



TABLE TALK

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RAIL AND TRAM NEWS

Queensland Rail Travel timetable

26 October

Queensland Rail Travel has issued a new timetable for its long-distance services effective 26 October. An electronic copy is at

http://www.queenslandrailtravel.com.au/Planyourtrip/Railinformation/Documents/Complete_Timetable_effective%20Oct-15_LR.pdf

The minor changes seem to be the insertion of recovery time into the final part of journeys:

- The northbound Spirit of Queensland departs Cardwell five minutes earlier at 1155 (Tue, Wed, Thu, Sat & Sun) and is due into Cairns 20 minutes later at 1605,
- The southbound Spirit of Queensland is due into Brisbane 20 minutes later at 0920,
- The Tilt Train arrives into Rockhampton 15 minutes later at 1845, and
- The Tilt Train arrives into Brisbane 17 minutes later at 1455.

QR Citytrain: Wulkuraka

Wulkuraka station was closed from 21 September to 18 October for works to connect tracks to the New Generation Rollingstock (NGR) project and a station upgrade. Buses transferred passengers to Karrabin station. The work is part of the NGR project which will deliver 75 new six-car trains for south-east Queensland including a connection to the NGR maintenance centre, opposite Wulkuraka station. It is also an opportunity to upgrade the station with improved safety and access features.

Gold Coast Tram extension

On 11 October the Prime Minister announced a grant of \$95 million for the 7.3 km second stage of the Gold Coast tram. This will extend from the Gold Coast University Hospital to meet the heavy rail line at Helensvale station. The aim is to have the extension operational before the Commonwealth Games of 4-15 April 2018. The Queensland government will ask three companies to tender. Mr Turnbull said, "This project is vital for the Commonwealth Games transport task. It connects five competition venues and nine events to accommodation and public transport interchanges. As congestion increases on the Pacific Motorway between the Gold Coast and Brisbane, the efficiency of the rail system and its mass transit capabilities become increasingly important for the region beyond the Commonwealth Games."

Queensland Premier Anastacia Palaszczuk welcomed the funding commitment from the Commonwealth and said with support secured Stage 2 can now be built in time for the Commonwealth Games. "I congratulate the Prime Minister.....Once the Commonwealth was provided with the business case, the Prime Minister prioritised the decision to fund this infrastructure which will be critical to the success of

the Games. As well as the Commonwealth funding, there will be \$100 million from the State government and \$55 million from the Gold Coast Council.

The Deputy Premier and Minister for Transport, Jackie Trad, said now a funding agreement has been secured with the Commonwealth the Queensland government will be in a position to appoint a preferred contractor in early 2016, following the conclusion of the Request for Tender phase on 23 December 2015. "Light rail has become the backbone of the public transport network and Stage 1 has driven a 25% increase in public transport patronage on the Gold Coast in the first year alone," Ms Trad said.

This is the first commitment of Commonwealth funds to urban public transport since the change of Prime Minister.

Since opening in June 2014, the 13km first stage has seen 6.18 million trips made in its first year and brought urban renewal and new development projects along the line.

Aurizon: Traffic decline

There has been a 3% drop in coal volumes hauled by Aurizon in the first three months of 2015-2016. Queensland volumes declined by 2.2 million tonnes (mt) year-on-year to 41.7 mt - from 43.9 mt in the corresponding period last year. Aurizon said the expiry of a 2mt pa contract to haul coal from Anglo's German Creek mine drove weaker volumes on the Goonyella system, along with "the ramp up in volumes of a third party operator" [ie, Pacific National]. In contrast, Aurizon had a 6% increase in coal volumes year-on-year in NSW, recording 10.9mt in the September 2015 quarter. "This increase is largely driven by commencement of the long-term 6.4 mt pa Whitehaven contract which commenced on 1 March," the company said.

Aurizon's smaller iron ore business dropped 7% to 6.3 mt in the September quarter. This was due to the cessation of a pair of contracts in August and October 2014, Aurizon said. This was partially offset, however, by "strong railings from existing customers and incremental volumes for [Gindalbie metals' WA mine] Karara".

NSW North Coast line traffic

Current traffic at Grafton is:

- Three northbound and three southbound XPT passenger trains daily,
- 12 Melbourne-Brisbane and 12 Brisbane-Melbourne container trains weekly,
- Two Sydney-Brisbane and two Brisbane-Sydney container trains weekly,
- Two Adelaide-Brisbane and two Brisbane-Adelaide container trains weekly,
- Five WA-Brisbane and five Brisbane-WA steel and container trains weekly, and
- Three cement and sugar trains per week in each direction, terminating at Grafton – recently upgraded from

weekly. Now runs Tue, Thur, Sat northbound and Wed, Fri, Sun southbound.

Hunter Valley 2016 closedowns

The Hunter Valley Coal Chain Coordinator co-ordinates planning of coal transport in the Hunter Valley. Members are the Australian Rail Track Corporation, train operators Pacific National and Aurizon, the Newcastle Port Corporation and Port Waratah Coal Services, a port loading operator (see the ATA's *Times*, October 2015, page 9). It publishes a schedule of planned major rail closedowns for engineering works. The proposed closedown program for 2016 can be found at <https://www.hvccc.com.au/AnnualCapacity/Maintenance%20Plans/2016%20Draft%20Major%20Outages%20as%20of%2020150615.pdf>

Pacific National: St Marys terminal

Port and rail company Asciano, owner of Pacific National, announced on 8 October that it is planning a freight terminal at St Marys next to the Western line in Sydney's western suburbs, at a cost of \$100 million. The company already owns the 43 hectare site. The aim is to move containers from the port of Botany to the terminal by rail, removing 300 truck movements a day. This terminal will be in addition to the \$1.9 billion terminal proposed by Aurizon, Qube and the Federal government at Moorebank. Asciano's long-term plan is to also build a terminal at Parkes, western NSW, where the east-west and proposed Melbourne-Brisbane railways will intersect.

ARTC: Sydney Metropolitan freight

Boosting the competitiveness of short-haul shuttles in the metropolitan region is the biggest challenge for the ARTC in Sydney's rail freight. The ARTC released its 2015-2024 Sydney Metropolitan Freight Strategy on 22 October. According to the paper, available at <http://www.artc.com.au/uploads/2015-Sydney-Metro-Strategy-Final.pdf> cross-metro container shuttles represent the single biggest challenge" facing the corporation, which owns Sydney's Metropolitan Freight Network, along with the NSW Interstate and Hunter Valley rail networks, in New South Wales.

ARTC chief executive John Fullerton said recent announcements regarding new rail freight and intermodal operations in Sydney made a strategy for boosting rail freight in the region even more relevant. He said the corporation was well placed in the supply chain to lead the discussion around the current and future needs of rail freight. "No other transport mode has the existing capacity available for the rapidly increasing freight task and the ability to have an immediate impact on traffic congestion that currently gridlocks the city. ARTC is in a unique position of being the one organisation that has significant operational involvement in import/export container logistics, while not having conflicting commercial interests."

It is from that position the ARTC has identified cross-metro shuttles – between intermodal terminals and port facilities – as the primary concern going forward.

According to the ARTC the Port Botany Landside Improvement Scheme (PBLIS) – launched by the NSW government in 2010 to combat truck congestion – did such a good job of improving the efficiency of road freight, it actually hurt the growth of rail. "PBLIS has had the impact of making road transportation more efficient and significantly reduced congestion around Port Botany," the report states. Anecdotally this had the effect of making rail less competitive. Concerns have been expressed by various groups over a long period of time that there is not a compelling commercial proposition in all cases for cross-metropolitan container services."

While the report seeks to deliver some compelling commercial advantages to rail over road, it also identifies

some existing and potential future incentive programs to promote rail. "Rail market share of Botany container movements has stagnated despite the aspirations of many stakeholders," the ARTC observes. "Ultimately, to achieve the desired growth in rail market share there is a need for there to be an alignment of commercial interests and the right incentives to make rail a worthwhile option."

Eliminating additional handling for railed containers at stevedore terminals is one measure suggested by the report. "At present, all rail containers incur an extra lift in the port relative to road operations," the paper finds. Typically, terminals are designed to take a container from a road vehicle and place it in a stack, or vice versa. For a rail movement, a truck or intra-terminal vehicle is used to take the container to and from the rail siding with this vehicle then processed essentially as a truck movement would be. This, of course, then requires another lift to or from the train."

As a result of this report, ARTC envisages construction of a Loop on the South Sydney Freight Line (SSFL) at Warwick Farm by 2022 and the duplication of the Botany Goods line by 2023. Looking further ahead, the construction by 2015 of a Western Sydney Freight Terminal is envisaged near Badgerys Creek Airport, to be connected to the SSFL and the Western line, and possibly to an outer Sydney Western orbital line by 2030.

ARTC: Botany line upgrade

ARTC has awarded a contract for stage 3 of the Sydney metropolitan freight network upgrade to Rhomburg Rail. This will provide concrete re-sleepering and embankment upgrades between Sefton and Campsie over the next 18 months.

Sydney Trains: 13 December 2015 timetable

A new Sydney Trains timetable will be introduced from 13 December. The major change will be that services on the T2 Inner west-south west line will be diverted from Campbelltown to the new Leppington line, with most services every 15 minutes. Since the Leppington line opened in December 2014 it has had a 30 minute shuttle service only to Liverpool.

Sydney Trains: Holiday period timetable

From 25 December 2015 to 1 January 2016 (inclusive) Sydney Trains will run to a Saturday timetable with additional services

Sydney: Bankstown line future

NSW State government plans to extend the NW Metro in tunnel from Chatswood to North Sydney then via a second Harbour crossing in tunnel to the CBD then to Sydenham. From Sydenham it will take over the existing Bankstown line of Sydney Trains. Conversion of the line from heavy rail to Metro-style may mean closure for as long as a year. The NSW government envisages large-scale unit development near stations on the Bankstown line. This will, inter alia, increase patronage. The State government has not yet indicated what will happen beyond Bankstown. Options include Metro taking over the existing Sydney Trains lines to Lidcombe and Liverpool, but this will pose problems of integration with the Sydney Trains network. A proposal is now being suggested by the Opposition of extending the Metro in a direct line to Liverpool, and to Badgerys Creek Airport.

Sydney: Delays and diversions 11-17 October

A small fire damaged signal equipment at Kingsgrove on 11 October. Consequently, express trains did not stop at Padstow and Riverwood, and NSW Trainlink services were diverted via Strathfield and Regents Park until 17 October.

Sydney: Transport app

On 23 October NSW Minister for Transport and Infrastructure Andrew Constance announced the NSW government will unlock its public transport data to app developers to create the next generation of real time transport apps for customers. He said, "We're inviting the app development community to shape a new Open Data Hub, informing how it will work and what kind of data is available to create the apps customers want. The NSW government is already a leader in the open data space with more than 2 million downloads of our real time transport apps, but technical limitations have restricted access for the creation of more apps and new ideas. We have more than 2,000 subscribers registered for static timetable data on the existing Transport Data Exchange (TDX), but this data and the infrastructure that holds it was built for our operators and planners. This has held us back and only allowed us to provide static timetable data to TDX subscribers – that is until now. With this investment we're taking the next leap forward by opening up our data channels for the wider app development community and for customers. The applications for this transport data are endless and will encourage innovation and 'outside the box' thinking that the app development community brings to the table. To make sure we get the execution right, we're asking for advice from app developers to tell us what data should be made available and help build the new Open Data Hub."

App developers will still need to satisfy strict privacy and use conditions in order to receive data from Transport for NSW. Any data made available will be secure, private, and de-personalised including real time train, bus, ferry, light rail and selected Opal travel pattern data. Developers are encouraged to apply at:

www.transport.nsw.gov.au/opendata

John Holland Rail NSW Country Regional Network: Wheat lines upgrade

The NSW government has announced a \$9 million upgrade to the wheat line between The Rock and Boree Creek. Timber sleepers will be replaced by 30,160 steel sleepers and 56km of track resurfaced. This is expected to be completed by the end of 2015.

Canberra Tram: Development applications

Development applications for the Canberra Tram were submitted to the ACT Environment and Planning Agency in late October for both the originally proposed route from Gungahlin to the City and the proposed extension from the City to Russell. They can be viewed at

http://www.planning.act.gov.au/development_applications/capital_metro_light_rail_development_application

V/Line website: WTT removed, then re-instated

A redesigned V/Line website, www.vline.com.au, was launched in early October.

V/Line's Working Timetable and information about V/Line infrastructure was removed. Access to operational information was then available only upon registration as an approved external partner. The Australian Timetable Association alerted V/Line to their regulatory obligations. Subsequently, V/Line agreed that removal of this information was not in compliance with the Track Access Agreement approved by the Victorian Essential Services Commission which states in clause 3.2a (i):

"V/Line has an Information Pack which is available
1) free of charge on its website www.vline.com.au or
2) can be mailed upon request (fee of \$250 plus GST.....)"

The WTTs and other operational information was then re-instated at this link:

<https://corporate.vline.com.au/Network-Access/Network-service-plan>.

Other features of the revised site are the redesign of the network and South Western maps – necessary because of the opening of the Regional Rail Link.

The listing of ticket sales locations now contains some peculiarities. The Interstate list includes St Albans, in the Melbourne suburbs, "Wakook" instead of Wakool Shire Council in the listing for Barham, and Canberra does not appear, or rather appears under the unlikely heading of "Kingston" which is the suburb where Canberra station is located. There is a section for overseas ticket agencies, but it is empty.

V/Line: Minor timetable alteration 2 November

From 2 November the 0734 ex Melton arrives Melbourne Southern Cross two minutes earlier at 0813, and the 0736 ex Wyndham Vale arrives four minutes later at 0815, ie they now operate in the reverse order to previously from Deer Park to Melbourne.

Victoria: Trains via Werribee

Since the timetable change of 21 June 2015 all scheduled V/Line passenger trains on the South West line – and there are lots of them! – run via the new Regional Rail Link via Tarneit and Wyndham Vale. However, there are still a few trains that travel between Melbourne and Geelong and v.v. via the traditional South West line via Newport and Werribee. These are:

- V/Line Empty Carriage trains: 1312 if required Mondays-Fridays Geelong-Melbourne, 1945 and 2110 Fridays only Geelong-Melbourne, 1032 if required Mondays-Fridays Melbourne-Geelong, 2140 Sundays only Melbourne-Geelong. Possibly these trains are scheduled via this route to maintain crews' route knowledge. (A 1926 Saturdays empty cars train Marshall-Southern Cross also operated via Werribee. Since 24 October it has run via Wyndham Vale due to "Metro Train network restrictions".)
- Pacific National Freight trains: 0310 Mondays-Fridays Appleton Dock-Westvic Siding (Warrnambool), 1900 Mondays Westgate Port Siding-Merbein (Mildura) (on Wednesdays and Fridays this train runs via Bacchus Marsh), 0330 Tuesdays-Fridays Somerton-Waurn Ponds Cement Siding, 1845 Mondays-Fridays Westvic Siding-Appleton Dock, 2040 Tuesdays and Thursdays Merbein-Appleton Dock (on Sundays this train runs via Bacchus Marsh), 0015 Tuesdays-Fridays Waurn Ponds Cement Siding-Somerton.
- Steam and Heritage special trains, for example Steamrail trips from Melbourne to Geelong and return on 17 and 18 October.

Victoria: Grand Final Parade Day

Grand Final Parade Day, the day before the AFL Grand Final, is a new Public Holiday in all of Victoria. This year on Friday 2 October, all transport operators ran Saturday timetables with modifications. V/Line added an additional train Marshall at 0930 to Melbourne Southern Cross, and from Melb SX at 1550 to Marshall. Metro Trains operated additional trains, especially late at night. Yarra Trams ceased operating one hour earlier than the normal Saturday timetable. Yarra Trams also had to curtail or divert some services as the football parade occupied Spring St and Wellington Parade between 1030 and 1415.

Melbourne Metro project

On 21 October the Victorian Minister for Public Transport, Jacinta Allan, announced that a 'deep tunnel' for construction of the Melbourne Metro has been chosen, replacing the previous 'shallow tunnel' option. This won't require relocation of the trams from Swanston St. Following

investigations, which included engineering and geotechnical work, the Melbourne Metro Rail Authority has confirmed that CBD North and South Stations can be constructed entirely underground, rather than digging them out from the surface down. Large holes will be excavated next to Swanston St, the station boxes will be dug out from underneath, and the tunnels bored between the stations while the city keeps functioning above. This will significantly minimise disruption and enable trams to keep running through the heart of the city on Swanston St. It also means cross-streets such as Collins St and La Trobe St won't be closed as often or for as long. CBD North station will be connected to Melbourne Central station via underground walkways to both the concourse and platforms of the station. While this method of building the stations and tunnels under the city will reduce disruption, there will still be significant impacts to Melbourne's CBD while Melbourne Metro is built. It is believed that the final decision for this was influenced by a massive Telstra communications easement under Swanston St which, if it had to be relocated or rebuilt, would have added significant cost and time to the project.

The new Federal Minister for Cities, Jamie Briggs, said on 6 October that the Melbourne Metro project won't be "shovel ready" until 2018 or 2019, and until then it won't be ready for funding from the Federal government. He said he and Victorian Transport Minister Jacinta Allan have "had several discussions about Melbourne Metro". Briggs stressed while his cities' role does represent a new tack for the Coalition, it didn't mean the Commonwealth would just throw money at projects without a tick of approval from Infrastructure Australia. Briggs' comments were supported by Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull. "I'm yet to see a proposal, the Minister is yet to see a proposal, but certainly we don't discriminate between rail and road, or any other form of transport. I'd be delighted to see a [Metro] proposal, which the Premier will no doubt show to us," he said. However, on 11 October, Environment Minister, Greg Hunt, foreshadowed Federal funding of a range of transport projects in Melbourne - mainly roads, but including the Melbourne Metro, and undergrounding of rail lines near Federation Square.

Melbourne Metro Rail, the authority to construct this project, has established a website at <http://mmrailproject.vic.gov.au/>

The Turnbull government agreed to redirect \$1.5 billion of Commonwealth East West Link cash into other transport projects. In a major win for Victoria - and an implicit acknowledgement that the \$6.8 billion road link won't be built in the near future - the Commonwealth has agreed to open Tony Abbott's "locked box" of East West Link money. The Victorian Treasurer, Tim Pallas, told reporters it was great news that the money could be used for Victorian projects, to be agreed upon by the State and Commonwealth governments, and signalled an end to the "game playing".

Metro Trains: Patronage

Peak-hour overcrowding on trains has got significantly worse this year, according to new figures from Public Transport Victoria, especially on the Sunbury, Craigieburn, Werribee, Upfield, Frankston and Dandenong lines. The data gave peak-hour loading on trains and trams on weekdays in May. There were 47 train "load breaches" in the morning peak, up from 41 in May 2014 and 30 breaches in the evening peak, which was steady. The Sunbury line suffered the biggest spike, leaping from two to seven load breaches in the morning and from four to six in the evening.

A decision by the Victorian government to defer a planned timetable revamp has exacerbated the problem. There has been scope to ease the overcrowding in Melbourne's west and north since June, when V/Line began using the new Regional Rail Link and freed up capacity for 46 extra peak-hour Metro trains a day. But that extra capacity has gone

almost entirely unused, after the government rejected a planned timetable revamp for April that would have boosted services on nine lines but removed Frankston line trains from the City Loop. Public Transport Minister Jacinta Allan said more services would be added to the timetable next year, and that hundreds of new V/Line services had already been added this year. "With strong patronage growth and four years of complete neglect under the former Liberal government, where not a single major public transport infrastructure project was started, there is pressure on our train system," Ms Allan said.

Tony Morton, president of the Public Transport Users Association, said high-capacity signalling technology would alleviate the crowding by enabling trains to run at more frequent intervals. Many cities in Europe had suburban rail systems that could handle 30 trains an hour, he said, "but we're still struggling in Melbourne where some of our suburban rail lines are still limited to 16 trains per hour".

Metro is removing dozens of seats near train doors to accommodate more passengers. This has created standing room for about 100 extra passengers per train, but with the loss of priority seating for people with disabilities, with prams and the elderly.

Metro Trains Melbourne: Projects

In early October work on the removal of the level crossing at Main Road, St Albans involved the demolition of platform 2 and the station building. From 9 until 29 October down trains did not stop at St Albans. Buses operated between Ginifer and St Albans and St Albans and Keilor Plains.

From 15 October 3G mobile coverage became live in the City Loop tunnels. VicTrack undertook the work in co-operation with Optus, Telstra and Vodafone Hutchison Australia. A second phase of the project will upgrade the coverage to 4G and be completed in late 2016.

Melbourne: 24 hour services

From 1 January 2016, there will be all-night public transport on weekends on trial for a year. Metro trains will depart from Flinders St station every 60 minutes on all lines except Stony Point and Flemington Racecourse. Trams will also operate every 30 minutes on six key routes - the 19, 67, 75, 86, 96 and 109 - providing services to St Kilda, Coburg, Bundoora, Port Melbourne, Carnegie, Box Hill, Vermont South and Brunswick, as well as within the CBD. A revamped and improved night bus network will include 20 routes, with a mix of routes operating from the city and others providing suburban connections from train stations and from suburban night-time hubs including Dandenong and Frankston - see Bus News on page 9. V/Line buses will depart from Southern Cross station at around 0200 for Bendigo, Ballarat, Traralgon, and Geelong - these will be a mix of express and stopping services. If successful, 24-hour weekend public transport trial will be continued and expanded where necessary.

Melbourne Airport rail-less

Melbourne is the only airport among the world's 50 busiest without a rail link or one on the way, other than five heavily car-dependent American cities. A new analysis is to be released by the Public Transport Users Association It shows Melbourne - with 28 million passengers passing through it each year - is the only Australian airport in the top 100 without a rail link. The other top 50 cities without an airport rail link are Las Vegas, Houston, Charlotte, Orlando and Detroit. Athens has just over half the number of passengers as Melbourne but has a rail link; Oslo with a population of more than 600,000 and Salt Lake City with just under 200,000 residents have rail links. Melbourne's population is 4.4 million.

About 12,500 workers travel to the Melbourne airport each day and, contrary to widespread belief, the Citylink contracts

do not prevent construction of a heavy passenger rail link to the airport. While many argue an airport rail link is desperately needed for Melbourne, others – including American public transit expert Jarrett Walker – have said Melbourne Airport has the best public transport of any Australian airport, including Sydney and Brisbane with their rail links.

Yarra Trams: MCG tram stop

Work commenced on 10 October on a new tram stop near the Melbourne Cricket Ground. It will have an 80 metre platform, long enough for two E-Class trams, and will be able to handle as many as 450 passengers at one time. The new stop will be located between Powlett and Clarendon Streets on Wellington Parade on routes 48 and 75. It is being built specifically for MCG crowds. It will combine two pairs of existing stops, and improve passenger connectivity to Jolimont railway station.

V/Line: Wheat lines

The Victorian Minister for Public Transport, Jacinta Allan, announced on 22 October the completion of \$5 million in critical maintenance works on the Murray Basin Rail network. This includes 28,000 new sleepers on 70 kms between Ouyen and Carwarp on the Mildura (Merbein) line and is stage one of the \$416 million Murray Basin Rail Project, which is to standardise the Murray Basin rail network and increase axle loading to 21 tonnes. \$25 million was set aside in the 2015-16 state budget for further works on the Mildura line, including the replacement of 3.4 km of rail, and nearly 100,000 sleepers. This will be completed in early 2016.

TasRail traffic

TasRail claims to be on track to capture 60% of the contestable rail freight market. This compares with 11-12% in 2009 when TasRail was created after Pacific National gave up in Tasmania. On the Brighton (north of Hobart) to Burnie route, TasRail now has 68% of freight volume.

Port Augusta – Leigh Creek line closing

The railway from Port Augusta to Leigh Creek in northern South Australia is now expected to close in November 2015, earlier than expected. Alinta's Port Augusta power station is also closing earlier than expected, about 31 March 2016. The only traffic on the railway is coal hauled by Pacific National. By November there will be enough coal stockpiled at Port Augusta to last until the powerhouse closes.

WA Wheat lines access

WA Transport Minister Dean Nalder did not seek to have WA's controversial freight rail access regime recertified with the National Competition Council (NCC), which will allow certification to lapse on 11 February. This will assist the CBH Group in its two-year dispute with Brookfield Rail over freight network access for grain trains.

Since 2011, certification as an "effective access regime" under the Competition and Consumer Act 2010 has shielded the regime and its impact on competition from the national competition watchdog, the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC). Allowing NCC certification to lapse will open the regime, and any disputes, up to ACCC scrutiny as an alternative to the Railway (Access) Code 2000 administered by the WA Economic Regulation Authority (ERA). The move has the potential to create more consistency and some transparency in negotiations by allowing ACCC access to information previously claimed as commercial-in-confidence by Brookfield Rail.

After 11 February, CBH or any other aggrieved access-seeker suspecting it is not being treated fairly can apply to the NCC to have a line or lines – including closed Tier 3 wheat lines – "declared" under part 111A of the Competition and Consumer Act. Declaration allows the ACCC to arbitrate in disputes and it can order access be provided under terms

and conditions it sets, irrespective of the State code. Lapsed certification may have a bearing on Brookfield's bid to acquire 100% of Asciano if the ACCC's concerns are not resolved by 17 December, when it is due to announce a formal decision.

ACCC Chairman Rod Sims has confirmed ACCC had "red light" concerns about the potential lessening of competition through vertical integration of Asciano's Pacific National above-rail freight haul business with Brookfield's WA rail network business, and with its Dalrymple Bay coal terminal in Queensland.

A forthcoming article in our sister ATA journal, the Times, will examine rail access regulation in Australia.

TransPerth: Airport line

On 23 October the Railway (Forrestfield-Airport Link) Bill 2015 was passed by the WA Parliament. Transport Minister Dean Nalder said the construction contract will be awarded in 2016 and the first trains will run in 2020.

NT ambitions

A feasibility study to investigate construction of a railway between Katherine, and Kununurra WA, will be commissioned by the NT government. NT Minister for Transport, Peter Chandler said a railway would have benefits for both WA and the NT. "Alongside the proposed Tennant Creek to Mt Isa line, would see much of northern Australia connected through rail."

Infrastructure funding

On 8 October, Opposition Leader Bill Shorten, announced Labor Party support for infrastructure projects:

- A railway to Sydney's new second airport at Badgerys Creek
- Melbourne Metro,
- The Cross River Rail project in Brisbane,
- Gold Coast tram, second stage,
- Planning of the Ipswich Motorway from Darra to Rocklea, Brisbane,
- Tasmanian Midland Highway,
- Perth public transport,
- Gawler Line electrification, Adelaide, and
- Fast-tracking Pacific and Bruce Highway upgrades, Qld.

KiwiRail: Kaimai Tunnel

A multi-million dollar upgrade of the 8.8 km Kaimai Tunnel, NZ's longest rail tunnel, is well underway. KiwiRail said the primary goal was to refurbish the track and tunnel floor to meet a forecasted growth in freight volumes and axle loads. As a result of the work, line speed has returned to 80km/h for the first time in four years. There are approximately three-dozen freight rail movements a day through the tunnel, mainly containers between the port of Tauranga and Auckland.

German national clock-face timetable proposed

From Railway Gazette International, October 2015

A detailed study of the feasibility of introducing a German national clock-face timetable based on a 30 minute and 60 minute cycle of long-distance trains with optimised connections has been published.....It was more detailed than previous macroscopic studies, incorporating a model of the rail network with 1,000,000 edges and 990,000 nodes as well as train performance data. The study found that a clock-face 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 hours per year, which could generate growth in ridership between 9 and 12 million

journeys. However, further discussion and analysis of the benefits would be needed before any decision on whether to go ahead. The large size of the network and the number of fixed boundary conditions make it difficult to devise a national clock-face timetable, which could not be implemented as a single step. It would need to be phased in over a multi-year timescale as necessary works to remove infrastructure 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.

Big data predicts train delays before they occur

From *International Railway Journal* October 2015

Stockholm commuter rail operator Stockhomståg says it has developed a mathematical algorithm based on big data which enables it to predict delays anywhere on the network up to two hours before they occur. Dubbed "the commuter prognosis", the algorithm uses historic data to forecast the risk of delay impacts across the network when a train is running behind schedule. The system was developed by Swedish mathematician and data scientist Mr Wilhelm Landerholm. "Imagine that the commuter prognosis

forecasts that a train will be ten minutes late arriving at station C in two hours," Mr Landerholm explains. "To deal with this the traffic control centre despatches an extra train from station A that will arrive on time at station C. As soon as the extra train has set off the algorithm recalculates and gives the traffic control centre a new forecast for the entire network within minutes." Currently Stockhomståg's traffic control centre monitors delays manually in order to prevent their impact from spreading through the system, but it says moving to automated forecasting will enable it to significantly raise service levels. Stockhomståg says that the commuter prognosis will enable it to inform passengers of the risk of a delay to their service before disruption occurs, and the operator plans to launch a smartphone app within the next few months.

Thanks to Scott Ferris, Peter Hobbis, Albert Isaacs, Victor Isaacs, Geoff Lambert, Max Michell, Samuel Rachdi, Len Regan, Richard Talbot, Brendan Whyte, ABC News, Australian Railway Exploration Association www.railknowledgebank.com, www.railpage.com.au, *Age*, *Australian*, *Canberra Times*, *Herald Sun*, *International Railway Journal*, *Railway Digest*, *Railway Gazette International*, *Sydney Morning Herald* and *Transit Australia* for Rail news.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR – METRO TRAINS MELBOURNE

Albert Isaacs writes: On Friday 30 October 2015, I had a lunchtime meeting in Nunawading and an evening meeting in nearby Box Hill. Rather than going home to Hawthorn just in time to retrace my steps back to Box Hill, I decided to fill in the time between meetings with a train trip to Belgrave.

I arrived at Nunawading station only to find that the 1548 Down Belgrave was shown on the electronic indicator as only going to Upper Ferntree Gully. Similarly, the 1555 Lilydale was shown as terminating at Croydon. A P.A. announcement explained that Down services were currently running about ten minutes late. I decided to catch the 1548 and was surprised to see that the electronic indicators inside the X'trapolis still showed the train as going to Belgrave, even though indicators at wayside stations all showed UFTG as the destination. The train was held for some minutes at the Ferntree Gully home stick [signal]. When the train eventually arrived at UFTG, it was placed in the Up platform where it formed the Flinders Street service that should have come from Belgrave but didn't because of the late running. P.A. announcements advised passengers for Upwey, Tecoma and Belgrave to change to the train about to come into the other platform (that is, the Down platform which is actually the former narrow gauge platform) Unfortunately,

many people on the train didn't hear the announcement and, therefore, probably missed their train. The following Down service arrived on time, just one minute after the late running arrival!

With all the recent talk in the media (and in this illustrious journal) about The Met running trains express to avoid penalties for late running services, one must keep in mind that the train that was terminated at UFTG would be regarded as a cancelled service UFTG-Belgrave and, thus, The Met would be penalised with a higher financial penalty than it would have had, had it just been a late running service. However, running the train through to Belgrave may have been impractical because of the single-track UFTG-Belgrave section. Perhaps the hold-up at Ferntree Gully was made whilst the safe-working boffins worked out what they should do. One can't help wondering what happened to the Lilydale service scheduled to leave Nunawading at 1555 and advertised as terminating at Croydon.

Of course, my UFTG train is another example of a Gunzel like me thoroughly enjoying the experience of an unusual journey, whilst most of my fellow passengers would have complained about a perceived inefficient service!

BUS NEWS

Australia Capital Territory by Victor Isaacs

A new weekend timetable came into effect for ACTION from 17 October. There are minor directional changes to routes 909, 923, 924 and 951, so that they align with the weekday services. Route 982 is discontinued and Bimberly Youth Detention Centre is now served by diversions on route 958. In a welcome improvement, maps in the Weekend Bus Book now show stops. The only Canberra weekend services that have better than hourly frequency are now placed at the front of the Book – the 900 Inter-town service (every 15 minutes) and the 950 Gungahlin-City (every 30 minutes). Copies of the Weekend Bus Book are available from the ATA's November Distribution List.

The Gungahlin Bus station is temporarily relocated from Monday 12 October to Friday 11 December to allow for the construction of an underground car park. It is relocated to Gozzard St. Diversions are in place and minor delays are

expected. Services are diverted along Gungahlin Place and The Valley Avenue.

ACTION had 12,420 kms a day in empty running in 2014-15, the *Canberra Times* reported on 5 October. This cost \$32,416 a day and represented 18% of the 25 million kms run in 2014-15. In 2012, dead runs were up to 19,000 kms, which was further than a return trip to Beijing. Today, the daily dead run distance is equivalent to a one-way trip to Los Angeles.

A spokesman for ACTION said the geographical spread of Canberra made it difficult to limit dead runs. "While service planners strive to minimise the number of kms of dead running, ACTION's dead running is slightly higher than the latest benchmark of 17.4% for private bus operators. The dead running on the ACTION network is also slightly higher due to the fact that school services are integrated with commuter services."

Canberra only has two bus depots, in Belconnen and Tuggeranong, which means drivers must travel long distances to position buses at the beginning of a route. The ACT government hopes improvements to facilities in Lanyon and proposed toilet blocks in Fyshwick will mean drivers no longer need to return to the depot for breaks. A Territory and Municipal Services spokesman said the government would investigate whether the Woden bus depot should be reopened to reduce dead runs. In September, Territory and Municipal Services Minister Shane Rattenbury said dead runs were a frustrating part of any bus network and were inevitable despite improvements being made through timetables. The network has been able to reduce the annual cost of dead runs from almost 20% in 2011-12 to 18% in 2014-15.

More than \$18 million of revenue claimed by the bus network in 2014-15 came from MyWay fares, although passengers failed to log off when departing a bus on 313,281 occasions. Government figures reveal bus fares are cheaper in Canberra than other capital cities with an adult fare costing \$2.91 compared with \$4.50 in Sydney, \$4.66 in Brisbane and \$3.76 in Melbourne. Another \$5 million of revenue came from cash fares while charter hires brought in \$692,000 and advertising \$545,000.

A report to the ACT government by transport consultants MRCagney found outsourcing through competitive tendering of ACTION operations, including vehicle maintenance and other functions, was the most plausible option for improving efficiency and "attractiveness of services". However, the Territory government rejected the recommendation, instead promising to improve services and increase public transport use by combining buses and light rail in a new stand-alone transport agency. The new Transport Canberra agency will begin working on integration for buses and trams from July 1, 2016. Trams are set to begin running by 2019 or 2020.

The website for the new agency is www.transport.act.gov.au The site includes links to ACTION, QCity, TransBorder and Airport Express.

It is claimed the move will deliver savings of as much as \$47 million each year in the longer term, nearly half of the \$107 million taxpayer subsidy paid to ACTION in 2014-15. Canberra's buses recorded an operating loss of \$11 million last year and received about \$7.20 in public funding per passenger, twice what other similar public and private bus operations received. About 17% of ACTION's costs are recovered through fares and commercial revenue, significantly lower than other public and private networks in Australian and NZ.

The report said privatisation would take several years to complete and would involve significant transition costs to the taxpayer. A sale would be in line with World Bank research on the cost of running public transport systems.

Fare structures and expensive and inflexible industrial agreements for drivers are highlighted in the report, two areas the government says it will move to address in the future. Bringing pay and conditions into line with other Australian jurisdictions would save the ACT about \$5 million annually, with Canberra drivers earning \$21,880 more than drivers in NSW and SA. The report cautions against like-for-like comparisons.

Changing trip caps and moving to distance-based fares would also save ACTION money. The government confirmed a planned fare increase will go ahead in January, but wants more time on an overhaul of fares. Assistant Minister for Transport Reform Shane Rattenbury said any changes to pay and conditions for drivers and crews would require negotiations with unions as part of a new enterprise agreement, due in 2017.

"Clearly an expenditure review is focused on delivering business efficiencies," he said. "The government has looked at this review in light of that and our broader goals of making sure we're delivering a transport system that assists those in our city experiencing transport disadvantage.

"This is a public asset and the government wants to retain ownership of it so we can continue delivering services."

The report identified 116 bus services after 8pm on weekdays that could be removed from the timetable due to low patronage. The average number of passengers on the services was 5.2, a low rate for services running all day. The report also found plunging passenger satisfaction and slow falls in patronage, when measured against population growth. About 97% of Canberra's population is served by at least one route, although 15.2% is served by only one route. On-time running of bus services has been "well below the target set by the ACT government", the report said. Patronage growth has not kept pace with population growth, while total gross costs have grown considerably and the network's trends compare unfavourably with most metropolitan bus operations in Australia.

Mr Rattenbury said customer service would be central to any decision making by the new agency. Decisions are still to be taken on whether the ACTION brand will be retained for Canberra's buses, or how existing senior public servants will be incorporated into the new agency. ACTION management, which has been part of the Territory and Municipal Services Directorate, has been reorganised this year. The new agency could also prompt a stand-alone public transport ministry to be created before the October 2016 election, potentially allowing retiring Deputy Chief Minister Simon Corbell to hand over responsibility for the tram line.

New South Wales

New Sydney CBD Bus Network Days 4 and 5 by Hilaire Fraser

The media were expecting a disaster once the new Sydney CBD bus network was implemented on 4 October 2015. The *Sydney Morning Herald* and the *Daily Telegraph* spoke of "Busarmageddon" and Sydney Channel 7 news spoke of "Shocktober", with the biggest test being on the first business day following the changes, that is Tuesday 6 October. Well, reporters and TV cameras were on the streets and even in a moving bus and things went smoothly on 6 October. Thereafter the bus changes were no longer a news item.

Three to four weeks before the changes the new timetables were available online and as printed copies from timetable outlets in the CBD. 54 of the new 56 timetables have been sighted in print form. 300 Kings Cross to Railway Square and 360 361 South Bondi and North Clovelly to Bondi Junction timetables have not been sighted in print form. The staff at timetable outlets were very helpful in providing the requested timetables. Timetables are no longer available in self-serve racks in Sydney. From three weeks before the changes pink-shirted helpers were handing out leaflets showing where to find information about changes and in the week of changes distributed the 41 page booklet entitled "A new CBD Bus Network" and "Find Your Way" leaflets showing bus stands at Wynyard, Circular Quay, Martin Place, Town Hall, Museum and Central. One might have thought that the helpers would use an electronic tablet to readily access the required information. However, they used the above materials and had a pink-covered guidebook for their use only.

A Hillsbus staff member was seen with a small staff reference guide. At the TfNSW Projects info centre a staff member had a large fold-out map but said it was not current but there was a new one coming.

On Days 4 and 5 October 7 and October 8, which I spent on the buses, traffic was flowing smoothly in the CBD. Firstly, traffic was lighter than normally expected as many people may have been put off driving into the city. Secondly, George St now cleared of buses apart from the double-decker Sydney Sightseeing Bus, offered a very quick run for motorists. This will change from 23 October when a section of George St is closed to permit light rail related works.

I had wanted to travel end to end on the three new through services created by the CBD changes. Apart from Metrobus routes M10, M20, M30, M40, M50, through services in Sydney for standard routes is a new thing for recent times.

The new services described in terms of their destination and route displays are:

- 343 Chatswood-Kingsford via Willoughby/via North Sydney/via Central/via Rosebery, combining 273 City-Chatswood and 343 City-Kingsford
- 389 Maritime Museum-North Bondi via Pyrmont/via St James (eastbound)/via Town Hall (westbound)/via Fiveways/Via Bondi Junction combining 443 City-Maritime Museum and 389 City-North Bondi
- 440 Rozelle-Bronte via Parramatta Road/via Central/via Oxford St/via Bondi Junction combining 440 City-Rozelle and 378 Railway Square-Bronte.

On Wednesday October 7 my first trip was on 389 from Park St City to the Maritime Museum. This was on a Leichhardt Depot bus which proceeded out of service at the Maritime Museum. The driver mentioned that he had made a wrong turn at Oxford St Bondi Junction. With the aid of a roundabout this error was quickly righted. Whilst waiting for the driver of the bus already at the stop and which was to provide the next service to North Bondi I spoke to a couple, who, now aware of the new through service, were catching the 389 from their home at Pyrmont to North Bondi, planning to have lunch at the Bondi Icebergs Club. The 389 is Malcolm Turnbull's favourite route and travels through the back streets of Paddington past St Vincent's Hospital, across the Barcom Avenue viaduct originally built for trams, through tree-lined streets containing with well-presented terrace houses and terraces converted to cafes and businesses in sympathy with the streetscape. The 389 misses Bondi Beach and travels through the back streets of North Bondi where another café precinct can be found. There was a change of drivers at Waverley Depot. At this time the Opal System aboard the bus was rebooted, causing a default fare for my tap on at the Maritime Museum and wrongly recording my tap off at North Bondi as a tap on - also attracting a default fare. As I was going to reach the fare cap of \$15.00 on this day, including train fares to and from the city, I was not financially disadvantaged by these errors. From North Bondi I caught a 333 to Bondi Junction where I enjoyed a lunch break.

After lunch I caught a 440 to Bronte. The driver was explaining to a number of potential passengers who were expecting a 378 that the 440 had replaced the 378. Understandably, people in the Bronte vicinity would have thought that a change to George St bus services would not have affected their route. I then travelled from Bronte towards the city on the 440. Although the driver had displayed "Rozelle" on departure from Bronte this journey terminated at Railway Square as indicated by the timetable. I then waited for the next 440 to Rozelle. This provided a journey along Parramatta Road and Norton St, Leichhardt to Rozelle. From Rozelle I caught the M20 for a very quick return to the city via Victoria Road. Thus on 7 October I had travelled the new 389 and 440 from end to end.

On Thursday October 8, I travelled to Chatswood and boarded a 343 bound for Kingsford. The vehicle was 1100 series gas-powered Mercedes. The destination display was too large for the dot-matrix grid in the header and the lower half of the route information display, the VIA information, was

cut off. During the trip north of the harbour the driver was explaining to a number of potential passengers who were expecting a 273 that the 343 had replaced the 273. It was strange passing 400 series bus routes in Elizabeth St bound for Martin Place and 500 series buses bound for Circular Quay. After a morning tea break at South Juniors' Club at Kingsford I caught the 418 to Sydenham to access the train.

Jim Wells, curious as to how Elizabeth St was coping at the busiest time of the evening peak, adds the following from current timetables using the "A new CBD bus network" booklet as a guide.

Times at Elizabeth St / Martin Place 1700 -1709 M-F

| Time | Route | Destination |
|------|-------|----------------|
| 1700 | M52 | Parramatta |
| 1701 | X39 | Covelly |
| 1701 | 333 | North Bondi |
| 1701 | X73 | Coogee |
| 1701 | 397 | South Maroubra |
| 1703 | 373 | Coogee |
| 1704 | 303 | Eastgardens |
| 1704 | X74 | Coogee North |
| 1704 | 343 | Kingsford |
| 1705 | X73 | Coogee |
| 1705 | 380 | Dover Heights |
| 1705 | L94 | La Pouse |
| 1705 | M52 | Parramatta |
| 1706 | 374 | Coogee North |
| 1706 | X96 | Maroubra Beach |
| 1708 | 301 | Eastgardens |
| 1708 | 333 | North Bondi |
| 1708 | X77 | Maroubra Beach |
| 1708 | 392 | Little Bay |
| 1709 | 343 | Kingsford |

Not all of these start at the Quay, eg 343 (some) are ex Chatswood.

Alan Miles comments: One advantage of the new bus arrangements is that outbound Broadway passengers waiting to board at Railway Square in the evening peak can now actually get on and find a seat. Previously, all buses had traversed the city from at least Town Hall before arriving at Railway Square and were consequently full on arrival. I often waited 20 minutes to get on a bus without upsetting full-fare paying working passengers. Now, the following buses start empty from Railway Square - 433, 436, 480, 483 and 501 (and you could probably include the 440 from Bronte) - and there is no scrum at the door.

Cowra Bus Services updated their local weekday routes in October to make school bus services more accessible to the general public. To facilitate these changes, Transit Graphics produced an expanded, five panel folded to DL timetable, with additional mapping and service information.

Tasmania by Ian Cooper

The Tasmanian Department of State Growth advertised on 10 October (closing 4 November) for expressions of interest in providing a "General Access Bus Service" (a regular route service) from the West Coast to Burnie. Such a service is to operate on a same day return, two days per week basis, enabling West Coast residents to attend appointments and conduct other business in Burnie. A trial of a minimum of 12 months is envisaged. For some years West Coast towns have had a route bus connection to Hobart and to

Launceston although the continued operation of such services is dependant upon the support of tourists visiting Cradle Mountain, Lake St Clair and Strahan. A regular route service between the West Coast and Burnie, originally pioneered by Green Coach Lines on 6 January 1964, was discontinued several decades ago by Redline Coaches when patronage dwindled to miniscule levels. At the present time, Crown's Motors carry West Coast resident students, boarding in Burnie, to and from home and study.

Western Australia

From 1 November a new TransPerth service, route 380, has run between the Esplanade Busport and Perth Airport Terminals 1 and 2. It is a limited stops service running at a 30-60 minute frequency from 0425 to 2325 from Perth on weekdays including public holidays, 0525 to 2325 from Perth on weekends, 0520 to 0120 from the Airport on weekdays including public holidays, and 0620 to 0120 from the Airport on weekends. Route 380 will run with four new accessible buses with dedicated luggage racks. The service also gives Belmont passengers a new and potentially quicker.



Victoria by Craig Halsall

Night Bus network unveiled

In late October PTV and the Victorian government released early details of the new weekend Night Bus network that will commence operation in Melbourne's suburbs from 1 January. The new network of 21 routes replaces the existing NightRider network and will operate in conjunction with a 12-month trial of hourly all night trains plus half-hourly services on tram routes 19, 67, 75, 86, 96 & 109 on Friday and Saturday nights. Popular university Thursday night parties will remain without an option home. Standard myki fares apply. The new route structure is designed to avoid

duplication with trains and trams running overnight, retaining coverage of the existing NightRider network. In a bid to ensure at least 70% of Melbournians will be within a 1km walk home of all night service, bus services have been expanded to serve a number of new areas (refer to the list below). Only some routes will depart directly from the City centre, mostly half-hourly, with others running as feeders in the suburbs timed to meet the hourly trains. These include two ambitious east-west routes between Elsternwick and Dandenong, both serving a number of suburbs away from

the rail network. With timetables yet to be published it is not clear how connections will work for feeder routes meeting multiple hourly train lines, such as 978 which also passes Ormond and Huntingdale stations.

City routes will no longer depart the central termini in Swanston St or Crown Casino, but instead operate a new CBD loop via Queen St, Flinders St, Russell St and Lonsdale St, with six boarding points. Termini vary depending on city entry and exit points.

As per the existing NightRider service, buses will only pick-up at key locations in the suburbs, however will stop any tram or bus stop passed en route.

The Night Bus network consists of the following routes:

- 941 City – Watergardens via Docklands, Footscray, Maidstone, Braybrook, Sunshine North, Kealba and Taylors Lakes
- 942 City – St Albans via Docklands, Footscray, Maidstone, Braybrook, Sunshine, Sunshine West, Deer Park, Cairnlea and Albanvale
- 943 Watergardens – Melton via Hillside, Taylors Hill, Caroline Springs, Rockbank, Melton West and Melton South
- 944 City – Point Cook via Spotswood, Newport, Altona North, Altona, Altona Meadows and Seabrook
- 945 City – Wyndham Vale via Yarraville, Kingsville, Brooklyn, Laverton North, Williams Landing, Truganina, Tarneit & Werribee Plaza
- 951 City – Glenroy via Parkville, Travancore, Moonee Ponds, Brunswick West, Coburg West, Pascoe Vale South and Hadfield
- 952 City – Broadmeadows via North Melbourne, Footscray, Maribyrnong, Aberfeldie, Essendon West, Niddrie, Airport West and Gladstone Park
- 953 Broadmeadows – Craigieburn via Meadow Heights, Roxburgh Park and Craigieburn North
- 955 City – Mernda via Carlton, Princes Hill, Brunswick East, Thornbury, Ivanhoe West, Bellfield, Heidelberg West, La Trobe University, Bundoora, RMIT Uni, Mill Park, South Morang and Mill Park Lakes
- 961 City – Doncaster via East Melbourne, Collingwood, Bulleen, Templestowe, Templestowe Lower and East Doncaster
- 963 Ringwood – Lilydale via Croydon North, Mooroolbark North and Chirside Park
- 964 Croydon – Lilydale loop via Kilsyth, Montrose, Mt Evelyn, Lilydale, Chirside Park, Croydon North
- 965 Lilydale – Healesville loop via Coldstream, Yarra Glen, Tarrawarra, Healesville, Badger Creek, Worri Yallock, Seville East, Seville and Wandin North
- 966 City – Box Hill via Carlton, Collingwood, Abbotsford, Kew, Kew East, Balwyn North, Doncaster and Box Hill North
- 967 Glen Waverley – Bayswater via Burwood East, Vermont South, Wantirna South, then loop via Boronia West, Bayswater, Bayswater North, Kilsyth South, Boronia Heights and Ferntree Gully
- 969 City – Ringwood via East Melbourne, Richmond, Cremorne, Prahran, St Kilda East, Caulfield North, Caulfield, Carnegie, Murrumbeena, Malvern East, Oakleigh, Oakleigh East, Notting Hill, Wheelers Hill, Rowville, Scoresby, Wantirna South, Wantirna and Heathmont
- 970 Carrum – Rosebud via Seaford, Belvedere, Frankston North, Frankston, Mt Eliza, Mornington, Mt Martha, Safety Beach, Dromana and McCrae.
- 978 Elsternwick – Dandenong via Gardenvale, Caulfield South, Ormond, Oakleigh South, Huntingdale, Monash Uni, Mulgrave, Noble Park North and Dandenong North
- 979 Elsternwick – Dandenong via Gardenvale, Brighton East, Bentleigh, East Bentleigh, Oakleigh South,

Clarinda, Clayton South, Springvale South, Keysborough and Dandenong South

- 981 Dandenong – Cranbourne via Doveton, Hallam North, Fountain Gate, Narre Warren, Berwick, Berwick South, Narre Warren South and Cranbourne North
- 982 Dandenong – Cranbourne via Doveton, Endeavour Hills, Hallam North, Hallam, Hampton Park, Cranbourne North and Cranbourne West

Route maps and detailed timetables are yet to be released, however detailed route descriptions are available on the PTV website.

The substantial number of suburbs away from the rail network gaining overnight transport for the first time includes:

- 941: Sunshine North and Kealba
- 943: Hillside, Taylors Hill and Caroline Springs
- 944: Seabrook and Point Cook
- 945: Kingsville, Brooklyn, Laverton North, Truganina, Tarneit and Manor Lakes
- 951: Parkville, Travancore, Brunswick West, Coburg West, Pascoe Vale South and Hadfield
- 952: Maribyrnong, Aberfeldie, Essendon West
- 953: Meadow Heights and Craigieburn North
- 955: Brunswick East, Mill Park, Mill Park Lakes and Mernda
- 969: Cremorne, St Kilda East, Caulfield North, parts of Wantirna and Heathmont
- 978: Caulfield South, Oakleigh South, Mulgrave, Noble Park North and Dandenong North
- 979: Bentleigh East, Oakleigh South, Clarinda, Clayton South, Springvale South, Keysborough and Dandenong South
- 981: Doveton (in lieu of Eumemmerring)
- 982: Cranbourne West

Routes 942, 961, 963, 964, 965, 966, 967 and 980 largely maintain existing coverage.

Existing NightRider providers Ventura, Dysons and McKenzies will continue to operate the new network, however it is not clear at this stage who operates individual routes. One would assume routes would largely reflect current operating territories.

Don't rock the bus

Owing to ongoing rock throwing incidents in Seabrook and Point Cook, operator CDC Melbourne cancelled evening bus services on two occasions in late September and early October due to safety concerns over fears of further attacks. 495 and 497 ex Williams Landing were cancelled after 1830 on 21 and 22 September, while evening services on 496 & 498 were suspended from 24 September until at least 1 October. Information regarding the return of the latter routes was not communicated promptly, with PTV advising cancellations for another week and CDC's social media streams also slow to confirm services had resumed.

It is noted that Transdev services continue to bypass Roxburgh Park Station after 1900 on Friday and Saturday evenings, nearly two years since the diversion was put in place.

Kew school numbers

Despite online advice that Kew School services would be renumbered from 150-series to a new K-prefix from 5 October, buses have continued to display the old numbers both before and after school, whilst online information have not been amended. The change would mean numbers avoid conflict with the new numbering system with the Wyndham network introduced in June and would also indicate that the services are not available for adult travel.

Crown Coaches continue to operate selected morning school services on a sub-contracted basis due to ongoing fleet shortages.

Transdev depot changes - October 2015

Following the list of which depot operates which Transdev service published in the October *Table Talk*, some allocations were amended from 5 October with new rosters and shifts due to the opening of the Spring St bus lanes the previous month. Routes 234 (Garden City – City), 235 and 237 (Fishermans Bend – City) are now shared between North Fitzroy and Doncaster depots. Previously all trips had been exclusively operated by the former. As some trips now include changeovers between the two depots, vehicles now venture across depots overnight. A connection 901 was omitted from the list of services operated out of the Dysons depot in Reservoir. With the sale of the existing Footscray depot site to make way for apartments and a Woolworths supermarket, Transdev will relocate to a new depot in Vella Dr, Sunshine West within the next 18 months or so. A new depot has also been proposed in Moorabbin East on Corporate Drive to replace the Sandringham depot & house buses for the 903 Orbital SmartBus along Warrigal Road, however rumours suggest buses may move to the Keysborough depot in the interim. The exact timeframe for the closures has yet to be confirmed.

BusTracker roll-out continues, but Google Transit still delayed

Over 150 routes are now covered by the BusTracker GPS tracking system. The following Ventura depots and routes were added from 28 September:

- Knoxfield: 732, 733, 734, 735, 736, 737, 738, 742, 745A to 745D, 753, 754, 755, 757, 758, 765 and 768
- Monbulk: 694, 695, 695F, 696, 697 and 699
- Oakleigh: 701, 704, 733, 766 and 767. (SmartBus 703 went live in May)

A further 69 Ventura routes began pushing out real-time info from 30 October:

- Dandenong: 709, 800, 802, 804, 811, 812, 813, 814, 815, 828, 843, 844, 845, 848, 849, 850, 857, 861, 862 and 885 (SmartBus 900 went live in May)
- Lilydale: 663, 664, 670, 671, 672, 673, 675, 676, 677, 679, 680, 691 and 693 (TeleBus not switched on)
- Hastings & Seaford: 770 to 785, 832 and 833
- Moorabbin: 631, 705, 708, 811, 812, 821, 822, 823, 824, 825 and 828
- Rosebud: 786, 787, 788, 886

NightRider routes 966, 968, 970, 980 and 981 were also switched on from this date.

The *Age* reported on 22 October that Google Transit was still not available in Victoria; over six months after PTV publicly released GTFS data and up to five years since the service was available in interstate areas. A Google spokesperson stated that the data does not currently meet their “quality requirements”, however PTV suggested Google had additional requirements beyond the standard GTFS format, which has been used successfully by various third party apps along with Microsoft’s Bing Maps.

Grand Final Eve confusion

Misinformation abounded online regarding service levels on Grand Final Eve, 2 October. Ventura Lilydale depot routes 671, 672, 676 and 677 did not run despite online notices suggesting they would. Various six-day a week routes from Ventura’s Dandenong, Monbulk, Pakenham, Rosebud and Seaford depots operated, but timetables were not displayed on the PTV website or journey planner.

Despite advice from Dysons over Twitter that 560 between Pascoe Vale and Coburg North Coles would not operate,

trips were observed in operation.

Organisers of the annual Tulip Festival in Monbulk failed to arrange the usual shuttle buses from Lilydale on Grand Final Eve, leading to full loads on the hourly 663 Lilydale - Belgrave bus. On weekends during the event (10 September – 6 October), buses met each train for a \$3 return fare.

Runners disrupt route running

12 October saw Run Ballarat take place, with CDCB cancelling around two dozen Sunday morning trips prior to 1100 due to a number of road closures in the City centre.

The following Sunday, the Melbourne Marathon took place in the city and inner southern suburbs. Services on CDCM’s 606 between Port Melbourne and Elsternwick were truncated north of St Kilda before 1300, while Transdev ran 246 in three parts, with shuttle buses running, between connecting with regular timetabled trips at either end to Elsternwick and Clifton Hill. Other detours affected parts of 216, 219, 200, 600, 922 and 923.

Racing Timetables

Dysons operated unadvertised extras on 508 (Moonee Ponds – Alphington) on 24 October catering for crowds attending the Cox Plate at Moonee Valley Racecourse. It is not known if the parallel 506 service to Westgarth operated by Moonee Valley Coaches operated any additional trips, as was the case in years past. Indeed the last timetabled trip now leaves the course less than 15 mins after the main race, due to Daylight Saving.

It is noted that Sita’s 404 (Footscray – Moonee Ponds) will operate to a Saturday timetable on Melbourne Cup Day – in years gone by, services have obeyed the weekday timetable to cater for crowds attending the big race.

New Ringwood Interchange opens

Bus services at Ringwood are departing from new bays as part of the \$80M station development. The changes were originally earmarked for 26 October but were delayed four days, with the opening later coinciding with the unveiling of new shops at neighbouring Eastland.

Routes 271, 364, 370 and 380 depart from new east-facing bays within the interchange (previously all bays faced west) while services on 670, 679 and 901 depart from bays on Maroondah Highway.

Ventura’s 742 from Chadstone continues to depart from Ringwood St near Eastland, despite suggestions from internal sources that the terminus would be relocated to the nearby station for the first time from late October. Bay 3 however remains vacant, suggesting change may still take place at a later date.

Bikes set to ride onboard

Commencing March 2016, PTV will conduct a trial of bike racks on the front of buses on a small number of routes, including Moreland’s 510 (Essendon – Ivanhoe) and 512 (Strathmore – East Coburg), the Cowes – Wonthaggi intertown route operated by their sister operation South Coast Bus, plus the Bendigo – Strahfieldsaye 16 service operated by the Whitemore’s Group.

Previous trials interstate have returned mixed results, with Canberra the only capital city to continue to offer the service. Although not widely advertised, Martyrs accept bikes and scooters underneath vehicles on their outer suburban 683 run to Warburton. alternative to Perth. Normal fares apply to route 380. Route 40 will continue to serve Perth Airport Terminals 3 and 4.

From Sunday 1 November there were time changes to routes 285, 286, 287, 288, 293 and 298.

Thanks to Jason Blackman Paul Brown, Ian Cooper,

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AIR NEWS

International

Qantas has commenced serving Haneda Airport in Tokyo instead of Narita. Haneda is 20 km from central Tokyo compared to Narita's 70 km. From 26 October Qantas has had four extra Sydney – Hong Kong flights to make 11 return services a week. The extra services are on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. From 6 December 2015 until 20 March 2016 Qantas will have an additional Sunday flight to and from Manila.

Air Hong Kong, a cargo subsidiary of Cathay Pacific, will commence flights between Hong Kong and the Gold Coast.

Philippines Airlines will commence services four times week from Manila to Cairns to Auckland in December. It expects to increase within a year its service to Sydney from the present five times a week to daily.

Domestic

From 8 March 2016 **QantasLink** will increase services from Hobart to Sydney and Melbourne from 35 return services a week to 46.

A new service Launceston-Burnie-King Island commenced on 1 September. On weekdays there are two return flights

from Launceston and Burnie to King Island while one return flight operates on Saturdays and Sundays – see www.sharplines.com.au **Par Avion** provides the Hobart – Burnie link and **Sharp Airlines** operates the Burnie to King Island service.

Free Spirit airline resumed its Burnie – Melbourne service on 1 November after being grounded since early June due to a shortage of pilots, a factor which the airline admits was unforeseen in its planning. The service operates on Mondays, Thursdays, Fridays and Sundays with the frequency to build-up as demand increases. Free Spirit also flies between Melbourne Essendon and Merimbula.

FlyPelican will commence daily return Newcastle-Ballina flights on 7 December. FlyPelican, based in Newcastle, commenced operation on 1 June 2015. It also flies Newcastle-Sydney twice daily Mondays-Fridays, once on Sundays; Newcastle-Canberra twice or thrice daily M-F, once Sundays; and Sydney-Mudgee twice daily M-F, once on Sundays.

Thanks to Tony Bailey, Ian Cooper, Victor Isaacs, Tris Tottenham, the Burnie *Advocate* and the *Australian* for Air news

FERRY NEWS FROM THE SOUTH ISLAND

“Spirit of **Devonport**”, the trans-Mersey ferry, was re-launched at the East Devonport pontoon at 0730 on 23 October. Merseylink, the Devonport bus service provider is again the ferry operator. Hundreds of residents celebrated the return of the ferry which was withdrawn from service in June 2014 due to inadequate funding. A new East Devonport pontoon for the ferry has been provided from funds supplied by local businesses and residents. Residents have been advised that they must use the ferry or it will again be withdrawn.

The Tasmanian government and **Bruny Island Ferry Company** have substantially increased the number of sailings between Kettering and the island from 2 November. The new timetable incorporates the operation of two vessels, with 11 return sailings by “Mirambeena” and seven by “Bowen” daily, with “Mirambeena” making one extra trip on

Mondays to Saturdays only. Up to the 2 November change, there were ten sailings from Kettering, Monday to Saturday and nine on Sundays, all by “Mirambeena.” “Bowen” recently augmented the service, on an unadvertised ad hoc basis. The new timetable will operate up the end of March 2016 and resume in October 2016. The April to September timetable also features extra sailings. Twelve return sailings plus one Friday night only are to be made on a daily basis which compares with ten daytime sailings plus one Friday night trip. This significant increase in the number of sailings is a joint response to a large increase in the number of visitors to the island, including passengers on bus tours from Hobart which created very long wait times for a ferry vacancy.

Thanks to Ian Cooper for Ferry 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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Back issues of **Table Talk** are available on the Australian Timetable Association's website, Austta.org.au, after three months.

Table Talk Newswire is an advance monthly email of Rail news. To obtain this, ask the Rail Editor at abvi@iinet.net.au