



TABLE TALK

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TOP TABLE TALK: VICTORIAN PROJECTS

Melbourne Airport railway

The Federal government is willing to explore all options to commence construction of a railway to Melbourne Airport. It is reported to be keen for the railway to run through the former defence site at Maribyrnong — a 127 ha precinct that could fit up to 6000 new homes. This route could link Footscray with Tullamarine, with a direct track through the new suburb also servicing Highpoint shopping centre. Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull sees the multi-billion-dollar airport link as a high priority and is keen to explore all viable funding options. These could include outright federal ownership of the project. The Commonwealth has committed \$30 million to develop a business case. Private sector proposals will also be considered, with a strong emphasis to be put on servicing growth areas and recovering some of the value the project would generate for private landowners.

Prime Minister Turnbull says the Federal government will invest in a viable project that delivers taxpayer value. "The Commonwealth isn't just an ATM, we want to be a partner in infrastructure. All the world's great cities have a rail link to the airport. Melbourne should be no different, if the business case stacks up."

Mr Turnbull also pointed to the latest census figures, released yesterday, showing Melbourne would soon be the nation's biggest city.

The Victorian government said in April it would look at opportunities to save money and deliver the Tullamarine rail link sooner through private sector proposals.

Federal Infrastructure and Transport Minister Darren Chester said planning needed to start "as soon as possible. We need to work out first, what's the question we're trying to answer? Is it just about a rail link for the airport or is it to provide another function in terms of linking the outer suburbs as well?" Mr Chester told the ABC.

Opposition Leader Bill Shorten has also flagged his interest in the project this year, saying he wanted to work with Mr Turnbull to "look at possible paths" for the rail line.

A \$5 billion private plan for a light rail line using driverless trains to connect the city to the airport, Doncaster and Monash University is also likely to be considered. The technology could then be expanded to Sunbury, Ringwood and Dandenong.

Melbourne Airport has said a train connection would be required within 15 years, with Tullamarine expected to be catering for 64 million passengers pa in that time, 30% more than predicted by Infrastructure Victoria. The Airport argues this surge will increase traffic on the Tullamarine Freeway by 50% and cause "untenable delays".

The *Herald Sun* reported last year that super fund giant IFM Investors, which owns 23.67% of the airport, was interested in investing in the rail link. IFM also owns Southern Cross station, the most likely connection point for trains to and from the airport. The pensions giant is closely monitoring which infrastructure projects it can invest in, with chief executive Brett Himbury even dining with US Vice-President Mike Pence recently to discuss the Trump administration's planned \$1 trillion infrastructure blitz.

Acting Premier James Merlino subsequently said the "important project" is being analysed in "partnership" with the Commonwealth. He said the State government was working alongside its Federal counterparts on a \$30 million study to determine the best route for the train to Tullamarine, as well as the cost and "the best way to fund it".

Melbourne Metro congestion

Metro Trains has warned the Victorian government that three of Melbourne's rail lines have breached capacity at peak hour, with three others to follow within the next two years. The crowd crushes and heavy disruption experienced during the morning peak on the Sunbury, Craigieburn and Upfield lines will soon become the norm on the Cranbourne, Pakenham and Werribee lines.

Metro has proposed bypassing the City Loop more often in the peak and running trains direct to Flinders St or Southern Cross, to squeeze more capacity out of Melbourne's straining rail network. It says the problem is most urgent on the "northern group" of lines that

service Melbourne's booming north-west. The Sunbury, Craigieburn and Upfield lines share one of the City Loop's four tunnels and are all experiencing rapid patronage growth and worsening overcrowding.

The government's solution to the issue is the Metro Tunnel, which is due to open in 2026, but Metro has said there is "an urgent need" to find an answer now. "There is an urgent need to develop a solution for the Northern Group to ensure that there is sufficient capacity on this group until the commissioning of Metro Tunnel in 2026." The warning is contained in Metro's 2016 Strategic Operational Plan, which was leaked to Fairfax Media.

The plan reveals Metro has set an internal target to run 95% of trains on time by 2026, the same year the Metro Tunnel opens. But it has also warned the government that Melbourne's rail network needs significant taxpayer investment to fix a host of problems, such as peak-hour congestion in the City Loop, rail bottlenecks, and ageing trains and signals, if it is to do so.

According to the plan, Metro also expects the Cranbourne/Pakenham line to overflow with passenger demand in 2018, for the same reason – a lack of capacity in the City Loop. This is in part because the government continues to run peak-hour Frankston trains through the Loop, Metro said. It has proposed running more Cranbourne/Pakenham trains direct to Flinders St as an interim solution. It also said the Werribee line in Melbourne's south-west will be "at capacity by 2019 once the additional paths provided by the Regional Rail Link Project have been used".

Premier Daniel Andrews said that "not enough has been done for a very long time" to deal with Melbourne's rail capacity problems. I think Victorians appreciate there is a lot of catching up to be done and Metro Tunnel project will take quite some time, because it's the biggest public transport project our state has ever seen."

The \$11 billion Metro Tunnel will remove the Cranbourne/Pakenham lines and the Sunbury line from the City Loop, and free up capacity for more trains to run on other lines. But given it is not scheduled to open for another nine years, Metro has urged the government to commit to a series of smaller investments to help it keep pace with passenger growth. These include removing rail bottlenecks such as junctions and single-track sections.

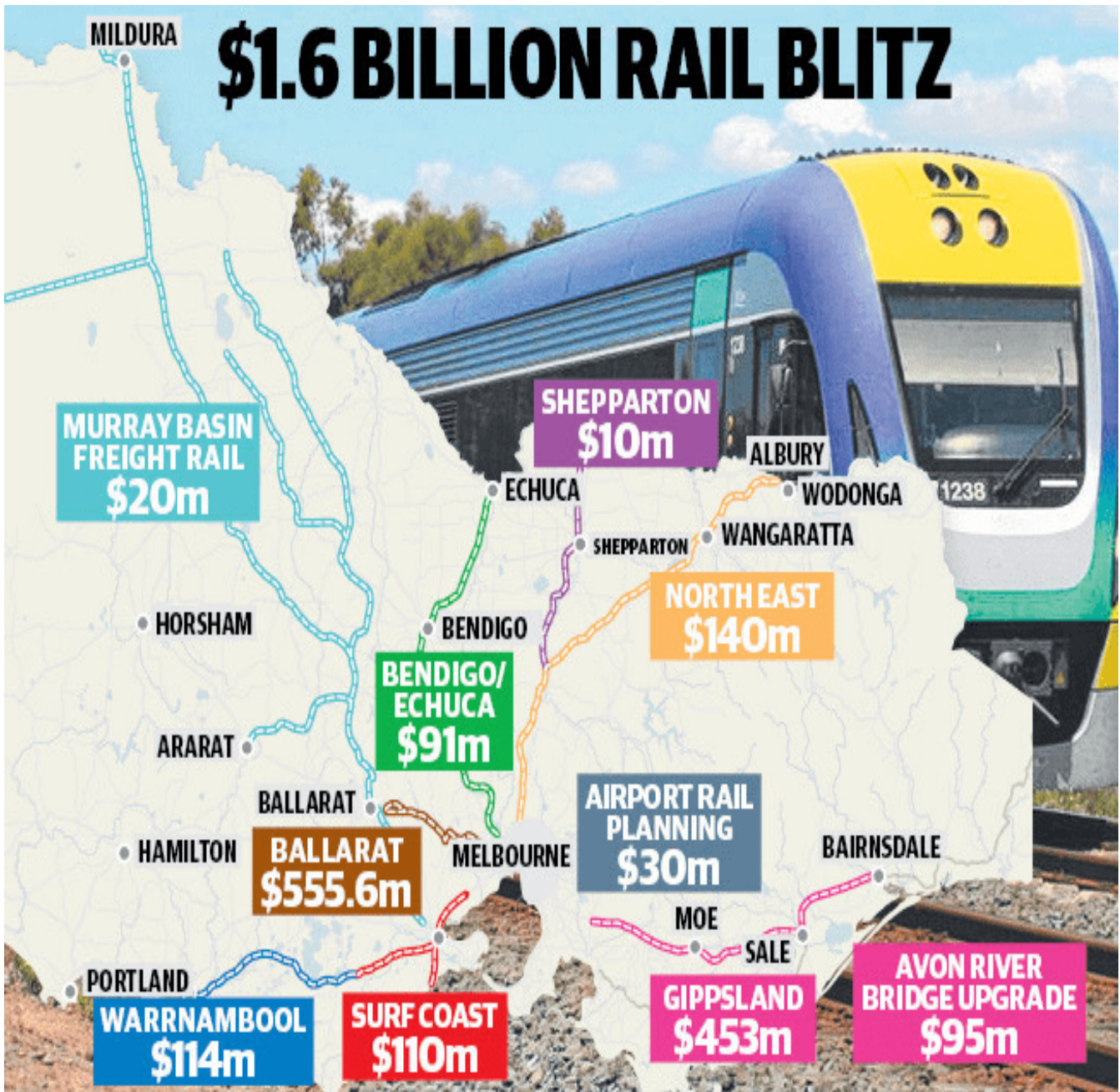
Metro tunnel signaling

The Victorian government has signed a \$1 billion contract for high capacity signalling and communications in the Melbourne Metro tunnel to be let to CPB Contractors and Bombardier Transportation. The advanced technology will enable trains every two to three minutes – creating a true 'turn-up-and-go' train network for Melbourne. Dedicated control centres will be built in Dandenong and Sunshine to support the new technology. The centres will be staffed by experts who will monitor trains on the new Metro Tunnel line.

Regional Rail upgrade

The Federal government has confirmed that they will provide almost \$1.5 billion to Victoria under the Asset Recycling Initiative for the Regional Rail Revival program announced as part of the Victorian Budget in May. The package includes the \$516.6 million Ballarat line upgrade already underway, with an extra \$39 million for Stage 2 of the project, which will deliver better services for Ararat and Maryborough. Also:

- \$556.6 million will be spent on the Gippsland line, with \$435 million for major upgrades between Pakenham and Traralgon, and \$95 million to replace the Avon River Bridge.
- \$110 million will fund the first stage of a massive new Surf Coast Rail Project, which will prepare the corridor for duplication between South Geelong and Waurin Ponds, while work is undertaken to complete the business case for the duplication. The funding will also reserve land for a future line to Torquay.
- \$114 million will be spent on the Warrnambool line to upgrade track and signalling to enable more services and new VLocity trains to run to Warrnambool.
- \$140 million will be provided for track, signalling and station improvements on the North East line.
- \$91 million is provided for the Bendigo-Echuca line to run faster trains, an extra daily service to Echuca, and delivery of Bendigo Metro Stage 2 with more services to Epsom and Eaglehawk.
- The package includes \$10 million to plan for an improved freight network in and around Shepparton and ensure it is not negatively affected by future increases to passenger services on the line.
- The package includes just over \$20 million for the \$440 million Murray Basin Rail Project.



Graphic from Herald Sun

Murray Basin Rail project

The Maryborough to Yelta and Ouyen to Murrayville sections will be temporarily closed while upgrades are underway. Work to reopen the 87 km rail line between Maryborough and Ararat starts in July, while

standardisation work on the Mildura and Ouyen-Murrayville lines is scheduled for August. Axle loading will be increased from 19 to 21 tonnes (apart from Ouyen-Murrayville). (See the next item for the Federal contribution.) The timeline is:

Work details	Timing
Stage 1 Mildura and Hopetoun lines: Enabling works and repair of existing rail.	Completed June 2016
Stage 2 Maryborough to Yelta, Ouyen to Murrayville, and Maryborough to Ararat: Gauge conversion and upgrade works, including re-opening of Maryborough-Ararat.	July 2017-January 2018
Stage 3 Dunolly to Manangatang, and Korong Vale to Sea Lake: Gauge conversion and upgrade works.	March 2018-August 2018
Stage 4 Gheringhap to Warrenheip: Gauge conversion and upgrade works.	March 2018-August 2018
Stage 5 Warrenheip to Maryborough: Gauge conversion and upgrade works.	To be advised.

RAIL AND TRAM NEWS

Queensland Rail Working Timetables

Some Queensland Rail non-metropolitan Working Timetables are currently available on their website. WTTs are in graphical format (and not particularly user-friendly) for some sections of the North Coast line (Caboolture-Rockhampton and Mackay-Townsville); Central West line; Main/Western line; South Western line; and Tablelands line. A WTT for the Mount Isa line is in tabular format. However, it is for the Down (Mount Isa to Townsville) direction only. Note that some of the documents require printing manipulation before they are readable.

The site also includes some other operational information, viz, planned track possessions (for civil engineering) and/or operation of inspection trains, for the North Coast line (entitled NCL Supply Chain calendar) July 2017 to December 2019; Western line (entitled Western Coal Supply Chain Western Corridor Alignment Calendar), plus scheduled steam train trips, for July-Dec 2017 and draft for Jan-March 2018; and for the next few months for the Mount Isa line, South West line and the Far Western line.

The site also includes a useful track diagram of the entire QR network, entitled Network Infrastructure Ownership, dated April 2017.

The address is <http://www.queenslandrail.com.au/forbusiness/access/access-undertaking>

Queensland Rail Travel: 28 August timetable

The much delayed return to service of the second Electric Tilt Train following refurbishment will take effect from 28 August. This will bring the reintroduction of the Tuesday and Sunday evening services to Rockhampton. Journey times will be faster than the interim replacement diesel-hauled train.

The 0515 Bundaberg-Brisbane service will run Mon, Tue, Thur, Fri and Sat; the 1655 Brisbane to Bundaberg train will run every day except Saturdays and will be extended to Rockhampton on Tuesdays and Sundays; the 1110 Brisbane-Rockhampton will run every day except Wednesdays; the 0710 Rockhampton-Brisbane will run every day. A summary is

	M, Tu, Th, F, Sa	Daily
Rockhampton		0710
Gladstone		0826
Bundaberg	0515	1005
Maryborough West	0601	1058
Brisbane Roma St	0955	1450

	Daily exc Wed	Daily exc Sat
Brisbane Roma St	1100	1655
Maryborough West	1440	2028
Bundaberg	1531	2125
Gladstone	1712	2317 Tue & Sun only
Rockhampton	1845	0030 Wed & Mon only

The new system timetable is at <http://www.queenslandrailtravel.com.au/Planyourtrip/timetable>

QR Citytrain: Redcliffe line signalling problems report

The report by independent expert, Rob Smith, into the signalling problems which caused the opening of the Redcliffe Peninsula line to be delayed in mid-2016, can be found at

<http://www.parliament.qld.gov.au/documents/tableOffice/TabledPapers/2017/5517T812.pdf>

The report is largely about contractual issues. Some of the content is already dated, as release of the report was delayed while these issues were resolved. There has been some censorship of sensitive commercial information. There are 40 recommendations which have all been, or are being, implemented.

QR Citytrain: Peak shutdown 29 June

Queensland Rail will investigate how a power failure at a radio transmission tower on Mount Coot-tha caused a shutdown of the Brisbane Citytrain network on Wednesday 29 June during the evening peak period. Tens of thousands of commuters were delayed. The fault shut down the communications system, and delayed trains from all lines for about 80 minutes on Wednesday evening during peak hour. Acting Transport Minister Dr Steven Miles said the service disruptions were "very disappointing. This particular fault was very difficult to predict or anticipate - in fact something like this hasn't happened in decades." The fault was identified within an hour and rectified within 10 minutes after that. "Obviously, coming on the back of the series of concerns about Queensland Rail, Queenslanders have a right to be concerned," he said. Dr Miles said initial investigations suggested the back-up battery system went dead, causing the power outage. "It appears that there wasn't an alarm to alert the engineers that the redundancy (back-up) was in place and, so, once the redundancy battery could no longer support the system, there was no system in place to alert engineers that they needed to get back out there," he said. QR chief executive Nick Easy said a full investigation would be undertaken to find the cause of the fault.

QR Citytrain: Major closure 22-23 July

A major closure for planned civil engineering work closed half of the Brisbane suburban network on the weekend of 22-23 July. Trains were replaced by buses

between Northgate, Corinda, Yeerongpilly and Cleveland, including all trains through the inner city.

ARTC: Inland Rail

The NSW Department of Planning & Environment has placed on exhibition a State Significant Infrastructure Application for the section of the Brisbane-Melbourne Inland Freight Railway between Parkes and Narromine. The application covers;

- Upgrading 107 km of existing track between Parkes and Narromine;
- Realignment of sections of track within the existing corridor, including a slight deviation of the main east-west line west of Parkes, to ease curves;
- Construction of three new crossing loops, probably at Goonumbla, Peak Hill and Timjelly; and
- 5 km of new line west of Parkes to connect to the Broken Hill line. The proposed Parkes National Logistics Centre will be placed within the triangle formed by this connection.

The report states that freight train numbers are expected to increase from the present 1 to 2 per day to 11 in 2025 and to 17.5 trains daily in 2040. Tonnage is expected to be about 11.8 million tonnes in 2025 and 19 million tonnes in 2040. The work is expected to be completed in mid 2019. Details are at http://majorprojects.planning.nsw.gov.au/index.pl?action=view_job&job_id=7475

Consultation for the Parkes to Narromine project EIS will close on 18 August.

Great Southern Rail: Withdrawals and changes – 1 April 2018

From 1 April 2018 the following will apply to Great Southern Rail trains:

Overland Melbourne-Adelaide and v.v: Worryingly, operation of the Overland may not continue beyond 31 December 2018. This is when the current subsidy from the Victorian and SA governments ends.

Indian Pacific and Ghan: Discounts for pensioners will be abolished.

Indian Pacific both directions: From 1 April 2018, the Indian Pacific will no longer convey passengers to the intermediate stations of Lithgow, Bathurst, Blayney, Orange, Parkes, Ivanhoe, Menindie, Peterborough, Gladstone, Coonamia (for Port Pirie), Merredin and Northam. Since "Red" fares (for seating or economy berths) were abolished, unsurprisingly patronage to these points has dropped significantly.

Ghan both directions: From 1 April 2018, the Ghan will no longer convey passengers to Coonamia and Tennant Creek. Since "Red" fares were abolished, patronage to these points has dropped significantly.

Indian Pacific eastbound Perth-Adelaide-Sydney: The stop at Rawlinna for an "Outback Experience" breakfast will be abolished and replaced by a "Nullarbor Lunch" at Cook. Passengers ("guests" as GSR calls them), will have the option of detouring at Mount Victoria at 0850-0900 for a tour of the Blue

Mountains, before continuing to Sydney via NSW TrainLink.

Ghan Expedition: The ultra-touristy, extended, southbound, winter peak tourist season train will operate for seven months, from April till October. It will not convey Motorail.

NSW website information

In late July the **NSW TrainLink** website was incorporated into the NSW Transport format. (This follows closure of the Sydney Buses website, and incorporation of its information into the NSW Transport info format - see July *Table Talk*, pages 5-6), NSW TrainLink claims the same range of information is available. The site includes timetables for individual trains, and also regional timetable compilations for North Coast, North West, Western and Southern NSW. The new address is <https://transportnsw.info/travel-info/ways-to-get-around/regional-trains-coaches> but typing the former address of www.nswtrainlink.info will lead to automatic redirection to the new site.

From 26 July, Transport for NSW implemented timetable information for regional train and bus timetables so that it is no longer necessary to input some unknown code. NSW timetables can now be accessed at <https://transportnsw.info/routes#/>

Sydney Trains: Strathfield control

On 7 to 9 July control of Ashfield, Homebush, Strathfield and North Strathfield areas was transferred to a Strathfield panel at Homebush Control Centre. The former panels at Strathfield Signal Box were decommissioned.

Sydney Trains: Categories of train alteration notices

Scott Ferris advises: There are a variety of categories of advice issued when alterations to train services occur.

Train Planning has to issue **Special Train Notices (STNs)** 14 days before the operation of the applicable train working. The STN must reach relevant stakeholders e.g. Train Control, Signallers and Station Staff, seven days before the operation of the train working.

Any altered train working that needs to be issued within seven days must then be issued by **Telegram**. There is a Register of Numbers for Telegrams, brief details are entered in the register, and it is a record of what number has been issued. Each year it starts back at 001. The number format on the notices is nn-yyGM.

The other type of Telegram is a **Vide Telegram**. When a STN is issued in a reasonable time to stakeholders (Train Control, Signallers, Station Staff), any errors can be picked up and advised to the Train Planner. The Train Planner can then make appropriate adjustments, and at the last possible moment, usually three days before the train working is to operate, issue a Vide Telegram to capture all the errors in the original STN. The format is "nn-yy". Note the V in place of GM.

Train Planners only have one opportunity to issue a Vide Telegram. If further adjustments are required, a

further Telegram can be issued. This will be a GM Telegram (nn-yy), note GM in the number, and will have the following inserted "to be read in conjunction with STN nnnn-yyyy". The word Vide is not used.

[If we were to go back some 20 years, for a moment, this is what took place.

Some STNs were produced with several different items of Special Trains, or Tables. For example, items could include: Additional Trains for Crew Training, Track Machine Transfers, SWTT changes, change to a previous STN (which is a Vide). Each one of these may have only been a few lines of Text. So you could have numerous items on a two page STN. The typist would purposely fill a two page STN with these items. Weekend Train Working was usually shown on one STN, separate to anything else.

STNs were normally issued between 14 and 7 days prior to the particular Train or Table operating. If the Train Planners made a mistake, they could place an Amendment on another STN, so long as it was not within 7 days of operation. There was no limit to the number of Amendments they could make. Inside 7 days, any changes would be captured on a Telegram and Faxed to the Sydney Telegraph Office for distribution.

For a period of time, Train Planners were being pushed to achieve more, especially in the lead up to the Olympic Games. This seemed to cause a spate of mistakes, from some Train Planners, and hence many Vices were generated. This was playing havoc with Crew Schedulers, Train Controllers, Signallers, and Station Staff, who had to read through numerous STNs to establish the applicable train working. In some instances the information on the STNs was being missed.

Train Control threatened to boycott some of the Track Possessions. They insisted on only one Vide being issued against a STN and would not accept any changes inside three days of the particular train working.

The Sydney Telegraph Office was closed down. Telegrams were Faxed by Train Planners using Fax Machines pre-loaded with Fax numbers, which could fax multiple numbers at the same time.]

Sydney Trains weekend timetable

More than 750 new weekend train services will be added to the Sydney Trains timetable to keep pace with demand. NSW Transport Minister Andrew Constance said the bolstered timetables followed a 68% surge in weekend demand between 2013 and 2016 and were part of an overall \$1.5 billion program to get more trains on the network. The new services will be in place by the end of the year. The Cumberland line will get more than 160 extra services on weekends. The Western and Northern lines will have trains every 15 minutes on average.

T1 Western line: Frequency to the City doubled between Penrith and Doonside with two additional trains every hour, or a train on average every 15 minutes throughout most of the day.

T1 Northern line: Frequency doubled between Epping and Central via Strathfield with an extra two services every hour, or a train every 15 minutes. Direct services doubled to the CBD between Hornsby and North Ryde via Macquarie Park.

T1 North Shore line: An extra two trains per hour during the day at Chatswood, Artarmon, St Leonards, North Sydney and Milsons Point.

T2 Airport line: Airport Line stations will receive a minimum 15 minute frequency throughout most of the day. Frequency doubled during the day at Green Square, Mascot and Sydney Airport stations, as well as most stations between Macarthur and Turrella on the T2 Airport Line.

T5 Cumberland line (at present without any weekend services): More than 160 new services.

T6 Carlingford line: Frequency doubled during the day with an additional train every hour or a train every 30 minutes.

Blue Mountains line: 24 dedicated express trains between Blue Mountains and the CBD.

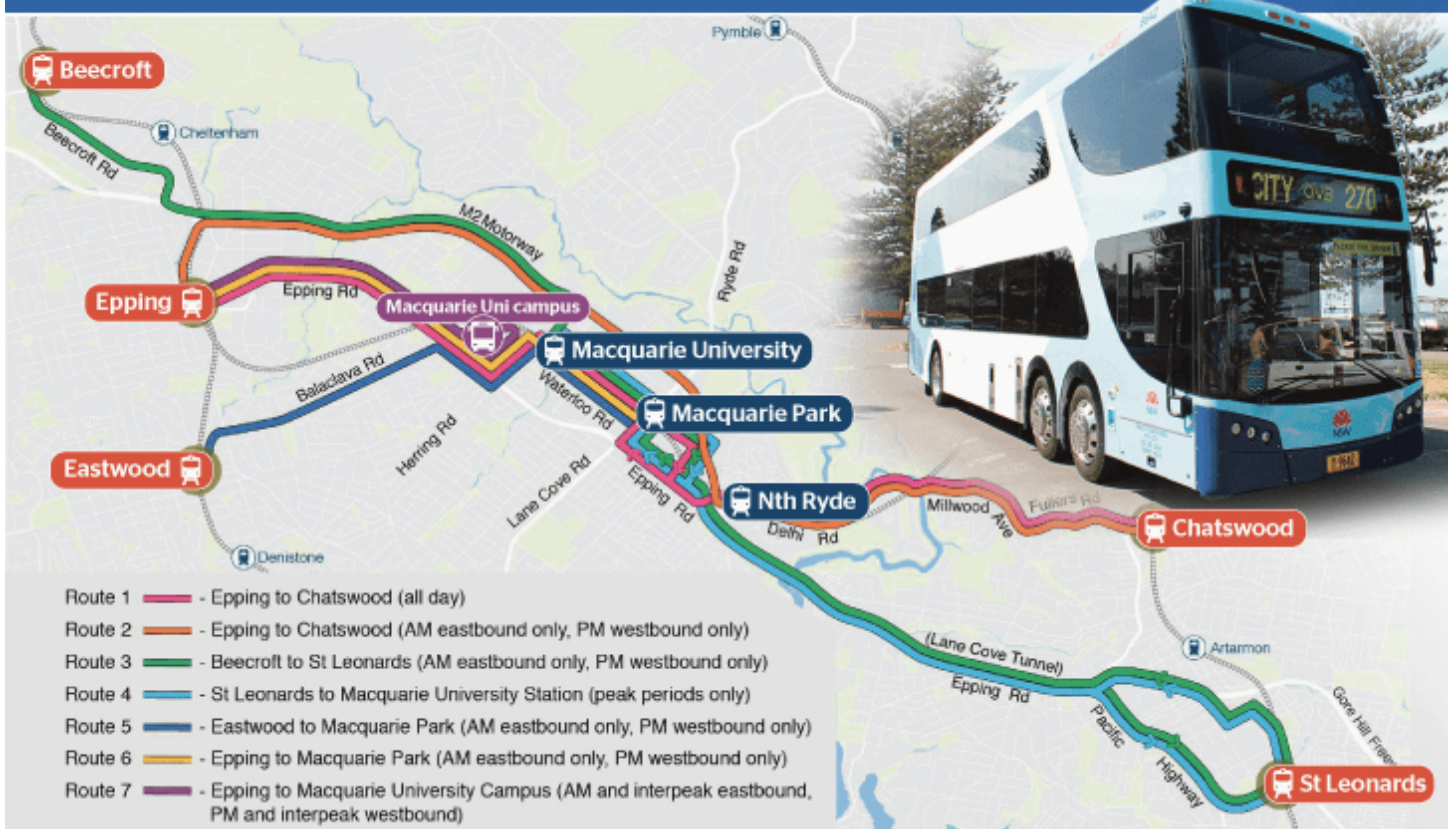
Chatswood-Epping conversion

Thousands of commuters face journey times of at least an extra ten minutes when buses are used to replace train services during the seven-month shutdown of the Epping-to-Chatswood rail line from late 2018. More than 120 new buses will run as often as every six minutes during peak periods, connecting stations disrupted by the conversion of the existing 13-km heavy rail line, which only opened in 2009, to carry single-deck metro trains. The conversion of the line is part of the first stage of Sydney's \$20 billion-plus metro railway from Rouse Hill in the north-west to Chatswood.

NSW Transport Minister Andrew Constance urged the more than 14,000 commuters who would be affected by the closure to "bear with us", saying they would eventually experience a "transformative" service. "It is going to be a challenge, which is why we are urging people to plan their trips. There is very significant congestion out there but we will run the buses at the same time as we are investing in the infrastructure to try to assist bus movements." He said the exact date for the line's closure was not likely to be made public until about a month beforehand so as not to confuse people.

As part of the changes, a shuttle bus will run between Epping and Macquarie University, as well as express and all-stop services between Epping and Chatswood. The other new bus routes will include Beecroft to St Leonards; St Leonards to Macquarie University; Eastwood to Macquarie Park; and Epping to Macquarie Park.

Off the rails Bus routes during the Epping to Chatswood line temporary closure



Graphic from Sydney Morning Herald

The government will spend \$49 million on alternative transport during the closure of the line, including \$35 million to private bus operators Hillsbus and Transdev. An extra 120 bus drivers will be hired.

CBD coordinator-general Marg Prendergast said commuters would probably spend at least an extra ten minutes travelling from Epping to the CBD but exactly how much longer would not be known until bus schedules and timetables were completed. "We will be flexible and agile - we will cater for what we see," she said. "We are confident that we have the buses and the plan to do it." She said fares for the alternative bus services would be the same as they would be if commuters were using the rail line. "We're coding Opal to actually be like a weekend rail close-down."

Tens of thousands of commuters who travel by train between Bankstown and Sydenham each day will also be forced to catch buses for up to two months each year for five years from 2019 while the line in Sydney's west is converted to carry metro trains.

Sydney Metro

Infrastructure Australia has promoted the Sydney Metro City & Southwest project to its High Priority Project list. This is the second phase of the Sydney Metro project which will extend the Sydney Metro Northwest rail line from Chatswood to Bankstown, via new stations on the lower North Shore and the CBD. The project's business case, evaluated by Infrastructure Australia, calculated a benefit-cost ratio of 1.3 (i.e. \$1.30 of economic returns for every \$1

invested). When wider economic 'city shaping' benefits are also included, the project's BCR increases to 1.7.

Sydenham-Bankstown corridor revitalisation

The NSW Department of Planning & Environment has released a revised Urban Renewal Corridor Strategy for the 13.5 km Sydenham-Bankstown corridor. The NSW government aim is to renew and reinvigorate the corridor with the potential to deliver more than 35,000 new homes and 8500 jobs in 11 precincts along the new Sydney Metro train line. Following extensive community consultation over the last 18 months, the 20-year vision for the Sydenham to Bankstown corridor has been updated and put on public exhibition. Details are at

<http://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/News/2017/Revitalisation-for-Sydenham-to-Bankstown-corridor>

Transport for NSW Train Operating Conditions

An updated edition of the Train Operating Conditions Manual for the Greater Sydney area has been published dated 27 April 2017. Volume 1 General Instructions contain many updates, mainly to details of rolling stock certified to run on the network. Volume 2 Division Pages (ie, track data) contains a few amendments. Although Volume 3 Track Diagrams has also been re-issued, there are no updates in this edition. They can be accessed at

<http://www.asa.transport.nsw.gov.au/ts/asa-standards#rolling-stock>

NSW TrainLink: Unusual train replacement 2 July

On 2 July, the train to form NT 31 XPT Sydney to Brisbane was cancelled after experiencing mechanical problems at the depot at Sydenham. Two hours after it was due to leave Sydney Terminal, Interurban sets V 1 and V 9 were used to convey passengers to Broadmeadow where they were placed on buses for the balance of their journey. The rear car was locked off and used as a luggage car. The train stopped only at Strathfield and Hornsby.

ARTC: Port Botany line

By June 55% of works for Stage 3 of the Port Botany Railway upgrade had been completed. This includes 1.5 kms of track reconditioning, 9.9 kms of concrete re-sleepering, 8.4 kms of new rail, 6 kms of new drainage, and two new retaining structures. \$75 billion of Federal funds have been spent for this and initial project funding for a scoping investigation into potential capacity enhancements for the Southern Sydney Freight Line/Metropolitan Freight Network, and a Cabramatta Loop, including construction design and geotechnical investigations. The government expects the project to be completed in September 2019.

ARTC WTT 7 July

The graphical version of ARTC's WTT of 7 July is now on their website at

<https://www.artc.com.au/customers/access/access-interstate/committed-capacity/wa-sa-vic/> and <https://www.artc.com.au/customers/access/access-interstate/committed-capacity/nsw/>

ARTC: Copper wire thefts

Thefts of copper wire on ARTC mainlines has become a problem for ARTC. For example, on 1 July there were thefts in the Hunter Valley. In the early morning of 4 July, thefts occurred along both lines near Yerrinbool on the Southern line. Three signals on the down line, and two on the up were affected, moving to the fail-safe position of Stop. Passenger trains were delayed about 15-25 minutes and freights about 25-40 minutes.

ARTC: South Control

From 10 July Network Control Centre South (NCCS) will introduce a day assist control board. The new Main South 'D' Control Board hours of operation will be 0700–1500 Monday to Friday but can be altered subject to operational requirements at the discretion of the Train Transit Manager NCCS. The new Main South 'D' Board will control from Medway Junction to Harden. During operation of the new control board, the Main South 'A' Board will control Berrima Junction to Medway Junction and Moss Vale to Unanderra.

South Coast line timetable gaps

For details of a new Nowra Coaches service that operates between Kiama and Bomaderry to fill gaps in the train timetable, see Bus News below.

Rail Motor Society

In recent years many railway enthusiast / heritage train operators have ceased operation. Those remaining

seem to have secure, nearby large markets, such as Puffing Billy in the Dandenong Ranges near Melbourne, or have found a market niche. Perhaps the most interesting of these is the Rail Motor Society, based at Paterson in the NSW Hunter Valley. Perhaps Rail Motors can be described as a "fringe interest of a fringe interest" (a term which has also often been used to describe the Australian Timetable Association). Nevertheless, the Society appears to be very successful. It operates its Rail Motors on tours on its own account. It also often hires them for tours to other enthusiast groups and community groups (for example, for local railway centenary celebrations). But its most interesting hirings are of Rail Motors to railway authorities themselves, The Australian Rail Track Corporation and Transport for NSW often hire the Society's Rail Motors for track inspections and radio testing. The most recent example was an ARTC inspection train in late May using Rail Motor HPC 402 – see ARTC Train Alteration Advice 840-2017. On 26 July this operated from the Rail Motor Society's siding at Paterson to Casino, then on 27 July from Casino to Acacia Ridge and return to Grafton City, then on 28 July from Grafton City past Paterson slightly onto Transport for NSW territory (Broadmeadow?) before returning to the Society's siding at Paterson. Another example is that on 27-29 and 31 May the Society's Rail Motors were hired by Transport for NSW to carry out radio testing.

What makes the Rail Motor Society particularly interesting is that it usually places the Train Alteration Advices (ARTC), Special Train Notices (Transport for NSW) and Country Train Notices (John Holland Rail) on its website, and these go back to 2009 – see http://www.railmotorsociety.org.au/tours_frame.htm

V/Line: 27 August timetables

The new V/Line public timetables from 27 August 2017 (as detailed in June *Table Talk*, pages 6-7) are now on the V/Line website at <https://www.vline.com.au/Timetables/Additional-pages/August-2017-Timetable-list>

RAIL: With the upgraded frequencies now applying, V/Line within the commuting zone is like a giant suburban system. Usual off-peak daytime frequencies, in minutes, are:

Line	Weekday day off-peak	Weekend day (less on Sunday morning)
Geelong	20	40
Ballarat	60 (and 60 to Bacchus Marsh)	60
Bendigo	60	60
Seymour	60-80	80
Traralgon	60	60

The long-distance lines now have the following number of trains (the supplementary buses vary slightly on some days):

Line	Weekdays	Weekends
Warrnambool	4	3
Ararat	4 down, 5 up (& 4 buses)	3 (3 bus Sat, 4 Sun)
Maryborough	2 (& 2 buses)	2 (& 1 or 2 buses)
Swan Hill	2 (& 2 buses)	2 (& 1 bus)
Echuca	1 (& 2 buses)	2 (& 1 bus)
Shepparton	4 (& 2 buses)	3 (& 1 bus Sun)
Albury	3 (& 2 NSW TrainLink & 1 bus)	3 (& 2 NSW TrainLink)
Bairnsdale	3 (& 2 buses)	3 Sat, 2 Sun (& 1 bus)

Additional / altered services are:

GEELONG: Weekdays Down 0730 Geelong, 1310 South Geelong, 1905 Wyndham Vale, evening Downs at 40 mins till 0015, and 0115 Tues – Sat.

Saturdays Down goes to 40 mins till 2110, then 45 mins till 0010 Sunday and 0110 Sunday.

Sundays Down 40 mins till 2110 then 60 till 0010 Mon. Weekdays Up 0835 ex Geelong, 1435 Up ex Geelong, 2026 Up ex Geelong.

Saturdays Up goes to 40 mins 0716 till 2236.

Sundays Up goes to 40 mins till 2116 and 2236.

BALLARAT: Weekdays Down evenings 40 mins till 2155 then 2255 and 2355 now M-F.

Saturdays Down Hourly from 0716 till 1916 then 2052, 2216, 2316, 0016 Sundays.

Sundays Down hourly from 0816 till 1916 then 2052, 2256.

ARARAT: Weekdays Down 0816, 1216, 1416, 1823.

Weekends Down 0816, 1216, 1816.

Weekdays Up 0618, 0715, 1226, 1449, 1649.

Saturdays 0715, 1115, 1610.

Sundays 0815, 1115, 1610.

BENDIGO: Weekdays Down evenings goes to 40 mins to 2102 then 2152, 2252 and 2352.

Saturdays Down hourly till 2225 then 2355.

Sundays Down Hourly to 2025 then 2225.

Saturdays Up Hourly till 1725 then 1842, 2009, 2127

Sundays Up Hourly till 1725 then 1838 and 2046.

SHEPPARTON: Saturdays and Sundays Down: 1252

Additional. Up: 1236 Additional

TRARALGON: Weekdays Down evenings 1938, 2044, 2144, 2300, 2359.

Weekdays Up: 1715, 1750, 1848, 1942, 2021.

Saturdays Down: generally hourly from midday till 1816 then 1935, 2135, 2305, 0005 Sun.

Sundays: Generally hourly from midday to 1816 then 1935, 2135 Up: Generally hourly to 1640 then 1803, 1849.

BUS: Changes noticed so far are:

The **Canberra Link** now departs Canberra ten minutes earlier at 0800 every day. The connection to the train is now advertised at Wodonga instead of at Albury. (Possibly this is because NSW TrainLink is reducing

staffing at Albury.) Northbound, the change is much greater. Connection is now made from the 0705 train from Melbourne (rather than from the 1205 train as formerly). The bus connection is made at Wodonga rather than Albury. Arrival in Canberra is at 1535, in place of the former time of 2025. Since this service was inaugurated in October 1988 it has always departed Melbourne at around midday (at least on weekdays). The northbound change means that both northbound and southbound NSW TrainLink and V/Line Canberra-Melbourne services now run at similar times.

The **Capital Link** via Gippsland is also substantially altered. The Tuesday and Friday departures from Canberra now leave much earlier at 0740, instead of at 1135. This means that the bus to train connection is now made at Traralgon rather than at Bairnsdale. Arrival in Melbourne is now at 1935 instead of 2222. The Sunday School Holidays only southbound and northbound services (Mondays and Thursday, plus School Holiday Saturdays) are only altered to a minor extent.

The westbound **Adelaide Daylink** runs earlier. It now departs Bendigo at 0940 every day, instead of at 1050. This means that on Sundays, it departs Bendigo before the first train from Melbourne has arrived (which is the Swan Hill train at 1005). So, whether for this reason, or to provide an additional service to Bendigo, or both, the bus on Sundays originates in Melbourne at 0730, and runs through all the way. Arrival in Adelaide every day is now at 1850 instead of at 1920. The eastbound Daylink leaves Adelaide 25 minutes earlier at 0650. The extra time is taken up by refreshment stops at Tintinara and St Arnaud.

Colac (on the Warrnambool line) now has an early morning bus departing at 0615 to Geelong (train connection at Waurn Ponds). It was as recently as 29 January 2017 that the train service on this line was increased from three to four trains daily on weekdays. There has long been an afternoon Geelong-Colac bus, which was unbalanced. This now runs earlier, departing Geelong at 1620 (connecting from the 1510 train), instead of at 1745, giving a better spread of services.

The public timetables are in a clearer, easier-to-read format.

V/Line Albury line

Victorian Premier Daniel Andrews has “re-confirmed” his promise to North-East train travellers that upgraded rolling stock will be forth-coming once major track upgrades are completed. Mr Andrews initially made the commitment on his most recent visit to the region in April before discussion with the Federal government ensued over the amount dedicated to track upgrades. The Federal and State governments increased funding from \$100 million to \$140 million and Mr Andrews confirmed V/Line and the ARTC were in talks about upgrades. The \$100 million commitment from the Federal government will improve ride quality between Albury and Melbourne and a further \$40 million will be spent on station upgrades at Wallan and Donnybrook.

The latter investment is to facilitate standard gauge V/ocity trains between Melbourne and Seymour.

V/Line: Real-time information

Real-time platform information is now available on the V/Line website and smartphone app. This gives passengers details about the arrival and departure platforms at Southern Cross station. Information is available 30 minutes before a train's departure. The real-time platform information can be accessed on the V/Line smartphone app, by using the Next 5 feature or by selecting Arrivals & Departures from the dropdown menu as well as from the Arrivals & departures section on the home page of the V/Line website. The new platform feature is supported by the real-time screens installed at 33 regional stations.

Metro Trains Melbourne: 27 August timetable

From Sunday 27 August altered timetables will be introduced with some additional weekday peak services:

- From Craigieburn at 0704 arriving at Flinders St at 0750.
- From Flinders St at 1717, traveling direct via Southern Cross, arriving at Craigieburn at 1811.
- From Sunbury at 0648 arriving at Flinders St at 0738:
- From Flinders St at 1630 arriving at Sunbury at 1722.
- From Werribee at 0815, arriving at Flinders St at 0854.
- From Flinders St at 1718, arriving at Werribee at 1758.
- Passengers on the Altona loop will no longer need to change at Newport to reach the city during inter-peak periods as all trains will be extended to run direct to Flinders St.
- The existing 0815 train from Greensborough now begins at Eltham at 0808.
- The existing 0823 train from Heidelberg now begins at Greensborough at 0811.
- The Frankston line timetable has been adjusted to accommodate additional services on other lines and to incorporate the new Southland station.

Metro Trains Melbourne: WTT Network Configuration Manual

On 31 March Metro Trains' Working Timetable System Description (WTT Addenda) was superseded by the Working Timetable Network Configuration Manual. This is in eight parts: Governance, System Description, Network Boundaries, Line Description, Line Speeds, Ruling Grade Loads, Metro Rolling Stock, and Third Party Rolling Stock.

Metro Trains Melbourne: Complete failure 13 July

Scenario: *A major city of 4.6 million, heavily dependent on its railway network, which completely fails just as the peak period is starting on a busy weekday on a cold winter evening.*

Reality: All of the above in Melbourne on Thursday 13 July.

A computer fault brought the entire Melbourne suburban train system to a halt just after 1600 on Thursday 13 July. A Metro Trains spokesperson said the catastrophic system failure was due to a computer fault. He said many of the trains were able to be brought back to nearby stations, but an unknown number stuck between stations. Some were stuck in the City Loop. Metro could not identify the cause of the problem. Metro Trains chief executive Mike Houghton ruled out hackers as the cause of the widespread outage. Metro said the Train Control and Monitoring System suffered a total shutdown, and the backup Disaster Recovery System Centre also lost power. Asked how this could occur, Metro could only "sincerely apologise" to passengers for the disruption and frustration. With the system down, train controllers were staring at blank screens and literally did not know where in the network Melbourne's trains were, so all trains were brought to a halt for safety's sake. Trains pulled up, either at platforms or in between stations, and sat there while staff in Metro's nerve centre raced to identify the problem and get the system back on line. It took well over an hour, leaving tens of thousands of commuters stranded on their way home from work. Metro says it will conduct a full investigation into what happened. Crowd control measures were in place at Southern Cross Station and City Loop stations.

The system that failed is called TCMS and it cost \$88 million. It was years in the making - first proposed in 1999 and only switched on 15 years later, in 2014, after interminable delays. It was meant to improve the reliability of Melbourne's public transport system.

When all the trains stopped, Metro Trains released a series of tweets and urged commuters to seek alternative transport. Metro was forced to plead with commuters stuck between stations not to attempt to open the doors of their train. After about 45 minutes some trains started running.

After the train shutdown, **Yarra Trams** also reported major delays on its lines due to demand.

One commuter at Flinders St described the scene as "chaotic". He said it was confusing, as timetable screens were blank, even though lines had resumed. "The trains are being announced as they arrive," he said.

Commuters reported seeing Uber prices surge after the delays. The Uber surcharge was hiked to 3.6 times immediately after the outage. One Uber user claimed Uber was charging \$130 for a trip to Cheltenham and \$200 for the 27-km trip to Caroline Springs.

V/Line trains were also affected where it uses Metro tracks for the Bendigo, Seymour and Gippsland lines.

VicRoads issued a warning for drivers to avoid boom gates as some were down for long periods where stopped trains were within the level crossing activation zones.

Metro Trains' website crashed, further adding to the chaos.

Train passengers resorted to running from platform to platform in hope of finding a service.

Public Transport Minister Jacinta Allen said that what happened was unacceptable and said the contract with Metro Trains allowed for penalties to be applied. She said the backup system also failed, but it was the first time this total system failure had ever happened.

On 13 July, Metro Trains said that travelers could apply for re-imbursement by filling out a form, subject to consideration on a "case-by-case basis". Next day, at State government direction, that was changed to automatic refunds to all who were affected. Passengers who touched on between 1500 and 1900 would be reimbursed for the cost of their two-hour fare. The total compensation cost will be about \$627,000.

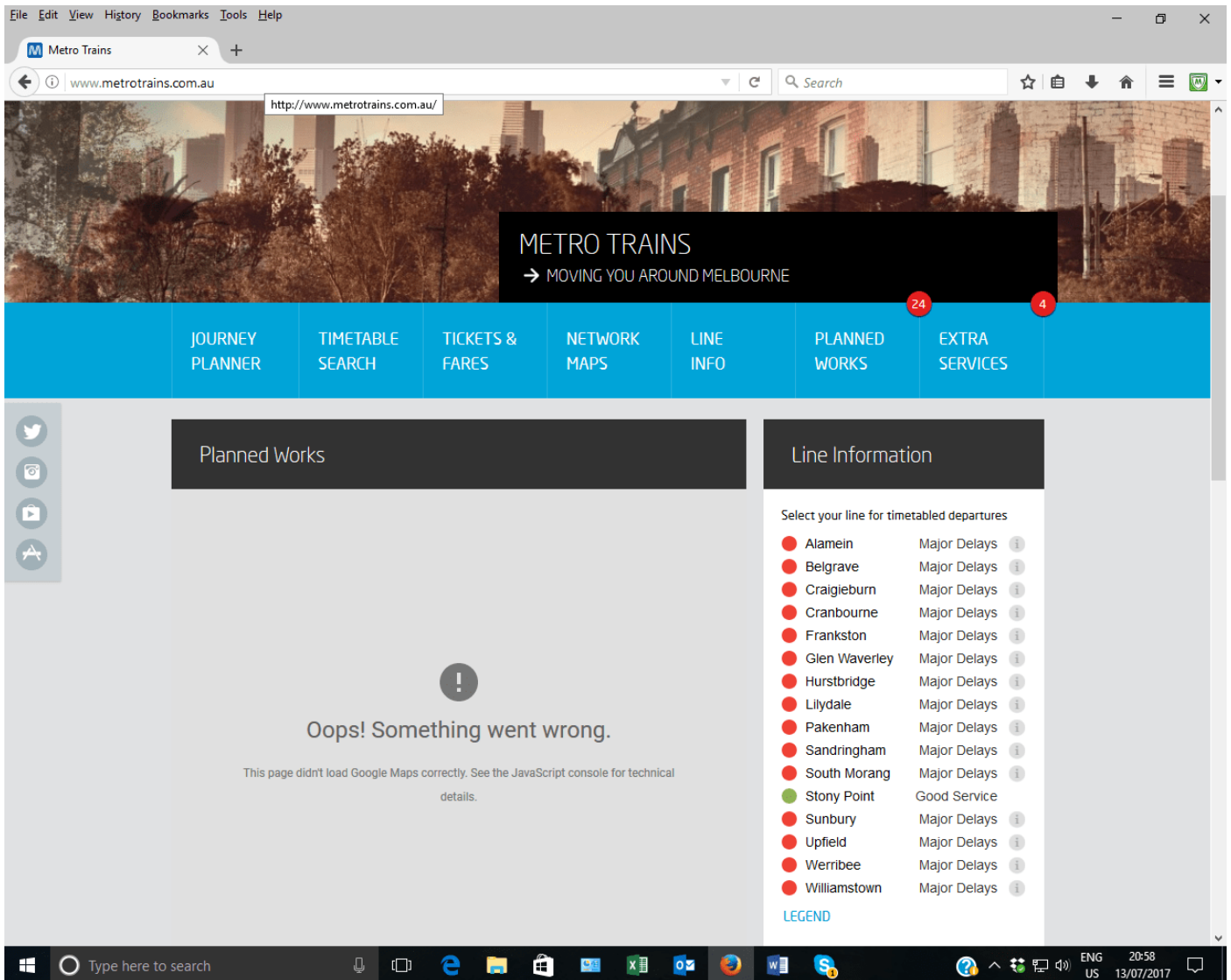
The train meltdown could not have come at a worse time - both for passengers, because it happened on the cusp of peak hour, and for Metro, because the State government was believed to be on the verge of announcing it will hand Metro a seven-year contract extension.

Metro Trains could face fines and penalties for the crippling network shutdown, according to Ms Allan and she had already held talks with public transport officials about it.

Metro chief executive Mike Houghton said they had never had a failure like this before on a train control system and he expected they would take "a hit" in terms of penalty. "The fines and penalties are worked out every month. It does happen every week by routine. So the hit we had yesterday is a very large hit on our performance bonus."

Ms Allan said she had ordered a "comprehensive investigation" into what happened, calling it "unacceptable, infuriating and frustrating. It does need to be recognised that this was an unacceptable impact on passengers and the investigation needs to consider that as well as what happened," she said.

Luba Grigorovitch, the secretary of the Rail, Tram and Bus Union, claimed there was no backup system and the one that failed had over 1,400 faults. "Metro haven't provided for any software or hardware backup systems. We know for a matter of fact that there's 1,400 faults with this new system that's been put in place by Metro," she said.



The Metro Trains' website at 2100 on 13 July. By then, trains were running again, but with considerable disruption.

Metro Trains Melbourne: Murrumbeena closure

While works take place as part of the Caulfield to Dandenong Level Crossing Removal Project, Murrumbeena station will be temporarily closed from 17 June for up to 11 weeks. During this time, trains will run express through the closed station and replacement buses will operate express between Caulfield and Murrumbeena stations. A shuttle service will operate from Murrumbeena to Carnegie and Hughesdale stations.

Yarra Trams: Tram Route Guides

Yarra Trams has issued Tram Route Guides – undated other than a small, hard-to-find “17” - comprising a diagrammatic map of the system, plus for the routes within each set, details of frequencies, and details of stops. The routes have been grouped into the Guides by the depot that operates the routes. So, where two depots share operations, routes are listed in two guides (routes 6 and 58). This also causes other anomalies: Route 96 does not appear with other northern routes in Guide A. Four eastern routes – 3, 5, 6 and 67 - are divided between Guides E and F. A major deficiency is the omission of road names along the tram routes outside the CBD. As with previous route guides, these guides give no indication of how long it takes to travel along any route. The Guides are:

Set A: Routes 1 East Coburg-South Melbourne Beach, 6 Moreland-Glen Iris, 11 West Preston-Victoria Harbour Docklands, 86 Bundoora RMIT-Waterfront City Docklands.

Set B: Routes 57 West Maribyrnong-Flinders St station, 58 West Coburg-Toorak, 59 Airport West-Flinders St station and 82 Moonee Ponds-Footscray.

Set C: Routes 3 Melbourne University-East Malvern weekdays, 3a Melbourne University-East Malvern weekends (via St Kilda Beach). 64 Melbourne University-East Brighton, 67 Melbourne University-Carnegie.

Set D: Routes 48 North Balwyn-Victoria Harbour Docklands, 70 Wattle Park-Waterfront City Docklands, 75 Vermont South-Etihad Stadium Docklands, 78 North Richmond-Balaclava, 109 Box Hill-Port Melbourne.

Set E: Routes 5 Melbourne University-Malvern, 6 Moreland-Glen Iris, 16 Melbourne University-Kew, 58 West Coburg-Toorak, and 72 Melbourne University-Camberwell.

Set F: Routes 12 Victoria Gardens-St Kilda, 30 St Vincent's Plaza-Etihad Stadium Docklands, 35 City Circle, and 96 East Brunswick-St Kilda Beach.

Copies can be obtained from the ATA June Distribution List.

Victoria: Wheat deliveries

Road deliveries to Victorian ports exceeded rail this year with one company seeing a road transport

increase of around 20% during the past harvest. Industry leaders say the shift is costing the industry, with increased transport costs and grain sold out of other states. Grain marketing and supply chain company Emerald Grain is one company that saw a large shift from rail to road over the last harvest. Regional manager Brad Cullen said they used 60 per cent road transport, where they would normally have used 60% rail. "It's certainly more road than we would like. But due to rail issues we've had to push it that way to get the grain in." Heat restrictions and a week-long strike at rail company Pacific National were part of the reason more grain was transported by road. Mr Cullen said they had to maintain their rail contracts while also paying for extra road access. "We have actually relaxed our sales program given the fact we've had issues getting grain to port," he said. The managing director of Wakefield Transport, Ken Wakefield, said a lack of investment in rail infrastructure affected every grain grower. "It's about every single grain grower out there that relies on the rail to send their grain to market," he said. Mr Wakefield said a lack of infrastructure spending was behind the shift. "What government needs to do is ensure they have funding, major program maintenance for the freight network. Because successive previous governments haven't done this and what happens is you have a freight deficit." Victorian Farmers Federation grains group president Ross Johns has been campaigning for more spending on rail since he took over the role earlier this year. "It's a significant issue for the industry if the buyers of the grain can't actually deliver it to the market place — that impacts on the entire industry and the growers directly. There was some other business that was shifted from Victoria to other states, being South Australia and Western Australia." Mr Johns said one possible solution was for transport companies to invest in trucks with larger capacities. "It's going to be essential for the industry to look towards A-double and B-triple truck movements. We should have them in Victoria to move grain to port in a more efficient fashion."

Adelaide Metro: Major closures

The Outer Harbor, Grange and Gawler Central lines were closed on the weekends of 10-12 (Queen's Birthday Long Weekend) and 22-23 July to allow works for the Torrens Rail Junction Project.

Adelaide Metro: Tram extension

A consortium of Downer EDI Works and York Civil has won a contract to construct four new stops – one on King William Road, and three along North Terrace, and rebuild the intersection between the two roads to provide additional turning movements for trams. The SA Government has allocated an additional \$10 million to the project, bringing the total cost to \$80 million, to allow for the intersection work, and for the tram track along King William Road to be extended a further 100 metres north than originally proposed, to improve disability access and enhance pedestrian connectivity. Work is scheduled to be completed by early 2018, weather permitting.

Transwa Eastern line timetables 3 July

New timetables dated 3 July have been issued for the Transwa's Prospector, AvonLink and MerredinLink passenger trains. The schedules are a return to what prevailed before the trial of the augmented AvonLink service (see *July Table Talk*, page 5), plus the insertion of stops at Koolyanobbing for the Prospector trains – the timetables are available at <http://www.transwa.wa.gov.au/Bookings-and-fares/Timetables#Rail-All-4>

WA rail access

WA Treasurer Ben Wyatt has announced a review into the state's Rail Access Regime, to "identify possible improvements" to its operation. The Government is welcoming stakeholder comments, with public submissions open until 8 September. The main issues discussed in the paper are:

- balance of power in negotiations
- accountability
- capacity expansions and extensions
- pricing mechanisms
- marginal rail routes
- greenfield developments
- vertically integrated rail networks in the Pilbara
- consistency with the National Access Regime.

The review is intended to take a broader scope than previous reviews conducted by the Economic Regulation Authority, but will aim to address the recommendations of the ERA reviews, in the context of potential broader reforms. The WA Rail Access Regime has been in operation for over 15 years. Its defined purpose is "to encourage the efficient use of, and investment in, railway facilities by facilitating a contestable market for rail operations".

The Issues Paper is available at http://www.treasury.wa.gov.au/Treasury/News/Review_of_the_Western_Australian_rail_access_regime/

Arc Infrastructure: WA rural network

On 11 July, Brookfield Rail, the Canadian-owned engineering company responsible for managing the WA rural rail network, renamed its WA operations Arc Infrastructure. It says that the new name will help distinguish it from its parent company, Brookfield, which has major stakes in several other infrastructure companies, including Pacific National. Its new website

Corridor protection

On 7 July Infrastructure Australia launched a policy paper advocating that Australian governments act to protect vital infrastructure corridors and avoid cost overruns, delays and community disruption when delivering new infrastructure. The third paper released as part of Infrastructure Australia's *Reform Series*, *Corridor Protection: Planning and investing for the long term* shows that protection and early acquisition of seven corridors identified as national priorities on the Infrastructure Priority List could save taxpayers close to \$11 billion in land purchase and construction costs. These strategic corridors are: East Coast High Speed Rail, Outer Sydney Orbital road, Outer Melbourne Ring road, Western Sydney Airport Railway, Western

www.arcinfra.com has similar content to the former Brookfield website.

Watco WA expands

Watco Western Australia has been the operator since March 2012 of grain trains for CBH, the WA bulk grain handling company, Watco WA is a subsidiary of Watco America. Watco WA has now expanded its business in WA by winning contracts for the operation of infrastructure trains for Arc Infrastructure, the WA rural railway infrastructure controller. These have operated since December 2016.

Rio Tinto: Driverless trains

Rio Tinto says AutoHaul—the US\$518 million automation of its Pilbara iron ore heavy-haul rail network—is progressing well, with about 20% of all train-miles now operating in autonomous mode, albeit with on board locomotive engineers managing certain safety and reliability systems. Improvements to system performance continue, and reports suggest that Rio Tinto anticipates 100% of its network will be fully driverless by the end of 2018. Rio Tinto says that, when completed and fully operational, AutoHaul will be the world's first fully-autonomous, heavy-haul, long-distance freight railway.

Rio Tinto first floated the concept in 2008, but there have been delays in implementing the technology. The company is investing in automation and other improvements to its heavy-haul lines in the Pilbara so that it can increase capacity without the need to purchase additional rolling stock. Testing of AutoHaul started in 2014, and throughout 2015, AutoHaul-fitted locomotives were tested on the network to evaluate onboard systems, signaling, safety mechanisms and communications with the Rio Tinto operations center in Perth. The center enables all the company's mines, ports and rail systems to be operated from a single location.

Releasing its second quarter production results, Rio Tinto says its Pilbara iron ore shipments reached 77.7 million tons in the second quarter, despite being impacted by an increase in its track maintenance program following poor weather in the first quarter. Total volumes for 2017 are forecast to reach around 330 million tons, which takes into consideration first-half production and the additional track maintenance.

Sydney Freight Line, Hunter Valley Freight Line, and Port of Brisbane Freight Line. The paper can be accessed at http://infrastructureaustralia.gov.au/news-media/media-releases/2017/2017_07_07.aspx

Veolia Auckland

Auckland's booming commuter rail network could get 17 battery-powered trains to replace diesel units at a cost of \$NZ 207 million. These would run from Britomart to Pukekohe as electric trains, then continue with battery power to Pukekohe. The batteries would recharge on the electric line from Britomart to Papakura.

Mayor Phil Goff is backing the purchase, which meets an election promise to provide battery-powered trains to Pukekohe. Once the line to Pukekohe is electrified

by 2025, the trains could be used to extend rail services to Huapai and Kumeu on the western line. "The proposal for the new trains stacks up and will help meet the growth in rail patronage, which is growing at 17% a year and due to increase from 18 million passengers in June this year to 21.9 million passengers by the middle of 2019" [sic], he said.

The new trains would also provide resilience during construction of the \$NZ 3.4b City Rail Link when there will be disruption to overhead power lines. The project will only proceed if the NZ Transport Agency agrees to pay at least 50% of the purchase price and running costs, and Auckland Transport reprioritises its capital works programme to provide \$NZ 50 million funding over three years.

KiwiRail: South Island reconstruction

Reconstruction works on the earthquake damaged Picton to Christchurch line are nearing completion, with only 10 kms of rail still requiring repairs before trains will be able to operate over the whole length of the 348-km line. The final 10 km includes some of the toughest jobs since the earthquake in November 2016, according to KiwiRail's general manager of network services, Todd Moyle. Their completion will allow work trains to work along the entirety of the line for the first time. "Having work trains operating on the line will be a significant achievement in itself and is a key step in getting the Main North Line re-opened for freight services. We are unable to put a firm date on the re-opening yet, but we will get the freight trains running again as quickly as is safely possible."

KiwiRail estimates that the Coastal Pacific passenger train will not return for the 2017-18 summer season.

The Main North Line between Picton and Christchurch is a critical section of the network connecting freight movements between New Zealand's North and South Islands, with over 1 million tonnes of freight being carried along its length between Picton and Christchurch before the earthquake last year.

Japan Freight Timetable

The Japan Rail Freight Association publishes a Cargo Timetable which is sold publicly. The 2017 edition is illustrated.



Thanks to Tony Bailey, Paul Brown, Scott Ferris, Geoff Hassall, Victor Isaacs, Geoff Lambert, Dennis McLean, Len Regan, Lourie Smit, www.railexpress.com.au, www.railpage.com.au, *Railway Digest*, *Semaphore* (Signalling Record Society of Victoria), *Transit Australia*, *Age*, *Australian*, *Courier-Mail*, *Daily Telegraph*, *Financial Review*, *Herald Sun*, *New Zealand Herald*, *Sydney Morning Herald* for Rail news.

BUS NEWS

Australian Capital Territory

ACTION: To allow for Light Rail stage 1 construction works, stops near Exhibition Park, Mitchell were permanently closed from Friday 30 June. Bus diversions were in place around Flemington Road (via Sandford St) as closures took place for Light Rail works after 2000 from Sunday 16 July to Wednesday 19 July.

New South Wales

Sydney: Chatswood-Epping interim services: See item in the Rail News above.

New Northern Beaches Bus Network (late 2017)

This report supplements the earlier information concerning the new Northern Buses Network. Below is a route list for the new network, with stopping patterns for express services. Also, some analysis of the new network is provided.

City Services

- B Line Stops Wynyard, Neutral Bay Junction, Spit Junction, Manly Vale, Brookvale, Dee Why, Collaroy, Narrabeen, Warriewood, Mona Vale, Newport (10 minute frequency Mon to Fri off-peak, 5 minute to Mona Vale, 10 minute to Newport peak). L90 Wynyard-Palm Beach operates hourly weekdays 0900-1500, weekends 0700-2200. L90 stops Neutral Bay Junction, Spit Junction, Brookvale, Dee Why, Collaroy, all stops from Narrabeen.
- E65 Wynyard-South Curl Curl via Freshwater, E66 Wynyard-Skyline Shops, Frenchs Forest via Allambie Heights, E76 Wynyard-Dee Why Beach via North Curl Curl, E77 Wynyard-Dee Why via Wingala. 178 Wynyard-Cromer Heights, E78 Wynyard-Cromer Heights, E79 Wynyard-Wheeler Heights; E65, E66, E76, E77, E78, E79 stop Neutral Bay (Big Bear

- Shops outbound, Watson St inbound), Cremorne Junction, all stops from Manly Vale.
- E68 Wynyard-North Balgowlah, E71 Wynyard-Manly via Clontarf and Balgowlah Heights. E75 (new) Wynyard-Brookvale via Sydney Road & Condamine St. E68, E71, E75 stop Neutral Bay Junction, all stops from Spit Junction.
- 169 Wynyard-Manly via Narraweena, E69 Wynyard-Narraweena, E70 Wynyard-Manly via Balgowlah. E69, E70 stop Neutral Junction, Spit Junction, all stops from Seaforth.
- 180 Wynyard-Collaroy Plateau, E80 Wynyard-Collaroy Plateau, E83 Wynyard-Elanora Heights, E85 Wynyard-Mona Vale via Warriewood Valley. E80, E83, E85 stop Neutral Bay Junction, Brookvale and all stops from Dee Why.
- E88 Wynyard-North Avalon, E89 Wynyard-Avalon via Bilgola Plateau. E88, E89 stop Neutral Bay Junction and all stops from Narrabeen.
- Wynyard to: 243 Spit Junction via North Cremorne, 244 Chowder Bay, 245 Balmoral Beach, 246 Balmoral Heights, 247 Taronga Zoo, 248 Seaforth, 249 Beauty Point.
- City-Bridge St :to 201 Cammeray, 263 Crows Nest via Cammeray
- Night services. Queen Victoria Building to: 151 Mona Vale via Manly, 188 Avalon.
- M30 Spit Junction-Sydenham.

North Sydney/Milsons Point Services

- Milsons Point to: 168 North Balgowlah, 173 Narraweena, 227 Mosman Junction, 228 Clifton Gardens, 229 Beauty Point, 230 Mosman Wharf.
- E50 All stops Milsons Point to Miller Street, then Neutral Bay (Big Bear Shops outbound, Watson St inbound), all stops from Seaforth to Manly.
- E54 (new) All stops Milson Point to Neutral Bay Junction, then Spit Junction, Manly Vale, Brookvale, Dee Why, Collaroy, Narrabeen, Warriewood, Mona Vale.

Manly Feeder Services

- Manly to: 132 Brookvale via Balgowlah Heights and North Balgowlah, 136 Chatswood via Dee Why and Frenchs Forest, 139 Brookvale via Freshwater & South Curl Curl, 142 Skyline Shops via Allambie Heights, 143 Chatswood via St Leonards, 144 Chatswood via Royal North Shore Hospital, 146 (new) Wheeler Heights, 158 Cromer, 159 Dee Why via Wingala, 199 (new) Palm Beach (weekday frequency 15 minutes to Avalon, 30 minutes to Palm Beach, weekend frequency 15 minutes to Palm Beach).
- 135 Brookvale-North Head.

Other Feeder Services

- 137 Chatswood-Bantry Bay.
- 155 Narrabeen-Bayview Garden Village via Narrabeen Peninsula.

- 156 Mona Vale-McCarrs Creek.
- 182 Narrabeen-Mona Vale via Elanora Heights (now via Samuel St, Parkland Road and Waratah St).
- 185 Brookvale-Mona Vale via Warriewood Valley.
- 191 Avalon-Bilgola Plateau.
- 192 Avalon-Stokes Point.
- E60 Chatswood-Mona Vale.
- 225 Neutral Bay Wharf-Cremorne Wharf.
- 236 Spit Junction-South Mosman Wharf.
- 238 Zoo Wharf-Balmoral Beach.
- 257 Chatswood-Balmoral Beach.
- 269 McMahons Point-Kirribilli.

Note: The B Line service operating Monday to Friday at a ten minute frequency from the City to Newport replaces the 30 minute L85 operating limited stops to Warringah Mall, 30 minute L88 and 30 minute L90 both operating limited stops to Narrabeen. The problem is that passengers for intermediate stops between B Line stops, Warriewood Valley and Palm Beach will need to transfer to 199 Manly-Palm Beach (15 minutes to Avalon, 30 minutes to Palm Beach) or 185 Warringah Mall-Mona Vale via Warriewood Valley (possibly 30 minutes). L90 will continue to operate, but at a 60 minute frequency. For example, visitors to Sydney staying at the Narrabeen Lake Holiday Park at North Narrabeen often catch the bus to the city, but instead of getting a direct L90 service will now usually need to get a Warringah Mall or Manly bus to Narrabeen and change to the B Line, then reverse the process on their return. Thus, B Line will serve discrete stops like stations on a railway line. In the new network "L" services have been discontinued except for the limited operation of L90.

Newcastle Transport: issued seven timetables dated 1 July 2017: Stockton Ferry plus night route 118, and seven area timetables for routes:

- 100, 104, 106, 107 and 111.
- 201.
- 222, 224, 225.
- 226, 230, 231, 235.
- 310, 313, 317, 318, 320, 322.
- 334, 339, 363.349, 350, 352.

Their website says there are eight - there were eight previously with separate timetables for routes 317 and 322 in a separate timetable and routes 104 and 363 in separate timetables. They may not have updated their count after the amalgamations. There do not appear to be significant changes from the previous Newcastle timetables.

Nowra Coaches: A new weekday route 737 bus service operates between Kiama and Bomaderry stations commenced in July for a 12 month trial. This is to fill gaps in the train timetable. It stops at Berry and Gerringong stations. Departures from Bomaderry at 0535, 0700, 1000, 1200, 1400 and 1935, and from Kiama station at 0800, 1000, 1300, 1500 and 2030.

Northern Territory

The new NT government restored free public transport travel for all Australian seniors from 1 July. This had been abolished in 2013.

Queensland

From 17 July new bus route 567 has run from Holmview to Beenleigh station hourly 0630-1830 on weekdays and 0730-1730 on Saturdays.

A strike by 800 Brisbane City Council bus drivers on Friday 28 July from 1400 until 1800 is estimated to have affected about 100,000 passengers. The Council was offering a 2.5% wage increase and the union was seeking 3.5%.

Victoria

Public Transport Victoria has issued a series of pamphlets entitled *Explore the World of Melbourne by Bus* containing publicity and maps for particular areas. Unfortunately, there is nothing on the front or back cover, or even at the first unfold, to identify which area is covered. This can only be identified by fully unfolding the pamphlet. Three issues have been sighted:

- Footscray (November 2016);
- Port Melbourne/South Melbourne/St Kilda (March 2017); and
- Wyndham/Werribee (March 2017).

Copies can be obtained from the ATA June Distribution List.

V/Line: Additions and alterations to V/Line bus services from 27 August are set in the Rail News section above.

Gippsland Bus Services: With the new Victorian timetables of 27 August, timed to start with the V/Line timetable of that date, the Cowes-Anderson-Wonthaggi route has been reduced to only one weekday return service between Cowes and Wonthaggi, plus a “pre-booked” service on Fridays. Formerly, there were five daily return services (four on weekends). However, the buses from Cowes to Anderson that connect with the Inverloch-Melbourne buses are still shown as running on the V/Line timetable, marked “Private coach service”.

27 August timetable updates

Coinciding with the new timetables being introduced by Metro Trains and V/Line from 27 August, operators around the State will introduce updated bus timetables to maintain connectivity. Selected operators have also taken the opportunity to revise runtimes to ensure more reliable services, as noted below.

Frankston line Ventura:

- 705 (Mordialloc – Springvale)
- 708 (Carrum – Hampton)
- 709 (Mordialloc – Noble Park)
- 770 (Frankston – Karingal Hub)
- 771 (Frankston – Langwarrin)
- 772 (Frankston – Eliza Heights)
- 773 (Frankston – Frankston South)
- 774 (Frankston – Delacombe Park)

- 775 (Frankston – Lakewood)
- 776 (Frankston – Pearcedale)
- 778 (Kananook – Carrum Downs)
- 779 (Frankston – Belvedere)
- 780 (Frankston – Carrum)
- 781 (Frankston – Mt Martha)
- 782 (Frankston – Balnarring – Flinders)
- 784 (Frankston – Osborne)
- 785 (Frankston – Mornington East)
- 788 (Frankston – Portsea)
- 825 (Moorabbin – Southland)
- 832 (Frankston – Carrum Downs)
- 833 (Frankston – Carrum via Carrum Downs)
- 858 (Edithvale – Aspendale Gardens)
- 970 Night Bus (Carrum – Rosebud).

785 – School Days short working at 0800 ex Bentons Square to Mornington Secondary College now shown.
833 – Extended from Carrum Downs to Carrum via Wedge Road, McCormicks Road, Thompsons Road and McLeod Road. This introduces a long overdue bus service to Sandhurst; improves access to local shopping and schools; and allows Carrum Downs residents to connect with a station closer to the CBD, rather than backtracking to the end of the line at Frankston. The timetable has been offset with Route 708, providing a half-hourly combined headway between Carrum and Patterson Lakes on weekends, and roughly every quarter hour during the day Monday to Friday, although peak trips are not as well spaced. Unfortunately, weekday 833 trips to Frankston will now pass through Carrum Downs and Frankston North around the same time as the neighbouring 832 – traditionally trips were about 15 minutes apart.

Cranbourne Transit:

- 789 (Frankston – Langwarrin)
- 790 (Frankston – Langwarrin)
- 791 (Frankston – Cranbourne).

Wyndham and Altona area CDC Melbourne:

- 150 (Williams Landing – Tarneit)
- 151 (Williams Landing – Tarneit)
- 153 (Williams Landing – Werribee)
- 160 (Hoppers Crossing – Tarneit)
- 166 (Hoppers Crossing – Wyndham Vale)
- 167 (Hoppers Crossing – Tarneit)
- 170 (Werribee – Tarneit)
- 180 (Werribee – Tarneit)
- 181 (Hoppers Crossing – Werribee)
- 190 (Werribee – Wyndham Vale)
- 191 (Werribee – Wyndham Vale)
- 192 (Werribee – Wyndham Vale)
- 400 (Laverton – Sunshine) – *shared with Sita*
- 411 (Laverton – Footscray)
- 412 (Laverton – Footscray)
- 414 (Laverton – Footscray)
- 417 (Laverton – Laverton North)
- 439 (Werribee – Werribee South)
- 441 (Werribee – Westleigh Gardens)
- 443 (Werribee – South Werribee Loop)
- 494 (Williams Landing – Point Cook South)
- 495 (Williams Landing – Point Cook South)
- 496 (Laverton – Sanctuary Lakes)

- 497 (Williams Landing – Saltwater Coast)
 - 498 (Laverton – Hoppers Crossing).
- 161 – 1415 ex Hoppers Crossing M-F moved four minutes later better suiting bell times at Wyndham Central College.
- 167 – updates to runtimes around school times, with northbound trip moved later to suit The Grange College dismissal time.
- 181 – 1525 ex Mossfiel Drive M-F moved 15 minutes later due to regular late arrivals off Werribee Secondary College school trip
- 190 – No longer offer connections to all Geelong line trains at Wyndham Vale, although the majority are maintained. In particular, night services are timed to connect off train arrivals at Werribee. The final trip remains Friday night only, despite the 0115 train ex Southern Cross now running five nights a week.
- 400 – updated runtimes, with some full-length peak trips over ten minutes longer.

Ballarat line Bacchus Marsh Coaches:

- 433 (Bacchus Marsh – Hillview Estate)
 - 434 (Bacchus Marsh – Telford Park)
 - 435 (Bacchus Marsh – Darley)
- 433, 434 and 435 – Extra return trip in both peaks.

CDC Ballarat:

- 10 (Ballarat – Alfredton)
- 11 (Ballarat – Wendouree via Howitt St)
- 12 (Ballarat – Wendouree via Forest St)
- 13 (Ballarat – Invermay Park)
- 14 (Ballarat – Black Hill)
- 15 (Ballarat – Brown Hill)
- 20 (Ballarat – Canadian)
- 21 (Ballarat – Buninyong)
- 22 (Ballarat – Federation Uni)
- 23 (Ballarat – Mt Pleasant)
- 24 (Ballarat – Sebastopol)
- 25 (Ballarat – Delacombe)
- 26 (Ballarat – Alfredton)
- 30 (Ballarat – Creswick)
- 31 (Wendouree- Miners Rest).

Kastoria:

- 460 (Caroline Springs Station – Watergardens)
- 460 – Former 20 minute clockface headway interpeak now varies with gaps of between 12 and 28 minutes to try to meet increased trains stopping at Caroline Springs but connections off down Ballarat trains are just one minute!

Sita:

- 453 (Melton – Melton via Brookfield)
 - 455 (Melton – Micasa Rise)
 - 457 (Melton – Melton via Melton West)
 - 458 (Melton – Kurunjang)
 - 459 (Melton – Arnolds Creek)
- 453, 455, 457, 458 and 459 – Runtime adjustments.

Bendigo and Swan Hill line Christians Bus Company:

- 5 (Kangaroo Flat – Bendigo – Huntly)
- 50 (Bendigo – Epsom)
- 51 (Bendigo – Eaglehawk via Jackass Flat)
- 52 (Bendigo – Eaglehawk via Arnold St)
- 53 (Bendigo – Eaglehawk via Eaglehawk Road)

- 54 (Bendigo – Maiden Gully)
 - 60 (Bendigo – East Bendigo)
 - 61 (Bendigo – La Trobe Uni via Strathdale)
 - 62 (Bendigo – Spring Gully)
 - 63 (Bendigo – La Trobe Uni)
 - 65 (Bendigo – Spring Gully)
- 52, 53 and 63 - Runtime adjustments

Dysons Kyneton: Sunbury – Lancefield – Kyneton. This somewhat complex service, which connects with trains at Sunbury, Clarkefield, Riddells Creek and Gisborne depending on the time of day, now operates as a regional bus route rather than as a V/Line bus. This presumably is in preparation for the service to accept myki (myki is not valid on any V/Line bus routes). Long distance buses from Melbourne to Barham and Deniliquin continue to serve Romsey and Lancefield. Selected morning peak trips on the local route are now up to 30 minutes earlier to allow students to arrive into Sunbury by 0815 to connect with school buses.

Strathfieldsaye Transit (Whitmore Group):

- 70 (Bendigo – Strathfieldsaye)
- 71 (Strathfieldsaye Loop).

Sunshine Tours: 474 Gisbus (Gisborne)

Swan Hill Bus Lines: Swan Hill – Tooleybuc

Geelong and Warrnambool line CDC Geelong:

- 1 (North Shore – Deakin Uni via Geelong)
- 10 (Lara – Lara South – Corio Shopping Centre)
- 11 (Lara – Lara East)
- 12 (Lara – Lara West)
- 20 (Geelong – Corio Shopping Centre)
- 22 (Geelong – North Shore)
- 23 (North Shore – Corio Shopping Centre)
- 24 (Geelong – North Geelong)
- 25 (Geelong – Bell Post Hill)
- 43 (Geelong – Deakin Uni).

24 and 25 – Runtime updates

43 – Introduction of a deviation to Belmont Secondary College to cater for students living in Highton

McHarrys:

- 30 (Geelong – Whittington)
- 31 (Geelong – St Albans Park)
- 32 (Geelong – Leopold)
- 40 (Geelong – Deakin Uni via Breakwater)
- 41 (Geelong – Deakin Uni via Grovedale)
- 42 (Geelong – Deakin Uni via South Valley Road)
- 50 (Geelong – Jan Juc via Wombah Park)
- 51 (Geelong – Jan Juc via Torquay)
- 55 (Geelong – Ocean Grove)
- 56 (Geelong – Queenscliff)
- 60 (Geelong – St Leonards)
- 61 (Geelong – Drysdale).

Popes: Camperdown – Timboon

Seymour line Seymour Coaches Kilmore Town Service

Traralgon line Turnbulls: Traralgon – Yarram

Warragul Bus Lines (Dineen Group)

- 80 (Warragul – Warragul South)

- 81 (Warragul – Warragul North)
- 82 (Warragul – Warragul North)
- 83 (Warragul – Warragul East)
- 85 (Warragul – Drouin South)
- 86 (Drouin – Drouin North).

86 – Will operate directly along Albert Road rather than Armstrong St and Bennett St – this change appears to have already been implemented on an unknown date.

823 route change

State member for Bentleigh, Nick Staikos, announced at the end of June that Ventura route 823 (Southland – North Brighton) will be amended from late October to serve the Classic Residents Retirement Village on Thomas St, after residents' pleas for a closer bus stop than the existing half-kilometre walk. There will be consultation on further network changes in other parts of the Bentleigh electorate in the coming months, presumably including the controversial route changes in the vicinity of the Glen Eira Sports and Aquatic Centre on East Boundary Road.

SkyBus from Avalon to Geelong

Changes have taken place to the Avalon Airport shuttle from Geelong after Avalon Airport management refused to extend the access agreement for the Murrell Group, which had served the airport since commercial flights began in 2004, although exact circumstances remain unclear. After the Murrell Group announced they would stop their pre-booked shuttle service on 7 July, SkyBus introduced a replacement service at short notice from 10 July. SkyBus has only operated the Melbourne – Avalon Airport service since February, when they purchased the run from previous operator Sita. Airport management has indicated this is an interim arrangement, with a long-term contract to be awarded in around six months. SkyBus has reduced the one-way fare from \$22 to \$18, or \$34 return, compared to \$44 under Murrell. As with other SkyBus routes, children accompanied by adults travel free – previously a \$15 one-way fare applied. Unlike the Murrell Group service, SkyBus does not offer pick-ups from towns on the Bellarine Peninsula, Surf Coast or Great Ocean Road. Instead, an arrangement has been reached with Geelong Taxi Network to provide transfers at South Geelong station with flat fares. The service is also timetabled to stop at Geelong station for the first time. It will be interesting to see if Gull, the long-standing operator between Geelong and Tullamarine Airport, will bid for the long-term contract.

Castlemaine Bus Lines sold

On 1 July, the Whitmore Group expanded, acquiring Castlemaine Bus Lines from the Hansford family after 48 years of business. The Castlemaine operation consists of 22 buses on a range of Rural School, Urban, Intertown and Charter services to Castlemaine and the surrounding townships of Maldon, Harcourt and Taradale. The takeover marks the Whitmore Group's largest expansion to date. After humble beginnings in Boort in 1954 with a single school run, they would diversify into charter and tour services, gradually expanding with the acquisition of a further two school runs in Boort. In 2008 the company purchased Manleys of Serpentine as a partnership, later dissolving. The Manley's operation was subsequently rebranded to 'Loddon Transit', and in 2013 Strathfieldsaye Transit in Bendigo was purchased, marking the beginning of urban service operation.

Melton Highway detours

Work continued on the removal of the Melton Highway level crossing in Sydenham, from 1945 on 28 July until 30 July. Passengers for CDC Melbourne Route 425 (Watergardens – St Albans), Kastoria Routes 460 (Watergardens – Caroline Springs Station), 462 (Watergardens – Caroline Springs) and 476 (Moonee Ponds – Plumpton) were required to catch a shuttle bus from Sydenham Road side of Watergardens station to reach their bus at Overton Lea Boulevard (425), Goulary Road (460) or Calder Park Drive (462 and 476).

Route 605 Run Melbourne detours

Due to Run Melbourne marathon, CDC Melbourne Route 605 was diverted until midday 29 July and 1030 30 July. Inbound trips travelled via Alexandra Avenue, Punt Road, Toorak Road, St Kilda Road, Kings Way, King St, Collins St and Queen St, while Gardenvale trips deviated via Collins St, King St, Kings Way, Toorak Road West, Punt Road, Domain Road, Darling Road and Alexandra Avenue.

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AIR NEWS

International

On 30 June **Fiji Airways** launched twice weekly direct flights from Adelaide to Nadi. The airline also has direct flights from Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane.

Qantas will fly from Sydney to Osaka thrice weekly from 14 December to 24 March on Mondays, Thursdays and Saturdays. This is in response to the booming tourist market.

From mid-February 2018 **Qatar Airways** will extend its Doha-Sydney service to/from Canberra. Departure

from Doha will be daily at 0810, arriving Sydney 0615 next day and Canberra at 0825. Departure from Canberra will be daily at 1345, Sydney 1445-1555, arriving Doha at 2230. This will be the second international airline to regularly service Canberra.

Air New Zealand discontinued its direct Auckland to Norfolk Island flights in May. Air NZ was the only international airline serving this location. It said there were not enough passengers for the two-hour weekly flights. 13% of the Island's residents are NZ citizens.

The following are Australian airports where merely one international airline operated in **2016**:

Airport	Airline	Destinations	Passenger seats
Canberra	Singapore	Singapore, Wellington	62,444
Norfolk Island	Air New Zealand	Auckland (but see News item above).	17,386
Port Hedland	Virgin Australia	Denpasar	18,656
Sunshine Coast	Air New Zealand	Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch (all holiday periods only)	24,813
Townsville	Jetstar	Denpasar	55,260

The other Australian international airports in **2016**, according to the Bureau of Infrastructure and Transport Economics, were:

Airport	Airlines	Total passenger seats
Adelaide	Air NZ, AirAsiaX, Cathay Pacific, China Southern, Emirates, Jetstar, Malaysia, Qantas, Qatar, Singapore, Tigerair, Virgin.	1,157,569
Brisbane	Air Australia, Air Caledonia, Air Canada, Air NZ, Air Niugini, Air Vanuatu, British Airways, (AirAsiaX from 2017), Cathay Pacific, China Airlines, China Eastern, China Southern, Emirates, Etihad, Eva Air, Fiji Airways, Garuda Indonesia, Hawaiian, Jetstar, Korean Air, Malaysia, Nauru Airlines, Philippines, Qantas, Singapore, Virgin, Xiamen Airlines.	7,277,885
Cairns	Air NZ, Air Niugini, Airlines PNG, Cathay Pacific, China Eastern, China Southern, Continental Micronesia, Hong Kong, Jetstar, Jim Air, Philippines, Qantas, Silk Air, United.	1,056,718
Darwin	Indonesia, Jetstar, Jetstar Asia, Malaysia, Philippines, Qantas, Silk Air.	441,994
Gold Coast	Air NZ, AirAsiaX, Hong Kong, Jetstar, Qantas, Scoot, Virgin.	1,660,395
Melbourne	Air Australia, Air Calédonie, Air China, Air India, Air Mauritius, Air NZ, Air Vanuatu, AirAsiaX, Beijing Capital Airways, Cathay Pacific, China Airlines, China Eastern, China Southern, Emirates, Etihad, Fiji Airways, Garuda Indonesia, Hainan Airlines, Indonesia AirAsiaX, Jetstar, Korean Air, Malaysia, Philippines, Qantas, Qatar, Royal Brunei, Scoot, Sichuan, Singapore, Thai, Tigerair, United, Vietnam.	12,317,747
Perth	Air Mauritius, Air NZ, AirAsiaX, Cathay Pacific, China Southern, Emirates, Etihad, Garuda Indonesia, Indonesia AirAsia, Jetstar, Jetstar Asia, Malaysia, Mando Air, Philippines, Qantas, Qatar, Scoot, Singapore, South African, Thai, Tigerair, Tigerair Australia, Virgin.	5,792,942
Sydney	Aerolneas Argentina, Air Austral (based in Reunion), Air Caledonia, Air Canada, Air China, Air India, Air Mauritius, Air NZ, Air Niugini, Air Vanuatu, AirAsiaX, All Nippon, American, Asiana, British Airways, Cathay Pacific, Cebu Pacific Air, China Airlines, China Eastern, China Southern, Delta, Emirates, Etihad, Fiji Airways, Garuda Indonesia, Hainan Airlines, Haiyan, Indonesia AirAsiaX, Japan, Jetstar, Korean Air, LAN, Malaysia, Philippines, Qantas, Qatar, Scoot, Sichuan, Singapore, Solomon, Thai, United, Vietnam, Virgin Atlantic, Virgin Australia, Virgin Samoa, Xiaman.	19,786,098

Domestic

A \$7 billion proposal to build a privately-owned international **airport for Melbourne's south-east** was presented to the Victorian government in July. Paragon Premier Investment Fund proposes an airport between Koo Wee Rup and Lang Lang, to service Melbourne's booming south-eastern suburbs and the state's east.

Building Melbourne's third major airport is already part of the state government's long-term planning strategy and Paragon expressed interest in developing it earlier this year. But the plan has taken an important step towards becoming a reality, with Paragon's chairman Alande Mustafa Safi saying he last week received a signed letter of intent from an infrastructure financier pledging to bankroll the estimated \$7 billion airport.

The airport will not need any government funding, but the state will need to deem it a necessary piece of infrastructure for the capital partner to back it, Mr Safi said. The airport would initially have two runways and be around the size of Canberra Airport, which handles about 2.8 million passengers a year. Cargo flights could begin by 2020, followed by commercial domestic and international services in the two years beyond that, he said.

An airport in the area would have a catchment of about 1.5 million people, similar to the population of Adelaide, which has an airport servicing 7.8 million passengers a year. It would service a population of around 3 million by 2050. Mr Safi said there would be provisions to build two more runways and increase

passenger numbers beyond Tullamarine's 35 million a year as demand grew. However the initial focus would be on cargo, particularly exporting fresh produce overseas.

Melbourne Airport's chief executive Lyell Strambi has backed a Koo Wee Rup airport, telling reporters last week that Tullamarine would eventually reach its growth limit.

Federal Transport Minister Darren Chester said Commonwealth agencies would work with "any future

private sector proponents of the airport" on issues such as aviation safety, airspace protection and security. Infrastructure Victoria will advise the state government on feasibility while the Commonwealth is responsible for granting approval to run an airport.

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About *Table Talk*

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

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