TOP TABLE TALK – HUGE PLANS FOR MELBOURNE:
1. AIR RAIL MELBOURNE

On 16 September, the AirRail Melbourne consortium announced its proposal to build a railway to Melbourne airport within nine years at a cost of $15 billion. The cost would be split three ways: between the Victorian and Federal governments and the private consortium. There will be 27 kms of new track. Sunshine station will be upgraded to a "superhub" and a new underground station built at the airport. The consortium includes superannuation fund IMF Investors, Melbourne Airport, Metro Trains and Southern Cross station. It will contribute $5 billion to the plan. The Federal and Victorian governments will contribute $5 billion each, and the project would be built in six or seven years starting in late 2020 and opening a year after Melbourne Metro opens in 2027. There will be twin tunnels between Southern Cross and Sunshine along the state government's preferred route via Sunshine, a station beneath the airport forecourt to

take travellers directly into the terminals, and a major redevelopment of Southern Cross station.

The service will deliver a "reliable" 20-minute travel time from the CBD to the airport for $20, with around-the-clock services running every ten minutes. Trains would run 24/7 and would depart every ten minutes at peak periods. The tunnels will be used by the airport rail link for one third of the time and also provide for 16 more trains to Geelong, Ballarat and Bendigo an hour.

IFM Investors owns, operates and maintains Southern Cross station under a public private partnership (PPP) with the Victorian government. IFM Investors also owns a stake in Australia Pacific Airports Corporation, the privately-held corporation which owns and operates Melbourne Airport. Metro Trains Australia is the holding company of Metro Trains Melbourne and is a consortium of Hong Kong's MTR Corporation (60%), John Holland Group (20%) and UGL Rail (20%).

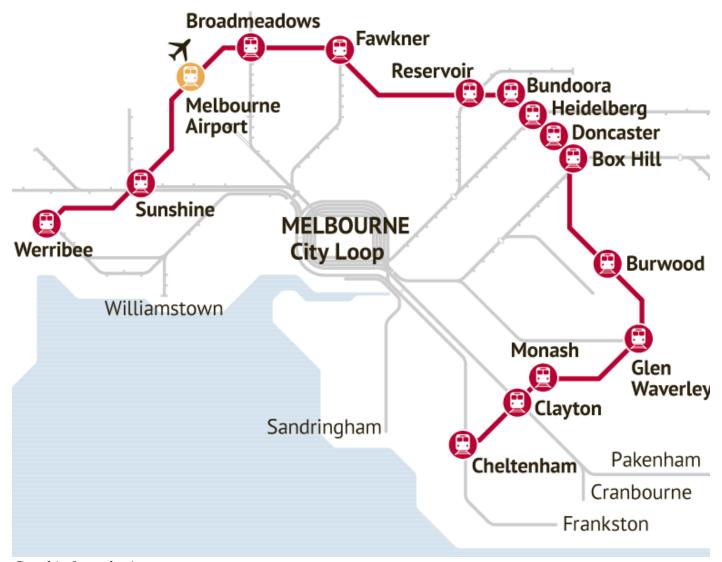## 2. THE RAILWAY TO CONNECT EVERYWHERE

On 28 August Victorian Premier, Daniel Andrews, announced that if his government is re-elected at the November State election, it will embark upon the biggest transformation of public transport in Australia's history, with a new 90 km underground rail line to circle Melbourne, connecting every train line and Melbourne Airport.

He said regional Victorian passengers will be big winners, thanks to regional super-hubs included in the project at Clayton, Broadmeadows and Sunshine, providing better access to jobs, education and health services outside the CBD – with 200,000 vehicles also forecast to be removed from our major roads. They will also be one stop away from Melbourne Airport via a regional super hub in Sunshine, providing the connection rail users need – a service that's set to be even faster, with a proposed high-speed rail connection currently under investigation thanks to a $50 million planning study.

The project will create up to 12 new underground train stations, linking into every existing major suburban and regional line. Stations will probably be at Cheltenham, Clayton, Monash, Glen Waverley, Burwood (not the

Alamein line location), Box Hill, Doncaster (giving Doncaster its long-awaited railway, but not on the expected alignment), Heidelberg, Bundoora, Reservoir, Broadmeadows, Melbourne Airport, Sunshine, (then partially on a surface alignment to) Werribee. Modelling projects strong patronage in both directions throughout the day, with 400,000 trips a day by 2051 set to make it Victoria's busiest rail line – alongside creating 20,000 jobs. A re-elected government will spend an initial $300 million in a full business case, planning and pre-construction works, with work on the first sections in Melbourne's south east between Cheltenham and Box Hill to begin by 2022. Exact station locations, route alignment, rolling stock, and staging will be confirmed through the full business case and technical work, including extensive consultation and environmental assessments.

A project of this massive scale – amongst the largest in the world – will be built over multiple decades, with the first sections expected to take around a decade of construction. State, Commonwealth and private sector contributions, as well as value capture opportunities, will be required to fund the project. Minister for Public Transport, Jacinta Allan, said, "This is the underground

train system a growing Victoria needs – connecting all Victorians to jobs, education, hospitals and shopping without needing to change trains in the CBD."

Graphic from the Age.

How the suburban rail loop would transform Melbourne
by Adam Carey, the Age, *29 August*

In 2050, the busiest rail line in Melbourne will be one that doesn't even exist yet, and perhaps won't for decades, the Andrews government says. The suburban rail loop – a 90-km orbital rail line through Melbourne's middle suburbs, mostly underground – is predicted to carry about 400,000 passengers a day. It will also shift about 200,000 cars a day off Melbourne's roads, almost as many as travel over the West Gate Bridge each day, government department Development Victoria predicts. It says it will "be a major step towards introduction of a genuine metro style of operation, connecting with every major rail line from the Frankston line to the Werribee line via Melbourne Airport".

The suburban rail loop could change the way people move around Melbourne, by putting hundreds of thousands of people within closer reach of jobs, study and services. It could radically redraw workers'

commuting patterns around Melbourne, an economics expert said. Terry Rawnsley, a partner at consultancy SGS Economics, said the proposed loop could expand people's job options. He gave the example of a nurse living in Fawkner who travels to the Royal Melbourne Hospital on the Upfield line. A rail loop would make the Austin Hospital in Heidelberg just as, if not more, accessible, he said. Mr Rawnsley said that although there were many unanswered questions about the cost and timing of the project, it did break away from the previous model of enlarging established transport corridors. "At the moment, travel engineers say there is X number of people driving on the Monash Freeway, or travelling on the Cranbourne-Pakenham rail corridor, so how do we make those routes wider so people can move faster?" Mr Rawnsley said "They don't think about how can we give people options for moving around the city."

Plan Melbourne, the state government's planning blueprint for Melbourne in 2050, lists a dozen employment "clusters" around the suburbs, and the rail loop would stop at four of them: Monash, Bundoora (servicing Latrobe), Sunshine and Werribee.

By the time the suburban rail loop is promised to be completed in 2050, Melbourne will have almost doubled in size. If official population projections are correct, it will be a city of 8 million people by 2050. That's an extra 1 million people every 10 years, or 100,000 new residents a year. But the truth is Melbourne's growth is outstripping government projections − more than 125,000 people moved here or were born here last year. Keep up that pace of growth, and Melbourne will be a city of 9 million by 2050. That's slightly bigger than greater London is today, and bigger than Asian mega-cities Hong Kong and Bangkok. Population growth has emerged as a sleeper issue in Victorian politics.

The vision of Melbourne as mega-city is one that makes many people wary; they worry about a city that is becoming too congested, too densely populated in some parts and too sprawling in others. Melburnians have become much more concerned about population growth since Daniel Andrews became Premier in November 2014, according to Ipsos quarterly surveys.

In four years, it has risen from a lowly ranking of 16th on a list of 19 issues Ipsos surveys Victorians about to our sixth biggest concern. But Tuesday's surprise announcement by Mr Andrews – that his government plans to build a massive underground rail loop - suggests that Melbourne is on an irreversible course towards mega-city status. Paris, population 12 million, has already started building a vast "ring rail" network beneath its suburbs, at an estimated cost of $61.3 billion.

Vincent Baumont, one of the project's directors, told the *Age* last year that this city would need one too. Development Victoria's strategic assessment of the project suggests a rail loop would unlock a huge boom in rail patronage.

Train travel makes up just 5% of trips in Melbourne, compared with 21% in London, the assessment says. But the underground stations of London and Paris service suburbs that are much more densely populated than Melbourne's middle ring.

Planning expert Professor John Stanley, from the University of Sydney, said the middle suburbs needed greater housing density to manage Melbourne's continued rapid population growth, and avoid condemning the city to worsening congestion and increased travel times. But Professor Stanley, who advised both the Napthine and Andrews governments on their urban blueprint Plan Melbourne, said no state government had yet shown the "courage" to follow through on that recommendation. The new rail loop "goes to the right places", he said. "But they'll have to go hell for leather to increase the density along that corridor, and along the radial corridors that connect to it, to make it work."

Plan Melbourne projects the city will have an extra 1.5 million homes by 2050. By Professor Stanley's reckoning, that should mean thousands of new homes will be built in middle suburbs including Glen Waverley, Burwood, Heidelberg, Fawkner and Broadmeadows. He conceded this could provoke a NIMBY backlash. The suburban rail loop could promote a new housing boom around its 12 new stations, and curb growth on the urban fringe. Nine of the 10 fastest growing suburbs in Melbourne are in new housing estates on the edge of suburbia, in three residential growth corridors in the west, north and south-east.

Professor Stanley and economist Terry Rawnsley agree the loop could rein in urban sprawl. "If you look at where population is growing, it is growing away from jobs," Professor Stanley said. "It's happening in the outer suburbs, but most of the jobs aren't in the outer suburbs." One in five jobs in greater Melbourne is in the CBD, 2016 census data shows. Mr Rawnsley said it was already possible to envision two radically different future versions of Melbourne; one with the suburban rail loop and one without it. "The early announcement [of the project] will give the housing market time to adjust, there will be certainty that will encourage density along the corridor, which might actually save some of that urban development going on way up north, south-east and west," Mr Rawnsley said. "So Melbourne will look quite different in 30 years time with this project than without it."

RAIL AND TRAM NEWS

Queensland Rail Travel: 15 October timetable
Changes to long-distance QR timetables apply from 15 October. The Spirit of Queensland departs Brisbane at the same time of 1545 but is 30 minutes slower to Rockhampton. North of Townsville it is about an hour later but makes some of this up to arrive Cairns 25 minutes later than formerly at 1630. The southbound departs Cairns 25 minutes earlier than formerly at 0835 but arrives Brisbane at the same time as formerly. The southbound Spirit of the Outback is slightly altered Rockhampton to Miriam Vale. The new public timetable is available at https://www.queenslandrailtravel.com.au/Planyourtrip/timetable

Queensland Rail Citytrain: Cleveland line
On Monday 3 September, the 1839 Cleveland to Brisbane Central departed at 1827. QR said this was because of an "earlier rollingstock issue". A spokesman said the train was run early as an express service after a technical fault with an earlier train left Cleveland with only one platform in operation instead of two. "To prevent further impacts to Cleveland-bound peak services, a decision was made to depart the 6.39pm Cleveland to Central service 12 minutes early from Cleveland station and run the train express through the two stations of Ormiston and Birkdale. The train arrived at Manly and departed on schedule. Had this decision not been made, all Cleveland-bound services that departed Central after 5.30pm would have incurred a 20 minute delay at Wellington Point. Impacted customers were able to be accommodated

within 15 minutes on the 6.54pm Cleveland to Central service."

The spokesman said that when an unplanned disruption occurred, network controllers may make a decision to alter the running of a train service in order to keep the network moving, minimise compounding delays and ensure the best possible outcome for the majority of our customers. "Queensland Rail has the most strict on-time running target in the country, with a target of 95% of metropolitan trains expected to arrive at their destination within 3 minutes and 59 seconds of the schedule. In the 2017-18 financial year, Queensland Rail exceeded this target with 95.89% of trains running on-time."

Adani railway

Adani has rejuvenated the controversial Carmichael mine in Queensland as thermal coal prices soar, shaving about $1 billion from the cost of a planned railway to help seal a finance deal and accelerate construction. Adani's new local chief, Lucas Dow, said the planned mine would now export through a 200km-long narrow-gauge rail line that would connect to the existing Aurizon Queensland coal network. He said, "By connecting to the existing network we can fast-track project delivery, reduce capital expenditure and deliver coal more quickly to countries in Asia with growing energy demand." The new rail plan will connect with Aurizon's existing network and is essentially similar to one previously proposed by Aurizon that Adani had opposed. The railway could also be used by other proposed coal mines in the area.

New rail network design

ARTC WTT 30 September

The new Australian Rail Track Corporation Working Timetable of 30 September is available on their website at
https://www.artc.com.au/customers/operations/mtp/2018-09-30/

JHR NSW CRN WTT 30 September

The new John Holland Rail NSW Country Regional Network Working Timetable of 30 September is available on their website at
http://www.jhrcrn.com.au/what-we-do/network-operations-access/standard-working-timetable-swtt/

Western Region Alterations:

AR85 (PNC 850m) for -MTWTF- will run as tabled by Sydney Trains to pass Hermitage 1602, Wallerawang 1618, Baal Bone Junction 1641, arrive Airly Balloon Loop Junction 1704, depart 1709, arrive Airly Balloon Loop 1714 forms AR86

8148 (SSH 1280m) for --T-T-- will run as tabled by ARTC to pass CRN/ARTC Boundary Main Line - Dubbo MW 1755, Geurie 1828, Wellington 1858, Stuart Town 1944, Orange 2105, Orange East Fork Junction 2109, Spring Hill 2126, Polona 2136, Blayney 2145, Murrobo 2149, Newbridge 2208, arrive Bathurst 2245, depart 2250, pass Raglan 2309, Tarana 2348, Wallerawang 0026, arrive Coxs River 0029, depart 0044 thence as previously tabled

8102 (SYT/RCP 301m) for ---W--- will depart Bathurst 1550, pass Raglan 1611, Tarana 1650, Wallerawang 1728, Hermitage 1744 thence as tabled by Sydney Trains

8146 (SSH 900m) for ---W--- will depart Kelso 1835, arrive Bathurst 1845, depart 2011, pass Raglan 2031, Tarana 2110, Wallerawang 2148, Hermitage 2205 thence as tabled by Sydney Trains

8146 (SSH 900m) for ----T-- will depart Kelso 2230, arrive Bathurst 2240, depart 0003, pass Raglan 0024, Tarana 0103, Wallerawang 0141, Hermitage 0158 thence as tabled by Sydney Trains

8146 (SSH 900m) for ------S will depart Kelso 1305, arrive Bathurst 1315, depart 1400, pass Raglan 1421, Tarana 1500, Wallerawang 1538, Hermitage 1555 thence as tabled by Sydney Trains

1845 (SSH 900m) for S------ will run as tabled by Sydney Trains to pass Hermitage 0807, arrive Coxs River 0821, depart 0826, arrive Wallerawang 0831, depart 0839, pass Tarana 0910, Raglan 0945, arrive Kelso 0950 – shunt to up Siding.

Western Region Additions:

9837 (PNRB 850m) for -M-W-F- will run as tabled by Sydney Trains to pass Hermitage 2225, arrive Wallerawang 2241, depart 2315, pass Tarana 2346, Raglan 0021, Kelso 0025, arrive Bathurst 0032, depart 0037, pass Newbridge 0128, Murrobo 0147, Blayney 0150, Polona 0203, Spring Hill 0211, Orange East Fork Junction 0221, Molong 0254, arrive Manildra 0319 – forms 8938/8136

8938 for --T---- will depart Manildra 1217, pass Molong 1253, Borenore 1321, arrive Orange East Fork Junction 1359, depart 1404, pass Spring Hill 1422, Polona 1432, Blayney 1441, Murrobo 1445, Newbridge 1504, arrive Bathurst 1540, depart 1545, pass Kelso 1555, Raglan 1606, Tarana 1645, Wallerawang 1723, Coxs River 1725, Hermitage 1740 thence as tabled by Sydney Trains

8938 for ----T-- will depart Manildra 1152, pass Molong 1228, Borenore 1256, arrive Orange East Fork Junction 1334, depart 1339, pass Spring Hill 1357, Polona 1407, Blayney 1416, Murrobo 1420, Newbridge 1439, arrive Bathurst 1515, depart 1520, pass Kelso 1530, Raglan 1541, Tarana 1620, Wallerawang 1658, arrive Coxs River 1701 depart 1723, Hermitage 1740 thence as tabled by Sydney Trains

8136 (PNRB 850m) for ------S will depart Manildra 1424, pass Molong 1500, Borenore 1528, arrive Orange East Fork Junction 1606, depart 1616, pass Spring Hill 1634, Polona 1644, Blayney 1653, Murrobo 1657, Newbridge 1716, Bathurst 1751, Kelso 1800, Raglan 1811, arrive Tarana 1851, depart 1906, pass Wallerawang 1945, Hermitage 2002 thence as tabled by Sydney Trains

1837 (PNRB 700m) for --T---- will run as tabled by Sydney Trains to pass Hermitage 0135 next day, arrive Wallerawang 0151, depart 0156, pass Tarana 0227, Raglan 0302, arrive Bathurst 0313, depart 0328, pass Newbridge 0419, Murrobo 0438, Blayney 0441, arrive Polona 0455, depart 0615, pass Spring Hill 0625, arrive Orange East Fork Junction 0636, depart 0641, pass Molong 0716, arrive Manildra 0742 – forms 8138

8138 (PNRB 700m) for ---W--- will depart Manildra 1740, pass Molong 1816, arrive Orange East Fork Junction 1922, depart 1927, pass Spring Hill 1945, Polona 1955, Blayney 2004, Murrobo 2008, Newbridge 2027, arrive Bathurst 2103, depart 2108, pass Raglan 2129, Tarana 2208, Wallerawang 2246, Hermitage 2303 thence as tabled by Sydney Trains

1845 (SSH 900m) for -----F- will run as tabled by Sydney Trains to pass Hermitage 2334, pass Wallerawang 2351, Tarana 0020, Raglan 0055, arrive Kelso 0100 – shunt to Siding, forms 8146.

Deletions Western Region Coal:
LS01 (SSH 875m) for S-----S
LS02 (SSH 875m) for S-----S
LS01 (SSH 875m) for -MTWTF-
LS02 (SSH 875m) for -MTWTF-
Deletions Western Area:
8112 (QUBE 640m) for -M-W-F
1811 (QUBE 640m) for --T-T-S
8964 (QUBE 640m) for -M-W-F-
9865 (QUBE 640m) for --T-T-S
Deletions Parkes Area:
8922 (PNRB 660m) for --TW-FS
8924 (PNRB 660m) for -MT-TF-
9823 (PNRB 660m) for SM-WT--

Sydney Trains: 30 September timetable

Alterations in the Sydney Trains timetable of 30 September are:

Chatswood-Epping line: Closure for conversion to Metro.

North Shore line: Services which formerly operated via the Epping to Chatswood line replaced with trains starting or ending at Gordon, Hornsby or Berowra. More AM peak hour services to the City from Mount Kuring-gai, Mount Colah, Hornsby and all stations from Wahroonga to Roseville. Gordon to Roseville have more services across most of the day – in the Off peak, ten trains an hour, two starting at Lindfield semi fast. There are no North Sydney starters in the off peak. There are Gordon starters in the am peak. Berowra peak moves to four an hour.

Northern line: Current services between Hornsby and the City via Chatswood replaced by limited stop services via Strathfield in the peak periods starting/finishing at Central. At other times, scheduled Epping via Strathfield services will extend to Hornsby. The extra services this will provide in the Epping to Central via Strathfield corridor will deliver two extra services per hour in the morning peak and a doubling of services in the evening peak for Rhodes, Meadowbank and West Ryde.

Central Coast and Newcastle line: The trial of a fast train service between Newcastle and Sydney will continue. Central Coast and Newcastle line trains no longer stop at Burwood or Eastwood "in response to customer feedback". Central Coast trains no longer stop at Berowra during the AM peak. Asquith stops have been removed from up city via North Shore services but there are other additional stops.

Airport and South line: Revesby has two more Sydney CBD bound express services via Airport stations in the morning peak, saving about nine minutes per trip.

The 1601 Central to Goulburn train now departs at 1600.

Western line: Richmond line trains no longer stop at Lidcombe after 0600 on weekdays. On weekdays the 1751 Central-Bathurst now leaves four minutes earlier at 1747 and arrives Bathurst two minutes earlier at 2132. This is according to the new Public timetable, but not according to the new John Holland Rail Working Timetable between Lithgow and Bathurst. On weekends it remains unaltered.

Cumberland line: The weekday 1528 and 1558 Schofields to Leppington services now start at Blacktown at 1543 and 1613.

South Coast line: The 1355 from Kiama is extended from Central to Martin Place. The 1624 Central to Kiama now starts at Martin Place at 1620.

On Weekdays there is:
- An increase of 4 x 8 car sets required to operate Sector 3.

- An allocation of 10 x 8B Waratah set Rosters to Sector 2 (only one set accepted into service, with a 2nd set soon).
- An increase in "Spare & Repair" Waratah A sets from 6 to 7 (may be difficult to maintain a 92% availability).
- 2 x 4T sets used on the South Coast Shuttles (Waterfall - Port Kembla) replaced by 2 x 4H sets.

On Weekends there is:
- A decrease of 1 x 8 car set required to operate Sector 3 (maybe due to services terminating at Lindfield).
- An allocation of x 8B Waratah set Rosters to Sector 2.

The new Working Timetable is version 4.5, produced by Rail Program Delivery, Transport for NSW. The new Public Timetables can be accessed at https://transportnsw.info/routes/train

Sydney Trains / Sydney Metro

Commencing at 0200 hours on Sunday, 30 September the Epping to Chatswood Rail Link (ECRL) will be shut down to allow Sydney Trains to decommission and segregate the line from the existing rail network. All ECRL infrastructure including tracks, signals and points both within or leading into the ECRL will be secured and permanently booked out of use. The ECRL and all associated assets will then be handed over to OpCo from 0001 on Saturday, 27 October when Northwest Rapid Transit will commence works on converting the line in preparation for Metro Operations.

The name of the terminal station of the NW Sydney Metro has been changed from Cudgegong Road to Tallawong.

East Coast High Speed Rail? Sydney Second Airport Railway?

A leaked document reported in the Melbourne *Herald Sun* suggests the overthrown Turnbull government planned to spend $7.6 billion on road and rail spending before the next federal election. Allegedly this included:

- $1.5 billion package for pre-construction work for high speed rail between Newcastle, Sydney, Canberra and Melbourne.
- $3.5 billion for a North-South Link connecting rail to the future Western Sydney Airport.
- $112 million for a third stage of Gold Coast Light Rail.
- $185 million for Adelaide's tram expansion program, Adelink.

NSW transport management system

The NSW government will spend $123 million to establish a predictive, data-driven transport management system in Sydney by the end of the decade, including a $50 million contract awarded to Cubic Transportation Systems. Cubic will provide Transport for NSW (TfNSW) with a new technology platform, the Intelligent Congestion Management

Program (ICMP), which will co-ordinate, manage and monitor Sydney's pubic transport system and road networks. The new system will reportedly reduce congestion, improve major event planning and enable faster response to incidents on the transport network. It will also provide real-time information and advice to the public regarding disruptions.

NSW Transport Minister Andrew Constance said that the system would be designed to help Sydney manage the introduction of driverless Metro trains next year and the eventual introduction of automated automobiles in the future. The government expects the new system to be implemented by 2020.

NSW TrainLink: Additional buses
NSW TrainLink has introduced additional bus services from Monday 10 September on trial, as follows:

Mon-Fri Read down			Mon-Fri Read up
		Sydney Central	*1959*
		Goulburn dep on XPT	*1718*
0900		Goulburn Station	1600
0910		Goulburn Big Merino	1550
1015		Canberra Civic West Row	1445
1030		Canberra John James Hospital	1430
1040		Canberra Hospital	1420
1055		Queanbeyan Bus Interchange	1405
1105		Canberra Station	1355

This is in addition to the existing three daily trains. Marulan Coaches Goulburn-Canberra service ceased only three weeks before, on Friday 24 August. However, that was more oriented to commuters, whereas TrainLink's service is oriented to people with medical and other appointments in Canberra. The new afternoon Canberra-Goulburn bus provides a connection into the Melbourne-Sydney XPT, offering an additional through service to Sydney.

TrainLink also introduced trial buses from Goulburn to Campbelltown on weekdays, in addition to the existing train service. These are non-booked and accept Opal cards.

	Mon-Fri	Mon-Fri
Goulburn bus dep	0500	1610
Campbelltown bus arr	0640	1740
Campbelltown train dep	*0652*	*1748*
Central train arr	*0746*	*1845*

	Mon-Fri	Mon-Fri
Central train dep	*0611*	*1718*
Campbelltown train arr	*0708*	*1810*
Campbelltown bus dep	0720	1820
Goulburn bus arr	0900	2000

Crawfords Freightlines: Werris Creek freight terminal
Liverpool Plains Shire Council has approved a $2.5 million freight terminal, at Werris Creek, NW NSW by Crawfords Freightlines. The facility will transport timber from Nundle forest to the port of Newcastle, along with cotton seed and refrigerated shipping containers. Mr Crawford said his company had already begun clearing the site and hoped to have trains running from the terminal by the start of 2019.

NSW: Grain Corp sidings
Rail siding upgrades and loading improvements for GrainCorp have been approved for funding under the NSW Government's Fixing Country Rail program at Bellata (for $1.8 million) and Condobolin (for $1.2 million).

Metro Trains Melbourne: Cessation of City Circle trains
The new Melbourne Metro Train timetables on 26 August 2018 marked the cessation of the City Circle trains – trains that traversed the City Loop from Flinders St and back to Flinders St station. Although City Circle trains were formally withdrawn on 23 August 1993, 25 years ago, a few of these services remained in the Working Timetables and were gradually reduced over time. The last remaining City Circle train was in the 27 August 2017 timetable. It departed Flinders St off an up train from Greensborough at 0634 and returned to Flinders St at 0646 to form the 0649 down train to Glen Waverley. The new timetables on 28 August 2018 do not show any City Circle trains.

Metro Trains Melbourne: Mernda line
The curse of the ATA AGM has struck again! There is a long and unfortunate history of lines associated with ATA AGMs being closed for civil engineering works. The Mernda line will be so closed on the weekend of 13 -14 October, the day of the ATA AGM. This is despite the outer section from South Morang to Mernda only being opened on 26 August. A number of interstate members of the ATA were planning to travel on the new line on the morning before the ATA AGM.

V/Line: Bendigo line
The Victorian government has promised that, if re-elected, it will build three new train stations and begin planning to upgrade the Bendigo line to operate trains every 40 minutes to Melbourne. There will be new stations at Goornong and Huntly (on the Echuca line) and Raywood (on the Swan Hill line). The single platform stations will have car parking and covered waiting areas with seating. Work at Goornong will start next year and finish by 2021. Construction at Raywood will start in 2020 and finish by 2022, followed by construction at Huntly in 2022 finishing by 2023. There will also be planning to reopen Harcourt station and upgrade track on the Bendigo line between Bendigo and Kyneton. (Is this a hint of re-instating duplication? This section was singled as an unfortunate by-product of the Regional Rail upgrading in February 2006, although frequent and lengthy loops were retained.)

V/Line: South West line

Infrastructure Australia is of the opinion that a plan to duplicate 13 kms of tracks between South Geelong and Waurn Ponds is not value for money, as it would not deliver extra train services to Melbourne. Duplicating the track would see trains leave Waurn Ponds every 12 minutes during the peak. But Infrastructure Australia said passenger growth was starting from a low base, and the upgrade would "primarily benefits local rail users". It has also called for a revised business case. "The project will not enable additional services between Melbourne and Geelong, which limits the benefits to be realised on the wider network," its report states. The Federal government advisory body reckons that the project's business case returned a benefit-cost ratio of just 0.6, which predicts a return to taxpayers of 60 cents for every $1 spent.

The Victorian government will fund $146 million — or 20% — and wants the Federal government to provide the remaining $550 million. However, the Andrews government has confirmed that it would fund its share despite Infrastructure Australia's finding, while the federal government says it remains committed to the project.

The track duplication, set to start in 2020 and finish by 2023, would relieve bottlenecks on the single section of track south of Geelong.

Train performance on the Warrnambool line, which runs from Waurn Ponds to the south-west Victorian city, has trended downward since 2003/04, and consistently fallen below the V/Line target rate of 92% on-time arrival, the Infrastructure Australia report states. The Geelong line, which services fast-growing areas, has had an 18% increase in patronage year on year between 2012/13 and 2016/17.

V/Line: Unusual operation

An interesting and unusual operation occurred on Friday 31 August - a Victorian standard gauge heritage train. The train, for Seymour Railway Heritage Centre, ran from Seymour at 0706 empty to Albury due at 0925. From Albury it conveyed passengers on a Cruise Express package tour. The train departed Albury at 1015 to Seymour arrive 1240, depart 1755, to Southern Cross arrive 2015, then empty from SX at 2050 to Seymour 2240. It comprised locos T357 and P22 and 3 x BS carriages. The bogies on the carriages were changed recently at Seymour Loco.

On 28 October Seymour Railway Heritage Centre will be running their first public Standard Gauge heritage train tour to Albury travelling behind recently restored P22 in an unfamiliar livery and T357. P22 recently was painted blue and gold, a first for the P Class locomotive. The train will have limited seating and will consist of 1937 former Spirit of Progress S Class Compartment style Carriages.

V/Line: Murray Basin Rail project

Freight trains will return to the 109 km Murrayville-Ouyen line following conversion from broad to standard gauge. Sleeper replacement and track maintenance also took place.

When all work in connection with the conversion of the Ararat-Maryborough line to standard gauge is completed, Train Order working will be introduced. Intermediate Block Points will be established, to be known as Wiltshire at 237.34 kilometres and Redpath at 208.5 kilometres.

Future stages of the Murray Basin Rail Project include upgrades and gauge conversion works from Maryborough to Manangatang, Korong Vale to Sea Lake, and further south, between Warrenheip and Gheringhap. The state government expects that the project will be completed by 2020.

Pacific National: Tocumwal freight trains

Schedules of the tri-weekly Melbourne-Tocumwal Pacific National container trains were altered from 16 September, as follows:
Sunday: Appleton Dock 2250, Seymour 0108-0113, Shepparton 0227-0232, Tocumwal 0355.
Tues, Thurs: Appleton Dock 2305, Seymour 0123-0128, Shepparton 0242-0247, Tocumwal 0410.
Mon, Wed, Fri: Tocumwal 2030, Shepparton 2150-2155, Seymour 2303 non-stop, Craigieburn 0100-0117, Appleton Dock 0135.
This schedule only lasted a week. From 23 September the schedule is:
Mon, Wed, Fri: Appleton Dock 0020, Seymour 0238-0243, Shepparton 0357-0402, Tocumwal 0525.
Mon, Wed, Fri: Tocumwal 2210, Shepparton 2330-2335, Seymour 0043 non-stop, Appleton Dock 0255.

Great Southern Rail: Overland

The future of Great Southern Rail's Overland passenger train between Melbourne and Adelaide is uncertain. Apparently GSR is not taking bookings beyond January 2019. In 2015 the previous SA government provided a $1 million three-year package to GSR to help support the service. The Victorian government also provided a subsidy. A Victorian government spokesperson said GSR had agreed to a contract extension until March next year. "The Government will then work with SA and GSR on future service models," the spokesperson said. Acting SA Premier Vickie Chapman said the Government would review the funding model but was not making any guarantees that the train service would continue.

The Overland runs twice a week between Adelaide and Melbourne, carrying about 30,000 passengers per year. It is the oldest intercapital passenger train service in Australia, dating from 1887. It does not fit with GSR's current model of providing luxury, upmarket, tourist-oriented trains.

South Australian Budget

The new SA government presented its Budget on 4 September. Items of rail and public transport interest are:

- $615 million for the electrification of the Gawler railway,
- $18.5 million for park and rides at Paradise and Golden Grove on the NE Busway,
- $37 million for a tram right hand turn at King William St and North Terrace,
- $11.7 million for upgrading the City South tram stop on King William St near Halifax and Sturt Streets,
- $7.9 million for renewal of tram tracks between Victoria Square and South Terrace,
- $600,000 for a business case to examine expanding city tram services,
- $2.5 million to establish the South Australian Public Transport Authority, tasked with "investigating how to make public transport more customer-friendly and more efficient,
- $150,000 to investigate providing Adelaide Metro services in Murray Bridge,
- $679,000 over four years for a new bus service to Gulfview Heights,
- $250,000 to investigate increasing public transport access on the Tonsley line, including options to build a new Tonsley station, and
- $100,000 for up to ten public mobile phone charging units at Adelaide train stations.

Savings of up to $15 million a year will be made by rationalising public transport services — low patronage and duplicate bus services will be discontinued. The government will work with bus contractors and the yet-to-be-established SA Public Transport Authority to decide which services will be axed.

Auckland public transport projects

The New Zealand government will spend almost $NZ 4 billion on public transport projects in Auckland over the next three years, under the $16.9 billion National Land Transport Program announced on 31 August, including:

- More electric trains for Auckland,
- Light rail between the Auckland City and Mangere, and to the northwest of the city.
- Improvements to Puhinui station to enhance access to Auckland Airport,
- A third main line between Westfield and Wiri, and upgrade Westfield rail junction to provide better separation of passenger and freight services.

However, far more funding will go to road projects.

British and Swiss WTTs

Non-Australian Working Timetables which are currently known to be available on the internet are:

Network Rail, Britain:
https://www.networkrail.co.uk/running-the-railway/timetabling/working-timetable/ However, links from this site are, at the time of writing, not working. No doubt, this is the result of the debacle following the introduction of new passenger timetables in Britain in May. This site usually has a very big collection of large documents.

Transport for London (London Underground):
https://tfl.gov.uk/corporate/publications-and-reports/working-timetables

Switzerland:
https://www.fahrplanfelder.ch/en/archives/graphic-timetables.html These are a complete set of timetables for Swiss Federal Railways, plus timetables for many of the private railways. They are in graphical format. These are archived documents. Current WTTs are also available but requires registration.

ODD SPOT

NSW Twist Train

Here is a new phrase for you: "twist train". John Holland Rail NSW Country Regional Network's Country Train Notice 247-2018 contains the timetables for Great Western Weekend Tours being operated by Transport Heritage NSW. On Monday 1 October (NSW/ACT Labour Day) there were five shuttle trains between Lithgow and Wallerawang. Actually, the final run was timetabled to run to Lidsdale. But Lidsdale is part of Wallerawang yard. The Country Train Notice says, "arrive Lidsdale 1640 – twist train". Country Regional Network Local Appendix West 210 tells us that there is a triangle at Lidsdale. Presumably "twist train" means to reverse the train on the triangle.

On Sunday 30 September, CTN 247-2018 had the timetables for the train to operate shuttles between Bathurst and Tarana. On Saturday 29 September, the train operated to Rylstone – the first operation of a Beyer-Garrett locomotive on this line. This required the issue of a special notice to re-open the line. JHR NSW CRN's SAFE Notice 34-2018 states "Use of the Line Airly Loop Junction to Rylstone. On Saturday 29th September, the single main line between Airly Loop Junction and Rylstone will be booked back into use to facilitate the running of the Great Western Steam Specials operated by Transport Heritage NSW, as advertised in CTN 0247-2018", and then continues with specific advice about local safeworking procedures, including removal of the Stop Block and its re-instatement after the special trains have operated.

SAFE Notice 38-2018 contains identical advice about re-opening this line on 28 October "to facilitate the running of the Rylstone Rambler Lunch Tour operated by Lachlan Valley Railway Society; as advertised on CTN 0249-2018."

WTT confusion

Are we lucky that some infrastructure controllers now place their Working Timetables on the internet for public access? Surely this adds to understanding the system by timetable students. Yes, in most cases. No, sometimes. There is one set of trains that appear in two sets of Working Timetables on the internet. V/Line passenger trains between Melbourne and Albury are timetabled in WTTs of the Australian Rail Track Corporation – the track controller. They are also timetabled in WTTs of V/Line – the train operator. The first anomaly is that there are some different timing points or nomenclature used on the approach to Melbourne. Canal Siding and Melbourne Operations Terminal, for example, appear in ARTC's WTTs but not in V/Line's. South Dynon Loco in V/Line's but not in ARTC's WTTs. A more significant problem is that the two WTTs sometimes have different times for the same train. For example, the ARTC WTT says the 1245 from Albury passes Sims St at 1622, whereas the V/Line WTT says it passes Sims St at 1624.

This difference of two minutes is insignificant compared to the times for the eastbound Indian Pacific on Wednesdays. Between Bathurst and Lithgow there is a difference of 50 minutes in the John Holland Rail and the Sydney Trains Working Timetables! The Sydney Trains WTT also does not recognise the new stop of the IP at Mt Victoria. For the westbound IP there is an inconsistency of 15 minutes at Lithgow between the two WTTs increasing to 22 minutes at Bathurst. Which WTT do we believe?

Some other inconsistencies noticed at random: The northbound overnight XPT from Melbourne has a time at Goulburn of 0413 in the Public timetable, but 0417 in the WTT. The southbound daylight Melbourne XPT departs Sydney at 0740 in the WTT but at 0742 in the Public timetable. No train is ever going to be allowed to depart before its publicly advertised time.

Thanks to Victor Isaacs for Odd Spot.

BUS NEWS

NSW / Queensland

In the latest expansion for **SkyBus**, services will commence between Byron Bay and the Gold Coast Airport from 16 September. The timetable is not yet available.

New South Wales

NSW TrainLink bus news is in the Rail news section above.

Newcastle: From 30 September, new route 266 has operated between West Wallsend and Newcastle via Glendale, Wallsend and Broadmeadow. Two morning peak and two evening peak trips operate on weekdays. Route 266 replaces route 267 (West Wallsend-Glendale) trips operating to and from Newcastle and no longer operates via the University of Newcastle. Routes 266 and 267 are operated by Hunter Valley Buses.

Sydney: From 30 September route 400 Burwood to Bondi Junction via Eastgardens jointly operated by State Transit and Transit Systems was split into 400 Sydney Airport to Bondi Junction via Eastgardens operated by State Transit and 420 Eastgardens to Burwood via Sydney Airport and Rockdale operated by Transit Systems. Route 410 Rockdale to Bondi Junction jointly operated by State Transit and Transit Systems was discontinued. Also route 418 Burwood to Bondi Junction via Dulwich Hill, Sydenham and Mascot operated by Transit Systems was split into 418 Burwood to Kingsford via Dulwich Hill, Sydenham and Mascot operated by Transit Systems and 357 Mascot to Bondi Junction via Kingsford and Mascot operated by State Transit.

In conjunction with the opening of the new Northern Beaches Hospital at Frenchs Forest the following changes took place. Route 136 Manly to Chatswood via Freshwater, North Curl Curl, Dee Why,

Narraweena and Frenchs Forest had the Monday to Friday off-peak service frequency increased from thirty minutes to fifteen minutes. Route 169 Wynyard to Manly via Narraweena was altered to serve the new hospital. Routes 136 and 169 are operated by State Transit. Forest Coach Lines route 270 City QVB to Terrey Hills and 271 City QVB to Auslink had Sunday services increased from sixty minutes to thirty minutes on each route. Forest Coach Lines introduced the following new services: 141 Auslink to Manly via Frenchs Forest and Seaforth operating hourly daily and 193 Auslink to Warringah Mall via Frenchs Forrest operating half-hourly Monday to Saturday and hourly on Sundays.

Timetables and other details of the Station Link services replacing the temporarily closed Chatswood to Epping railway are at https://transportnsw.info/station-link-service-adjustments-30-sep/station-link#toolkit

Australian Capital Territory

Royale Coaches ceased operation, on an unknown date, from Canberra City to Canberra Airport. This is not surprising, as it was both much more infrequent, and much more expensive than the new ACTION route 11/11A on the same route.

ACTION: The Valley Avenue, Gungahlin, is closed to all traffic from Manning Clark Crescent to Kate Crace St. Bus stops 7009 and 7010 are closed and services travel via Camilleri Way until further notice. Alternative bus stops are available on Manning Clark Crescent and Flemington Road. Bus Stops 4928 and 4927 on Flemington Road are temporarily closed due to Tram construction. Mort St, City between Cooyong St and Girrawheen St is closed to all routes, with the exception of the City Loop route 101. Other buses travel via Northbourne Avenue until further notice.

Victoria

Bendigo: Changes occurred on 23 September to routes 52, 63 and 71. Route 63 has been extended from Bendigo station to Bendigo Hospital. Route 71 Strathfieldsaye Loop has been extended to include Junortoun. Also from this date the Bendigo to Heathcote service was increased from five return weekday trips and three on Saturday,

Detailed analysis of buses in Victoria is at

https://public.tableau.com/profile/chris.loader#!/vizhome/PTVGTFSexplorerv3/Routelistperday

Western Australia

Belmont City Council withdrew its free *Buslink* service after the last run on 31 August. *Buslink* was sponsored by the Council and the Belmont Forum Shopping Centre and did a rectangular route through the light industrial area of Belmont for up to two hours at lunchtimes offering free transport to and from the major shopping centre. The service had operated for a few years and used a mini-bus.

Northern Territory

Darwin: Two new routes were introduced on 28 August. Route 87 Palmerston Circular via Durack Heights operating 0616—1913 Weekdays, 0701—1903 Sat and 0801—1906 Sunday; Route 88 Palmerston Circular to Hospital operating 0632—2108 Weekdays, 0635—2003 Sat and 0818—1938 Sunday.

New Zealand

Auckland North Shore: A new network commenced on 30 September featuring new routes and operators. Highlight is a new network with more local routes connecting with the Busway and less direct routes direct to Auckland CBD. Timetable books are:
Devonport / Bayswater
Lower East Coast Bays
Upper East Coast Bays
Beachhaven
Glenfield
Hillcrest / Northcote
Greenhithe / Unsworth Heights
Albany
Hibiscus Coast
Northern Express NEX 1 and NEX 2
North Shore Network Guide
Hibiscus Coast Guide
Frequency Guide.

Also on this date, a new network commenced on the Kowhai Coast linking it with Warkworth and the Auckland Network at the Hibiscus Bus station. Full details are at www.maxx.co.nz/NorthShore

Thanks to Paul Brown, Hilaire Fraser, Alan Gray, Ross Morrison and David Whiteford for Bus news.

FERRY NEWS

On Monday 24 September**,** the new SpeedyCatpeak hour only services will be introduced to the Brisbane River. These will provide express services from the outer reaches of the river to the CBD and University of Queensland, servicing the following terminals: UQ St Lucia, West End, Guyatt Park, North Quay, Riverside, Teneriffe, Apollo Road and Northshore Hamilton.

There will also be changes to CityCat and CityFerry timetables on 24 September. These changes will incorporate the new SpeedyCat express peak-hour services, the recent removal of the Kingsford Smith

Drive river speed restriction, the recent introduction of the Queen's Wharf Brisbane go-slow zone and the reopening of the New Farm Park ferry terminal in late September. While all CityFerry times will change, specific changes include the CityHopper frequency changing from 30 minutes to 36 minutes and the Holman St-Eagle St-Thornton St ferry frequency changing from every 10 minutes to every 12 minutes from approx. 0600 until 1900 and from 15 minutes to 18 minutes after 1900.

Thanks to Paul Brown for Ferry news.

AIR NEWS

Domestic

Regional airline **Fly Corporate** will re-establish scheduled direct flights between Wollongong (Illawarra Regional Airport), Melbourne and Brisbane. Commencing Monday 12 November, flights will depart Wollongong at 0615 with an 0800 arrival in Melbourne. The return service will depart Melbourne at 0835 and arrive in Wollongong at 1010. Afternoon flights will depart Wollongong at 1355 with a 1540 arrival in Melbourne. The return service will depart Melbourne at 1615 and arrive in Wollongong at 1800. Eight weekly services between Wollongong and Brisbane will also be offered – from Wollongong at 1045 Mon Wed Fri and at 1835 on Fridays, returning from Brisbane at 1010 Mon Wed Fri and Sun.

The former operator JetGo ceased earlier this year. Corporate Air, the parent company of Fly Corporate, is based in Canberra but operates no scheduled flights from there. It commenced business in 1972 and currently operates over 140 flights per week including to Armidale, Biloela (Thangool), Brisbane, Coffs Harbour, Dubbo, Inverell, Melbourne, Moree, Narrabri, Orange, Sydney and Tamworth.

International

The *Guardian* (UK) reports: Plane journeys are taking longer than a decade ago, according to a report that claims the change is down to airlines "padding" their schedules to create the impression passengers were reaching their destinations on time. Carriers are in some cases adding up to 30 minutes, to ensure they maintain punctuality and are therefore less likely to be liable for compensation payouts, the investigation by *Which? Travel* claimed.

Researchers examined average flight times for 125 routes operated by large airlines in 2009 and compared them with last year. They found that 76 routes, 61%, were now slated to take longer; with 87% of British Airways flights slower. That proportion was 82% for Ryanair, 75% for Virgin Atlantic and 62% for easyJet.

Despite the changes in scheduling, some of Europe's largest carriers have seen punctuality fall in recent years. According to *Which?,* BA, easyJet and Ryanair were all less punctual last year than in 2009, with easyJet recording a 10% fall in punctuality during the eight-year period. Airlines told the consumer magazine their aircraft were flying at slower speeds to reduce fuel consumption and that this allowed them to offer cheaper fares. BA also told *Which?* that air traffic control congestion was a factor, with European skies now much busier than 10 years ago, while previous flight taxi times had been "too optimistic".

European Union rules stipulate that passengers can claim up to €600 if their flight is delayed by more than three hours; however, airlines do not have to compensate for circumstances outside their control, such as bad weather.

Thanks to Richard May and *Guardian* (UK) for Air news.