



# TABLE TALK

AUSTRALASIAN TIMETABLE NEWS

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## RAIL & TRAM NEWS

### NATIONAL

#### Spirit of Progress returns

Following a 33-year hiatus, the famed *Spirit of Progress* rail service between Melbourne and Sydney will return on 31 March under a private initiative between Cruise Express, the Seymour Railway Heritage Centre and the Lachlan Valley Railway. The train will consist of two restored locomotives, parlour car, kiosk car, and three passenger cars with capacity for 150 travellers.

Departing Southern Cross on 31 March, there will be an overnight stay in Albury, and next day lunch in Junee, to arrive at Sydney Central on 1 April. The train will depart again on 3 April for a six-day journey back to Melbourne with passengers from the *Golden Princess* cruise ship.

Both services are booked out, with a third service, *The Far West Express*, currently being advertised for early July between Melbourne and Broken Hill for nine days via Sydney. Included is an overnight stay in Orange, three nights in Broken Hill, then two further nights in Orange on the return leg.

Interested travellers should keep an eye on the Cruise Express website.

### NEW SOUTH WALES

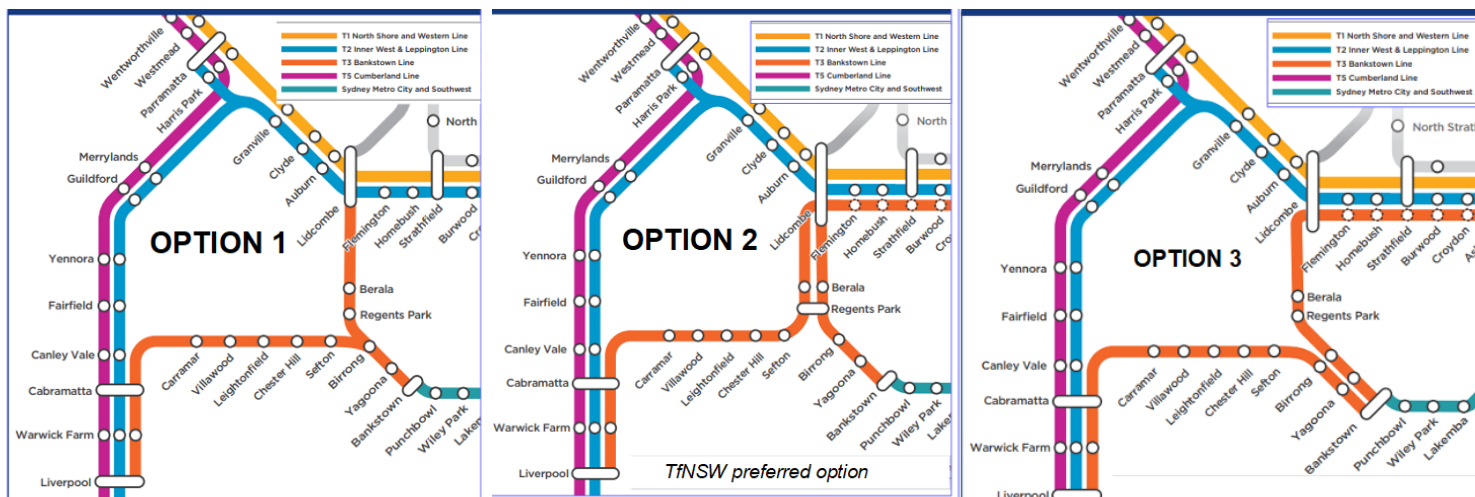
#### West of Bankstown

With the upcoming conversion of the existing heavy rail line between Sydenham and Bankstown to driverless metro, Transport for NSW is yet to lock in how trains will operate along the remainder of the T3 Bankstown Line. The Bankstown to Liverpool and Lidcombe to Bankstown sections of the line will remain with the heavy rail network (see mapping below), while the metro extension between Bankstown and the CBD/Chatswood is expected to open in 2024.

Transport for NSW has put forward their 'preferred option' as T3 Liverpool trains from the City operating via Strathfield, while a shuttle service would operate between the turnback platform at Lidcombe and Bankstown. This would see further timetable planning required to juggle T3 Liverpool services with T2 Inner West/Leppington services on the local lines between Central and Lidcombe.

The three options 'on the table' are provided below. Missing from the options is any form of shuttle service between Lidcombe and Liverpool, or using all three parts of the Y-link simultaneously at Sefton Park Junction.

Transport for NSW will shortly start consultation with commuters and other interested parties, with the option to be locked in by the end of the year.



## Blue Mountains line disruption

Continuing on from the February edition of *Table Talk*, extreme weather on Sunday 9 February led to a landslide which removed the ground from underneath a small section of the line near Leura. This event caused the re-closure of the line through Katoomba. While initially passenger trains continued to operate as far west as Lawson, this was later changed to Springwood. See our *Bus News* article on page 8 for more information on the bus replacement services provided.

Patrons travelling west of Mt Victoria were required to change at Mt Victoria for another replacement bus. At the time of publication, the works at Leura were expected to last until the end of February. With multiple trains stuck west of Leura, as an interim measure, many peak-hour Blue Mountains line services could only operate as four-car trains. Suburban commuters were encouraged to use suburban T1 Western Line services. The message provided by Sydney Trains follows:

*Due to a landslide at Leura preventing access to some of our fleet, some trains will operate with only 4 carriages. To help ensure customers from the Blue Mountains stations are able to travel, this service will 'pick up only' at Strathfield, Parramatta, Blacktown & Penrith. Customers wishing to travel to these stations should board a T1 Western Line service.*

The Dubbo XPT was replaced by road coaches for the entire journey.

## Hunter line closure

Australian Rail Track Corporation (ARTC) undertook major track maintenance in the Hunter Valley between 11 and 14 February with a 72-hour shutdown of lines between the Port of Newcastle and Narrabri/Ulan. Works included replacing 14 kilometres of rail, rail grinding, continued signal upgrade works between Islington and Sandgate, and other routine maintenance activities within the rail corridor.

NSW TrainLink Regional services were replaced by buses between Newcastle Interchange and Scone/Maitland. ARTC also advised it started using a new 120-stone Loram rail grinder machine.

## Flooding affects Sydney Metro

Heavy rainfall over the weekend of 8-9 February caused the partial closure of metro services between Chatswood and Macquarie Park due to flash flooding in the tunnels near North Ryde. The closure lasted for several days whilst crews deployed additional pumps to remove the flood waters. Replacement buses were organised along the closed section, while patrons travelling to the City were advised to change at Epping for T9 Northern Line services and vice versa.

## 125 Years of Sydenham to Belmore

With the impending conversion of the Bankstown line to driverless metro, 1 February marked the 125-year anniversary of the Sydenham to Belmore rail line opening. All six stations along the route (Marrickville, Dulwich Hill, Hurlstone Park, Canterbury, Campsie and Belmore) opened on the same day. The line was later extended to Bankstown in 1909.

## Updated CSELR timetable

From 20 January, an updated timetable for the CBD South East Light Rail came into effect, reducing timetabled journey times between Randwick and Circular Quay to 40 minutes. Transport for NSW also advised that an additional 43 services have been added each weekday.

## CSELR disruption

On the afternoon of Tuesday 21 January, during peak period, a broken-down tram near Town Hall caused the L2 line between Town Hall and Circular Quay to be closed for over an hour. Nine trams had to be terminated along this section with patrons forwarded to other transport options, including heavy rail services through the City Circle.

On the morning of Wednesday 19 February, a tram breakdown at Town Hall caused the line between Central Chalmers Street and Circular Quay to be suspended.

## Contactless ticketing

After little over a year, the NSW government has announced that 30 million journeys have now been made with contactless ticketing options across the Opal network. This method includes using a debit or credit card to tap on and off. Around 1.5 million journeys are now made each week, according to the NSW government.

Following on from the completion of the rollout of this program in September, in the period between October and December 2019, revenue totalling \$46 million was generated. Out of this, several technical faults caused the refund of \$265,000 to users with reasons including 'card clash'. Although the issue has been reportedly fixed, Transport for NSW continues to encourage patrons to separate their cards when tapping on and off to help ensure they are not overcharged.

Transport for NSW is currently working on introducing a digital version of the physical Opal card, which would also reportedly be able to be used on other transport services such as taxis. The digital Opal card is slated to begin trials by the end of the year.

## QUEENSLAND

### Flooding suspends services

The Mount Isa to Townsville rail line was suspended on 26 January due to flash-flooding. The line reopened on the night of 10 February following rectification works by Queensland Rail including bridge, track and ballast repairs

## AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

### Light rail timetable updates

The Canberra light rail line received a boost to peak hour services from 3 February, as follows:

- The southbound AM peak service period (trams operating every six minutes) has been extended by 30 minutes until 09:30, and
- The PM peak service period (trams also operating every six minutes) has been extended (northbound) from 16:00-18:00 to period 15:00-18:30, and (southbound) from 16:00-17:30 to period 15:30-18:00.

In addition, the light rail line will see further timetable changes, effective from 28 April, to complement simultaneous changes to the bus network (see our *Bus News* article, page 9). Improvements will include:

- Increased AM peak service frequency to every five minutes,
- The northbound PM peak period extended until 19:00, and
- On Sundays and public holidays, the first service of the day will commence from 07:00 (one hour earlier).

The ACT Transport Minister, Chris Steel, said "light rail has been a huge success... more than 15,000 boardings are being made every day".

### Light rail extension

The ACT government has announced that work on the wire-free 1.7 kilometre stage 2A extension of the light rail line from the City to Commonwealth Park (near Lake Burley Griffin) is on track to begin later this year.

The extension will provide a more convenient connection to Australian National University as well as the lake from the northern suburbs.

### Contactless ticketing

The ACT government announced in early February that it is looking to introduce credit/debit card payments across the public transport network. Over the next four months, the government will be undertaking a procurement process.

Interestingly, the Transport Minister, Chris Steel, called MyWay "outdated" with it being available for "some years now".

*Table Talk – March 2020*

## VICTORIA

### Airport rail row

The state and Commonwealth governments are reportedly considering a cheaper airport rail link option which would heavily congest western Melbourne rail lines which are already demanding extra services from patronage growth. The plan being considered would see an airport rail link built between Melbourne Airport at Tullamarine and Sunshine, where the line would join the Metro Tunnel through to the City.

Experts have countered that this plan would clog the spare capacity available to increase Metro Tunnel services to Melton and Sunbury which are experiencing consistent patronage growth. Under a previous plan, the line to Melton would have services increased to nine trains per hour, while Sunbury would increase to 14 per hour which covers the 23 per hour maximum capacity available.

Melbourne Airport, part of the AirRail Melbourne consortium vying to build a new rail tunnel between the City and Sunshine, which would connect with the future Airport rail link, has backed calls not to "cut corners" with the project. AirRail has now said it would contribute \$7 billion towards building this tunnel. AirRail also includes IFM Investors, Metro Trains and the IFM-operated Southern Cross Station.

### Metro driver training dispute

Metro stood down 13 of its drivers on 20 January, following the drivers' refusal to drive over new tracks between South Yarra and Hawksburn. The employees, through their local union, claimed that the 10-minute instructional video provided was insufficient as a training method, and that it would be unsafe. Metro made its own claim that the boycott was an attempt by the union to conduct protected industrial action. The Fair Work Commission heard the case on 24 January, dismissing all claims by both sides "on the evidence".

### Yarra Tram industrial action

On 28 and 30 January, frontline staff at Yarra Trams held strike action between 10:00 and 14:00, forcing some routes to be replaced by buses running every 30 minutes, while many were cancelled. Further strike action occurred on both 17 and 20 February.

The next strike action is planned for 3 and 5 March between 10:00 and 14:00. Another four days of strike action are also planned during the weekend of the Australian Grand Prix as follows:

- Thu March 12 – 10:00 to 14:00,
- Fri March 13 – 10:00 to 14:00,
- Sat March 14 – 12:00 to 16:00, and
- Sun March 15 – 12:00 to 16:00.

Following the announcement, the Victorian government went to the Fair Work Commission asking for an intervention. At the time of publication, no date had been set for the hearing.

Negotiations between employee representatives and Yarra Trams management have been ongoing since March last year.

V/Line industrial action

On Thursday 13 February, services on the Seymour, Shepparton and Albury lines were replaced by buses due to ongoing planned 'protected' industrial action. On Tuesday 18 February, services on the Ballarat, Ararat and Maryborough lines were replaced by buses, while on the next day, services on the Bairnsdale and Traralgon lines were replaced by buses.

PTV made replacement bus timetables available online.

Albury Line

Temporary coach replacement timetable Thursday 13 February

Due to industrial action coaches will replace trains. Freight trains and other services will still run as always obeying signs at level crossings and stay safe around trains. Thank you for your patience.

Melbourne to Albury via Seymour

Thursday 13 February

Table with 14 columns (COACH) and rows for services including Southern Cross Station, Broadmeadows, SEYMOUR, Avenel, AVENEL ROADHOUSE, Koroora, Violet Town, Renalta, Wangaratta, Springhurst, Chiltern, Wodonga, and ALBURY.

Albury to Melbourne via Seymour

Thursday 13 February

Table with 14 columns (COACH) and rows for services including ALBURY, Wodonga, Chiltern, Springhurst, Wangaratta, Renalta, Violet Town, Koroora, AVENEL ROADHOUSE, Avenel, SEYMOUR, Broadmeadows, and Southern Cross Station.

u - Pick up only / d - Set down only / b - Stops to let down passengers only when required. Please check vline.com.au prior to travelling.

For more information visit pty.vic.gov.au or call 1800 800 007

Authorised by the Victorian Government, 1 Treasury Place, Melbourne.



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Above, right and pg. 5 - Excerpts from 13, 18 and 19 February temporary timetables for replacement coaches (source: PTV).

Seymour Line

Temporary coach replacement timetable Thursday 13 February

Due to industrial action coaches will replace trains. Freight trains and other services will still run as always obeying signs at level crossings and stay safe around trains. Thank you for your patience.

Melbourne to Shepparton via Seymour

Table with 14 columns (COACH) and rows for services including Southern Cross Station, North Melbourne, Essendon, Broadmeadows, Craigieburn, Doreybrook, Wallan, Heathcote Junction, Wandong, Kilmore East, Broadford, Tallarook, SEYMOUR, Nagambie, Murchison East, Mooropna, and SHEPPARTON.

Table with 14 columns (COACH) and rows for services including Southern Cross Station, North Melbourne, Essendon, Broadmeadows, Craigieburn, Doreybrook, Wallan, Heathcote Junction, Wandong, Kilmore East, Broadford, Tallarook, SEYMOUR, Nagambie, Murchison East, Mooropna, and SHEPPARTON.

Ballarat Line

Temporary coach replacement timetable Tuesday 18 February

Due to industrial action coaches will replace all Ballarat, Ararat and Maryborough line trains for the entire journey. Please allow extra time for your journey. Thank you for your patience.

Melbourne to Ballarat including Ararat & Maryborough

Tuesday 18 February

Table with 14 columns (COACH) and rows for services including BIRREK, SOUTHERN CROSS, FOOTSCRAY, BUNBINE, ARarat, DEER PARK, CAROLINE SPRINGS, SOCKMAN, COLLEJAN, MELTON, BACCALAR MARCH, MULLALBA, BALLARAT, WINDOUSLEY, BURLINGHEAD, ARARAT, CLUNE, TULLAGH, and MARYBOROUGH.

Tuesday 18 February continued

Table with 14 columns (COACH) and rows for services including BIRREK, SOUTHERN CROSS, FOOTSCRAY, BUNBINE, ARarat, DEER PARK, CAROLINE SPRINGS, SOCKMAN, COLLEJAN, MELTON, BACCALAR MARCH, MULLALBA, BALLARAT, WINDOUSLEY, BURLINGHEAD, ARARAT, CLUNE, TULLAGH, and MARYBOROUGH.

Tuesday 18 February continued

Table with 14 columns (COACH) and rows for services including BIRREK, SOUTHERN CROSS, FOOTSCRAY, BUNBINE, ARarat, DEER PARK, CAROLINE SPRINGS, SOCKMAN, COLLEJAN, MELTON, BACCALAR MARCH, MULLALBA, BALLARAT, WINDOUSLEY, BURLINGHEAD, ARARAT, CLUNE, TULLAGH, and MARYBOROUGH.



Due to industrial action coaches will replace all Gippsland Line trains for the entire journey. Please allow extra time for your journey. Thank you for your patience.

Melbourne to Bairnsdale continued

	Wednesday 19 February															
Service	08:00	08:30	09:00	09:30	10:00	10:30	11:00	11:30	12:00	12:30	13:00	13:30	14:00	14:30	15:00	15:30
SOUTHERN CROSS	13:20	13:30	13:40	13:50	14:00	14:10	14:20	14:30	14:40	14:50	15:00	15:10	15:20	15:30	15:40	15:50
FLINDERS STREET																
CHILFIELD																
BENSLEIGH																
PAVENHAM																
MURFREESBOROUGH																
TRARALGON																
WARRAGALE																
MORWELL																
MELBOURNE																
STANTFORD																
BAIRNSDALE																

Melbourne to Bairnsdale continued

	Wednesday 19 February															
Service	08:00	08:30	09:00	09:30	10:00	10:30	11:00	11:30	12:00	12:30	13:00	13:30	14:00	14:30	15:00	15:30
SOUTHERN CROSS	16:20	16:30	16:40	16:50	17:00	17:10	17:20	17:30	17:40	17:50	18:00	18:10	18:20	18:30	18:40	18:50
FLINDERS STREET																
CHILFIELD																
BENSLEIGH																
PAVENHAM																
MURFREESBOROUGH																
TRARALGON																
WARRAGALE																
MORWELL																
MELBOURNE																
STANTFORD																
BAIRNSDALE																

XPT derailment

On the night of 20 February, at around 19:45 hours, the Melbourne-bound XPT train from Sydney derailed near Wallan. Two fatalities resulted, both from the drivers cabin – one was the driver, with the second a 'pilot'. The service had just over 150 passengers on board at the time, with many suffering from non-life threatening injuries and/or shock.

The cause of the accident will be under investigation for some time, however there were earlier reports from V/Line of “track equipment repairs near Wallan” causing service delays of up to 60 minutes.

With the majority of on-site evidence collection completed, the incident site was released by the Australian Transport Safety Bureau back to the corridor manager, ARTC, the next evening, while NSW TrainLink, got custody of the train back on the Saturday morning.

A preliminary report is expected to become available in mid-March, while the final report is expected to be released in mid-2021.

Coaches are replacing trains on the Seymour, Shepparton and Albury lines until further notice. In the interim, coaches are also replacing NSW TrainLink's Melbourne XPT service in its entirety. An exception on Friday 21 February was the 08:30 Melbourne to Sydney service which reportedly still operated with a delay of over 30 minutes - based on real-time data.

Level crossing removal project

The government announced on 13 February that construction had commenced on the building of a new road bridge at Cherry Street, Werribee, which will replace an existing level crossing.

The \$114 million project is being delivered by an alliance between McConnell Dowell, Arup, Mott MacDonald and Metro Trains Melbourne. The bridge will provide a direct road connection between Tarneit Road and the Princes Highway. The same alliance is currently building a new train stabling yard at Wyndham Vale.

Rail operator punctuality

The Department of Transport has released January's punctuality figures for Victoria's passenger rail operators. Impacted in part by severe weather and industrial action, Metro Trains achieved 91 per cent, Yarra Trams 86.4 per cent and V/Line 90.6 per cent.

Both Metro Trains and Yarra Trams will provide monetary compensation to eligible passengers for failing to meet reliability targets. Metro Trains delivered 98 per cent reliability, Yarra Trams 97.1 per cent, and V/Line 94.6 per cent.

V/Line's Ballarat line experienced its highest punctuality level in three years, while Geelong and Bendigo also experienced month-on-month improvement.

On-dock rail approved

The Victorian government has announced that approval has been granted for “on-dock rail” to be built at the Port of Melbourne. The project, costing \$125 million, is scheduled for completion in 2023. The Port of Melbourne will increase the tariff on all imports by \$9.75 for each 20-foot equivalent unit, with the funds generated by this initiative to be spent on building new sidings and connections to the facility. This forms part of the Port's Rail Access Strategy (See: <https://www.portofmelbourne.com/wp-content/uploads/PoM-Our-Plan-for-Rail-2020.pdf>). One of the conditions of the 50-year lease of the Port to Lonsdale consortium is to improve rail access into the Port.

High capacity signalling test site

At Pakenham East Depot, a 'high capacity signalling' test site is currently under construction. Works include installation of trackside equipment, cabling, and building of an overhead canopy. These works will enable high capacity signalling to be tested with the new High Capacity Metro Trains.



## Warrnambool line upgrade

Downer has been awarded a new \$114 million contract for design and construction of upgrades on the Geelong and Warrnambool line.

The contract includes delivery of:

- signalling upgrades between Waurn Ponds and Warrnambool,
- new train crossing loop at Boorcan,
- Stage 1 delivery of the Waurn Ponds station upgrade, and
- new V/Line train stabling facility at Waurn Ponds.

Construction will commence mid-year with the upgrades set for completion by the end of 2021. The monetary value of the contract was not disclosed, funded from the Commonwealth and Victorian government's Regional Rail Revival budget of \$1.75 billion.

The government says that a fifth weekday return train service will be timetabled between Melbourne and Warrnambool once the upgrade is complete.

## TASMANIA

### Passenger rail interest

An old rail freight corridor in the northern suburbs of Hobart has been front and centre of a campaign by the Hobart Northern Suburbs Rail Action Group since 2010 to convert the line for passenger rail use. Current government plans indicate that a busway is more likely to eventuate to complement the existing bus network.

A study being done by the Tasmanian government on the best use of the corridor is due to be released later this year. Modes being considered include train, bus and trackless tram.

## NEW ZEALAND

### Auckland service disruption

On Monday 10 February, rail services were severely disrupted on most lines due to smoke and water damage to signalling equipment at Newmarket following a fire. Trains were suspended between Newmarket and Penrose, with other services across the network experiencing extended journey times due to rail traffic congestion.

Southern Line services between Otahuhu and Britomart were diverted via Panmure, while a shuttle train service was later organised to operate between Penrose and Onehunga. Replacement buses were organised to operate between Penrose and Britomart. Local bus route 66 was available to commuters to connect between Sylvia Park and Penrose.

## Auckland patronage jumps

Auckland Transport (AT) has revealed a near eight per cent jump in overall public transport patronage with trips last year totalling 103.2 million across train, bus and ferry. Local mayor Phil Goff said patronage is growing at "more than five times the rate of population growth".

The biggest contributor to the 7.5 per cent jump to public transport patronage was, once again, the bus mode, with a nine per cent jump and a corresponding six million extra trips, followed by rail, with the network operated by Transdev growing by six per cent to nearly 22 million trips. Meanwhile, ferries contributed a two per cent increase.

Year	Total Patronage (Thousands to one decimal point)			
	Total	Bus	Train (Rapid)	Ferry
2015	81,576.9	60,476.8	15,379.7	5,720.3
2016	84,787.6	60,636.7	18,111.2	6,039.9
2017	91,104.2	64,611.2	20,329.6	6,163.2
2018	95,980.9	69,138.1	20,722.1	6,120.6
2019	103,155.3	75,027.7	21,887.4	6,240.3

Annual trips by mode in Auckland (data source: AT).

### Auckland future rail operator

Auckland Transport has started seeking Expressions Of Interest (EOIs) to operate the Auckland suburban rail network. The current contract with Transdev expires in 2021. An Auckland Transport spokesperson said "the current rail operating contract... has been in place since 2004. With the City Rail Link to be completed in 2024 [and other upgrades incoming]... the future of Auckland rail is very bright. Great progress [has been made]... now carrying 22 million passengers per year, with growth of five per cent in the past year". The contract is due to be awarded next February.

### Frenzy launches

A new mobile application, Frenzy, launched on 5 February to Auckland, enabling commuters to earn money by planning their public transport trip then viewing marketing content afterwards. The app matches the real-time data used with the user's current location data. Advertisers pay to have their marketing content seen by Frenzy users, with users getting a cut of the revenue. Advertisers receive anonymous viewer statistics in return. The tech start-up also buys carbon credits to offset the emissions of its users' journeys.

Following the February roll-out across major cities in New Zealand, the app is scheduled to launch in Australia in March.

## INTERNATIONAL

### Alstom and Bombardier sign MOU

Global business Alstom has moved a step closer to acquiring Bombardier Transportation. Both parties have now signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that values Bombardier Transportation at almost \$10 billion.

Alstom Chief Executive Officer and Chairperson, Henri Puopart-Lafarge, said that this is “a unique opportunity to strengthen our global position on the booming mobility market”.

In Australia, Bombardier builds trains and trams from its Dandenong factory, while Alstom builds trains from its Ballarat factory. Alstom will also soon be constructing a new train manufacturing facility in Western Australia as part of the Metronet project.

Provided all approvals are given, the deal is expected to be consummated in early 2021.

### New York - Byford resigns

Former Sydney rail executive, Andy Byford, has resigned as president of New York City Transit after only two years in the role. Starting his career with the London Underground, Mr Byford also spent five years in Toronto, Canada, before his most recent role in New York.

### Eurostar service extension

Following agreement being reached between the UK, France, Belgium and Netherlands governments, a new Eurostar 'through' service between London and Amsterdam will begin from 30 April (two services daily), then between London and Rotterdam from 18 May. This will eliminate or juxtapose current border controls for patrons on board these services.

### Chinese rail patronage slumps

China National Railway has reported a significant slump in patronage on its services in the wake of the ongoing coronavirus epidemic. Overall daily trips made by passengers fell on both 8 and 9 February by between 80-85 per cent year-on-year.

At Beijing's West station, passenger departures have dropped 92 per cent, with arrivals dropping 75 per cent. Meanwhile, Beijing station reported departures falling by 81 per cent, while arrivals 'only' fell by 44 per cent year-on-year.

The Railway is reportedly also conducting random checks of passenger's temperatures onboard its trains, in addition to more regular cleaning and disinfection of trains.

International services operating between China and Vietnam, and between China and Mongolia have been suspended.

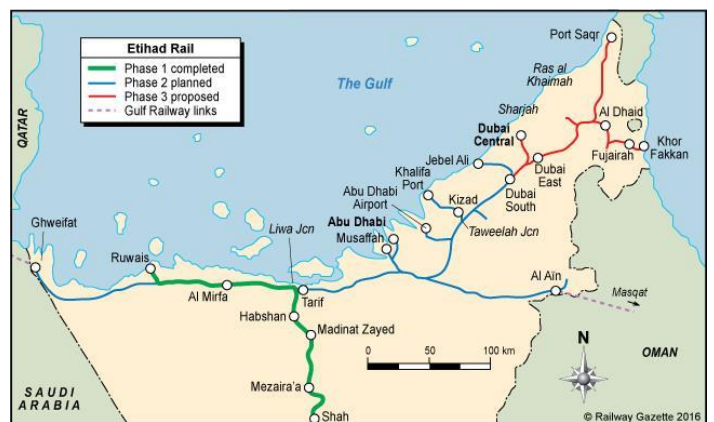
### UAE freight network project

On 29 January, Etihad Rail awarded a 1.9 billion dirham (\$AU 775 million) contract to design and build seven freight handling terminals as part of stage 2 of the United Arab Emirates' national rail network project.

This contract was awarded to joint venture between Power China International and Indian firm L&T Construction.

The entire 605 kilometre stage 2 of the national rail project will link Fujairah and Khorfakkan to the Saudi border at Ghuweifat with freight volume expected to increase seven-fold once commissioned. Hitachi Rail STS will be designing and installing ETCS Level 2 signalling along the line. See map below of stages 1-3.

A stage 3 is planned to serve the north-eastern emirates with 250 kilometres of rail.



(Source: Railway Gazette)

### Thai airport rail coronavirus

In fear of the ongoing coronavirus outbreak, airport rail line employees in Pattaya, Thailand are reportedly spraying alcohol inside train carriages, waiting areas and offices. Bottles of hand-washing alcohol are also being provided with masks for both employees and passengers.

**Thanks** to Steven Haby, Traveller.com.au, Cruise Express, Transport for NSW, Sydney Trains Heritage, NSW government, North Queensland Register, The Canberra Times, Rail Express, IT News, Public Transport Victoria, Victorian government, Port of Melbourne, The Sydney Morning Herald, The Age, The Australian, Infrastructure Magazine, Auckland Transport, Radio New Zealand, International Railway Journal, stuff.co.nz, Railway Gazette and pattayamail.com for *Rail & Tram News*.

# BUS & COACH NEWS

## NATIONAL

From the 'What the...?' files



Late in 2019, Murrays expanded their Canberra services to include a new service to Melbourne with a connection to their Sydney services. It appears that competition might be ramping up between Murrays and arch rival Greyhound, if the above screenshot from 9 February, from the latter's website, is anything to go by.

Interestingly, Greyhound's timetable for their Canberra to Sydney service has not changed in recent years. It is dated 5 March 2018.

## Updated Greyhound timetables

Some timetables have been updated on the Greyhound network, effective Monday 10 February:

- Brisbane to Cairns (appears to include timing changes),
- Brisbane to Hervey Bay (timing changes),
- Brisbane – Noosa – Sunshine Coast (services reduced from five to four),
- Canberra to Melbourne (timing changes),
- Sydney – Canberra – Melbourne (timing changes).

The timetables are available on the Greyhound website.

## New bus deliveries

Local bus manufacturers enjoyed a pleasant start to the year. In January, a total of 172 buses were delivered, which is higher than any month in 2019, and a 50 per cent year-on-year increase.

Unsurprisingly, more than half the deliveries went to Victoria and New South Wales.

Swedish makers Volvo (52) and Scania (38) were on top followed by BCI (28) and Yutong (21). Mercedes-Benz was the other one to make it to double figures.

Of the bus body-builders, Volgren (33) and BCI (30) were on top followed by Yutong (21) and Irizar (18). Custom was the other body-builder to make it to double figures.

## NEW SOUTH WALES

### Blue Mountains bus replacement

Following on from the *Rail & Tram News* article above, replacement buses between Springwood and Mount Victoria (due to the landslide at Leura) operated as follows:

- **12BM** Springwood (SGD) to Mount Victoria (MTV) (all stations)

**Weekdays** – buses operated (from SGD) every 20 minutes from 04:30 to 16:50, every 15 mins 16:50 to 18:50, then every 20 mins until 01:30; (from MTV) every 20 mins from 02:40 to 06:00, every 15 mins 06:00 to 08:30, then every 20 mins until 22:10 (the last service extended as required towards Penrith).

**Weekends** – buses operated (from SGD) every 30 minutes from 05:29 to 01:55 (02:00 Sunday night); (from MTV) every 30 mins from 04:00 to 22:59 (the last service extended as required towards Penrith).

Journey times between Springwood and Mt Victoria ranged from 64 to 75 minutes depending on the day and time.

- **40BM** Springwood (SGD) to Katoomba (KAT) (all stations)

**Weekdays** – buses operated (from SGD) every 15 minutes from 05:30 to 06:30, every 12 mins 06:30 to 07:54, every 10 mins 07:54 to 14:54, every 7 mins 14:54 to 17:00, every 6 mins 17:00 to 19:00, every 10 mins 19:00 to 22:00, then every 15 mins until 01:45; (from KAT) every 15 mins from 03:00 to 06:00, every 6 mins 06:00 to 07:00, every 7 mins 07:00 to 07:56, every 10 mins 07:56 to 19:56, then every 15 mins until 22:26.

**Saturdays** – buses operated (from SGD) every 10 minutes from 08:05 to 09:05, every 8 mins 09:05 to 10:09, every 15 mins 10:09 to 12:09, every 20 mins 12:09 to 14:09, every 15 mins 14:09 to 15:09, every 12 mins 15:09 to 16:09, every 10 mins 16:09 to 17:09, every 15 mins 17:09 to 18:09, then every 20 mins until 19:09, with the final service at 19:39; (from KAT) every 10 mins from 09:02 to 09:52, every 8 mins 10:05 to 11:09, every 15 mins 11:09 to 12:54, then roughly every 20 mins until 15:08, every 15 mins from 15:08 to 16:08, every 12 mins 16:08 to 16:56, every 10 mins 16:56 to 18:06, every 15 mins 18:06 to 18:51, then every 30 mins from 19:05 until 20:35.

**Sundays** – buses operated (from SGD) every 4 minutes from 07:05 to 08:09, every 4 mins 08:09 to 10:05, every 6 mins 10:05 to 11:05, every 10 mins 11:05 to 14:05, every 7 mins 14:05 to 15:08, every 5 mins 15:08 to 16:08, every 4 mins 16:08 to 18:08, every 8 mins 18:08 to 19:12, then every 12 mins until 20:12; (from KAT) roughly every 8 mins from 08:01 to 09:06, roughly every 4 mins 09:06 to 11:05, every 6 mins 11:05 to 12:05, roughly every 10 mins 12:05 to 15:04, every 7 mins 15:04 to 16:07, every 5 mins 16:07 to 16:57, roughly every 4 mins 17:00 to 19:04, every 8 mins 19:04 to 20:08, then roughly every 12 mins until 21:09.



On weekends, early morning and late evening services to all stations were covered by route 12BM.

Journey times between Katoomba and Springwood ranged from 35 to 64 minutes depending on the day and time.

The temporary timetables were made available online at [www.transportnsw.info](http://www.transportnsw.info). The above frequencies were for the period 21-28 February, the previous timetable (period 14-20 February) had a one or two extra late night services in selected directions.

## 12BM Springwood, then all stations to Mount Victoria

Monday to Friday										
Service Information										
Springwood Station	21:50	22:10	22:30	22:50	23:10	23:30	23:50	00:10	00:30	
Faulconbridge Station	21:55	22:15	22:35	22:55	23:15	23:35	23:55	00:15	00:35	
Great Western Hwy opp Linden Station, Linden	21:58	22:18	22:38	22:58	23:18	23:38	23:58	00:18	00:38	
Woodford Station	22:02	22:22	22:42	23:02	23:22	23:42	00:02	00:22	00:42	
Hazelbrook Station	22:05	22:25	22:45	23:05	23:25	23:45	00:05	00:25	00:45	
Great Western Hwy opp Lawson Station, Lawson	22:08	22:28	22:48	23:08	23:28	23:48	00:08	00:28	00:48	
Great Western Hwy opp Bullaburra Station, Bullaburra	22:15	22:35	22:55	23:15	23:35	23:55	00:15	00:35	00:55	
Station St opp Wentworth Falls Station, Wentworth Falls	22:22	22:42	23:02	23:22	23:42	00:02	00:22	00:42	01:02	
Leura Station, Leura Mall, Leura	22:27	22:47	23:07	23:27	23:47	00:07	00:27	00:47	01:07	
Katoomba Station	22:32	22:52	23:12	23:32	23:52	00:12	00:32	00:52	01:12	
Great Western Hwy opp Medlow Bath Station, Medlow Bath	22:40	23:00	23:20	23:40	00:00	00:20	00:40	01:00	01:20	
Blackheath Station	22:47	23:07	23:27	23:47	00:07	00:27	00:47	01:07	01:27	
Mount Victoria Station	22:57	23:17	23:37	23:57	00:17	00:37	00:57	01:17	01:37	

## 40BM Katoomba, then all stations to Springwood

Monday to Friday										
Katoomba Station	03:00	03:15	03:30	03:45	04:00	04:15	04:30	04:45	05:00	
Leura Station, Leura Mall, Leura	03:03	03:18	03:33	03:48	04:03	04:18	04:33	04:48	05:03	
Wentworth Falls Station	03:07	03:22	03:37	03:52	04:07	04:22	04:37	04:52	05:07	
Bullaburra Station, Great Western Hwy, Bullaburra	03:13	03:28	03:43	03:58	04:13	04:28	04:43	04:58	05:13	
Lawson Station	03:20	03:35	03:50	04:05	04:20	04:35	04:50	05:05	05:20	
Hazelbrook Shops, Great Western Hwy, Hazelbrook	03:23	03:38	03:53	04:08	04:23	04:38	04:53	05:08	05:23	
Great Western Hwy opp Woodford Station, Woodford	03:26	03:41	03:56	04:11	04:26	04:41	04:56	05:11	05:26	
Linden Station, Great Western Hwy, Linden	03:29	03:44	03:59	04:14	04:29	04:44	04:59	05:14	05:29	
Great Western Hwy opp Faulconbridge Station, Faulconbridge	03:31	03:46	04:01	04:16	04:31	04:46	05:01	05:16	05:31	
Springwood Station	03:35	03:50	04:05	04:20	04:35	04:50	05:05	05:20	05:35	

Monday to Friday										
Katoomba Station	05:15	05:30	05:45	06:00	06:06	06:12	06:18	06:24	06:30	
Leura Station, Leura Mall, Leura	05:18	05:33	05:48	06:03	06:09	06:15	06:21	06:27	06:33	
Wentworth Falls Station	05:22	05:37	05:52	06:07	06:13	06:19	06:25	06:31	06:37	
Bullaburra Station, Great Western Hwy, Bullaburra	05:28	05:43	05:58	06:13	06:19	06:25	06:31	06:37	06:43	
Lawson Station	05:35	05:50	06:05	06:20	06:26	06:32	06:38	06:44	06:50	
Hazelbrook Shops, Great Western Hwy, Hazelbrook	05:38	05:53	06:08	06:23	06:29	06:35	06:41	06:47	06:53	
Great Western Hwy opp Woodford Station, Woodford	05:41	05:56	06:11	06:26	06:32	06:38	06:44	06:50	06:56	
Linden Station, Great Western Hwy, Linden	05:44	05:59	06:14	06:29	06:35	06:41	06:47	06:53	07:00	
Great Western Hwy opp Faulconbridge Station, Faulconbridge	05:46	06:01	06:16	06:31	06:37	06:43	06:49	06:55	07:01	
Springwood Station	05:50	06:05	06:20	06:35	06:41	06:47	06:53	06:59	07:05	

Monday to Friday										
Katoomba Station	06:36	06:42	06:48	06:54	07:00	07:07	07:14	07:21	07:28	
Leura Station, Leura Mall, Leura	06:39	06:45	06:51	06:57	07:03	07:11	07:18	07:25	07:32	
Wentworth Falls Station	06:43	06:49	06:55	07:01	07:07	07:16	07:23	07:30	07:37	
Bullaburra Station, Great Western Hwy, Bullaburra	06:49	06:55	07:01	07:07	07:13	07:23	07:30	07:37	07:44	
Lawson Station	06:56	07:02	07:08	07:14	07:20	07:31	07:38	07:45	07:52	
Hazelbrook Shops, Great Western Hwy, Hazelbrook	06:59	07:05	07:11	07:17	07:23	07:34	07:41	07:48	07:55	
Great Western Hwy opp Woodford Station, Woodford	07:02	07:08	07:14	07:20	07:26	07:37	07:44	07:51	07:58	
Linden Station, Great Western Hwy, Linden	07:05	07:11	07:17	07:23	07:29	07:40	07:47	07:54	08:01	
Great Western Hwy opp Faulconbridge Station, Faulconbridge	07:07	07:13	07:19	07:25	07:31	07:43	07:50	07:57	08:04	
Springwood Station	07:11	07:17	07:23	07:29	07:35	07:47	07:54	08:01	08:08	

Monday to Friday										
Katoomba Station	07:35	07:42	07:49	07:56	08:06	08:16	08:26	08:36	08:46	
Leura Station, Leura Mall, Leura	07:39	07:46	07:53	08:00	08:11	08:21	08:31	08:41	08:51	
Wentworth Falls Station	07:44	07:51	07:58	08:05	08:16	08:26	08:36	08:46	08:56	
Bullaburra Station, Great Western Hwy, Bullaburra	07:51	07:58	08:05	08:12	08:23	08:33	08:43	08:53	09:03	
Lawson Station	07:59	08:06	08:13	08:20	08:32	08:42	08:52	09:02	09:12	
Hazelbrook Shops, Great Western Hwy, Hazelbrook	08:02	08:09	08:16	08:23	08:35	08:45	08:55	09:05	09:15	
Great Western Hwy opp Woodford Station, Woodford	08:05	08:12	08:19	08:26	08:39	08:49	08:59	09:09	09:19	
Linden Station, Great Western Hwy, Linden	08:08	08:15	08:22	08:29	08:43	08:53	09:03	09:13	09:23	
Great Western Hwy opp Faulconbridge Station, Faulconbridge	08:11	08:18	08:25	08:32	08:46	08:56	09:06	09:16	09:26	
Springwood Station	08:15	08:22	08:29	08:36	08:51	09:01	09:11	09:21	09:31	

12BM and 40BM temporary timetable extract (21-28 Feb)  
(source: Transport for NSW).

## AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

### Updated Canberra timetables

Transport Canberra service changes, 'planned' effective 28 April 2020:

- **R2** Fraser to Fyshwick via Belconnen and City – will be truncated to end at Canberra railway station,
- **R5** City to Lanyon – will operate direct from City to Woden. Suburbs of Russell, Barton and Forrest will now be served by new route 59 (City-Woden),
- **R6** City to Woden via Kingston – will terminate at the City Interchange in lieu of City West (in preparation for the start of construction of stage 2A of the light rail line from the City to Commonwealth Park),
- **18** Gungahlin to Mitchell – route extended to Dickson,
- **23** Gungahlin to Nicholls Loop anti-clockwise – route recast as Gungahlin to Belconnen via Palmerston, Grace and Giralang,
- **24** Gungahlin to Nicholls Loop clockwise – route recast as Gungahlin to Belconnen via Nicholls and William Webb Drive,
- **25/26** Gungahlin to Taylor Loop – route extended further into Taylor along Robin Boyd Crescent,
- **41** Belconnen to Fraser via Page and Melba – to now operate via Coulter Dr and Copland Dr in lieu of Evatt,
- **66** Woden to Cooleman Court via Denman Prospect – route extended to Bielski St in preparation for the Denman Prospect School (expected to open in 2021),
- **72** Tuggeranong to Erindale Loop clockwise – recast as Tuggeranong to Woden via Oxley and Canberra Hospital,
- **73** Tuggeranong to Erindale Loop anti-clockwise – recast as Tuggeranong to Woden via Monash and Athlton Drive,
- **76** Tuggeranong to Calwell via Erindale and Chisholm – recast as Tuggeranong to Woden via Calwell, Chisholm, Erindale and Canberra Hospital,
- **77** Tuggeranong to Erindale via Monash and Gowrie – recast as Tuggeranong to Woden via Monash, Gowrie, Erindale & Canberra Hosp'l,
- **New route 901** Belconnen to Calvary Hospital via Canberra Institute of Technology, Bruce,
- **New route 902** Woden to Hume via Old Narrabundah and Alexander Maconochie Centre.

Of interest is that loop routes 23/24 and 72/73 will be split, while service frequencies will be increased on Saturdays.

Addressing both the ongoing weekend service issue and the lack of drivers, which caused many weekend services to be removed from the timetable last year, the ACT government recently revealed that 87 new bus drivers had been hired in the past 12 months, with another 43 planned in the near future. Consultation is still ongoing regarding school bus services, with these expected to be finalised in March.

## Weekend services

The ACT government has rejected calls to immediately increase weekend bus services following recent hail storms damaging private vehicles. Many local route services operate only two-hourly, with additional timetabled services being cut following a reliability issue caused by a shortage of drivers working on weekends. The Public Transport Association of Canberra's Ryan Hemsley said "[the government] has relied on the fact these services are not frequently used by most people". ACT Transport Minister, Chris Steel, said "since the storm, we have been monitoring public transport patronage, and while there has been a small [3 per cent] increase [across the network], ... the network has been able to manage the additional load with no need for more services".

## NEW ZEALAND

### Auckland electric buses

Auckland Transport (AT) has confirmed it will go ahead with a plan to replace existing CityLink buses with electric vehicles from the end of the year. In partnership with NZ Bus, 12 electric vehicles will be procured from China's Zhejiang CRRC Electric Vehicle company.

This follows on from a trial undertaken two years ago in Auckland using an "e-bus" which, AT chairperson Adrienne Young-Cooper said passed "with flying colours".

Auckland Mayor, Phil Goff, made a previous promise to have all new buses be non-carbon emitting by 2025.

### Wellington early bird discount

From 10 February, adult-paying bus commuters 'snapping on' before 07:00 on weekdays started getting a 25 per cent fare discount in an effort to encourage commuters to travel earlier in the morning. This is part of a four-month trial expected to cost ratepayers \$155,000 in lost revenue.

**Thanks** to Hilaire Fraser, Steven Haby, Transport for NSW, The Canberra Times, Australian Bus & Coach and Otago Daily Times for *Bus & Coach News*.

## FERRY & SHIP NEWS

### NEW ZEALAND

#### Auckland disruption

On the morning of 21 January, three ferry services between Auckland and Devonport were cancelled, with the operator, Fullers, citing "cruise ships" as the cause – more particularly "cruise ships berthing at times outside of their schedule". Auckland Transport disputed this, with a spokesperson saying that there was "no restriction on ferries entering or leaving the ferry basin at any time".

**Thanks** to Radio New Zealand for *Ferry & Ship News*.

## AIR NEWS

### DOMESTIC

#### Rex pulls flights

Regional Express (Rex) has cancelled its service between Adelaide and Kangaroo Island, citing "excessive capacity" being "dumped" by Qantas onto the route. Qantas started operating flights on the same route two years ago, partially subsidised by the South Australian government. Rex has made a complaint to the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission, saying in a statement that "unlike Qantas, Rex is not able to continue servicing a money-losing route indefinitely". Rex however says the door is still open to a return in future, if the route can be profitable or possibly partially subsidised by the government. Rex deputy chairman, John Sharp – we "would love to keep operating to Kangaroo Island... [but] we're not a big enough company to keep losing money on a particular route. If the community of South Australia wants us to keep operating then yes, we're happy to work with the South Australian government to find a way to keep doing that".

Rex has also cancelled its Sydney and Ballina route, while it is reportedly reviewing Adelaide to Whyalla.

#### QantasLink adds KI flights

On 7 February, QantasLink announced that it would increase its service offering to Kangaroo Island from July. QantasLink's Chief Executive, John Gissing, said that "we will move to increase our capacity and frequency from five flights a week to 12" - more than doubling their offering. QantasLink will also publish a revised timetable for the route.

Regional Express responded, saying that in light of this development, with Qantas becoming a monopoly operator on the route, the South Australian government will need to watch prices for flights to/from Kangaroo Island once they ceased flying to ensure that Qantas does not take advantage with hiked fares.

## INTERNATIONAL

### Qantas suspends flights to China

On 1 February, Qantas announced that it would suspend its flights to the Chinese mainland from Sunday 9 February. This follows a period of “monitoring” the coronavirus outbreak, as previously reported in *Table Talk*. The airline said it would contact travellers that had booked flights between 9 February and 29 March to consider alternative options for those travellers. The Transport Workers Union's secretary, Michael Kaine, noted “it is for logistical reasons, rather than safety”. This was confirmed by Qantas, who said in a statement that “these entry restrictions pose significant logistical challenges for rostering crew to operate mainland China services, leading to the need to temporarily suspend these flights”.

This now also spells a premature end to their direct Beijing flights, which were due to close in March. When flights re-commence in future, their only direct route to the mainland will be to Shanghai.

### Virgin swings axe on Sydney-HK

In an update to a report in *Table Talk* from December 2019, Virgin Australia has now axed its Sydney to Hong Kong route to be effective from 3 March. This adds to the recently axed flights from Melbourne to Hong Kong. Virgin has cited the route as no longer “commercially viable” due to continued reduction in demand from civil unrest in tandem with the Coronavirus outbreak.

People with bookings made from 3 March onwards will be contacted to make alternative arrangements.

## Coronavirus

Cathay Pacific has made a reported 90 per cent reduction in scheduled flights to the Chinese mainland between March and June as a result of the ongoing Coronavirus outbreak. The airline's 27,000-strong employee base has been offered a “special unpaid leave scheme”. During this period, employees could voluntarily take up to three weeks of unpaid leave, with management citing low demand impacting profitability.

The business is also “asking suppliers for price reductions, implementing hiring freezes, postponing major projects and stopping all non-critical” expenditure, said its Chief Executive Officer, Augustus Tang Kin-wing.

**Thanks** to Ross Morrison, Paul Brown, Steven Haby, ABC News, The Sydney Morning Herald and Nine News for *Air News*.



## About *Table Talk*

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We welcome contributions to *Table Talk* at all times.

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Back issues of *Table Talk* are available on our website, [www.timetable.org.au](http://www.timetable.org.au), after two months from print publication.

**Table Talk Newswire** is an advance monthly email of Rail News. To obtain this, contact the Rail Editor.



**ATA**

Australian Timetable Association Inc.

The Transport Analysts

## Members' News March 2020

### Report of the ATA Committee Meeting Wednesday 20 November 2019

Our meeting comprised the usual reception of reports on the work of the ATA. For the first seven months of the 2019-2020 financial year, our bank balance has been in a healthy position due to the renewal of memberships. The distribution list and auction have been running at a surplus. Our work has been impacted by increased costs for postage and printing. Membership fees are unchanged for 2020/21, so normal membership will be maintained at \$60. Membership is now 134 and we welcome Robin Bromby of Edgecliff, NSW as a new member. In recognition of the assistance given to ATA by Samuel Rachdi of Fahrplancenter, Switzerland we will offer him free membership for 2020/21. Samuel has been able to provide ATA members with many overseas timetables. Matthew Gibbins and Richard May are assisting in the preparation of auction catalogues. They join Len Regan, Geoff Hassall and Robert Henderson as well as other volunteers in the work of the auction. Early in January 2019 we submitted an application for \$15000 under the Local History Grants Program to cover the costs of computer, printer, book scanner access and storage shelving in a new work area for the Victorian Segment of the National Timetable Collection. Scanning hard-bound working timetables is being done by members at Docuvan in Bayswater, Victoria. Remember the date for the AGM to be held in Sydney is Saturday August 15, 2020.

### Melbourne & Sydney National Timetable Collection Working Sessions

Melbourne Working Sessions will be held on Saturdays 7 & 21 March, 4 & 18 April, Thursdays 12 & 26 March, 9 & 23 April at [Prahran Mechanics' Institute](#) 39 St Edmonds Rd, PRAHRAN. Sydney Working Sessions will be held on Saturday March 21 (full day) and Saturday May 16(half day) at [378 Abercrombie St DARLINGTON](#). These days are very successful. Full day sessions run from 10am to 4pm.

Hilaire Fraser, [president@timetable.org.au](mailto:president@timetable.org.au)

### DIVISION MEETINGS- CALENDAR

**Adelaide:** Adelaide meetings are held at the home of the Convenor, Roger Wheaton, [2C Bakewell St, TUSMORE](#), 5065. Inquiries to [rogerw@adam.com.au](mailto:rogerw@adam.com.au) or 08-83319043. At the moment no meeting has been scheduled.

**Brisbane:** We expect that meetings will continue to be held at the usual venue of Brian Webber's residence at [61/22 Towns Street](#), Mitchelton starting at 2pm. Please contact Brian for dates. Phone 3354 2140

**Canberra:** The Canberra Division meets at 1830 on the second Thursday of every month at the [Ainslie Football and Social Club](#), 52 Wakefield Avenue, **AINSLIE**. Good conversation and a meal are features. Enquiries to David Cranney, [cranney@inet.net.au](mailto:cranney@inet.net.au) 0421 174 951

**Melbourne:** Meetings are held on the first Wednesday of odd-numbered months from March to November. All meetings commence at 2000 at the home of David Hennell, [3/29 Croydon Road](#), **SURREY HILLS**, a short walk from Chatham Railway Station. The next meetings will be held on 4<sup>th</sup> March and 6<sup>th</sup> May, 2020.

**Sydney:** Sydney meetings are held on the third Saturday of February, May, August and November. All members and non-members are welcome. The next meeting is at 1400 on Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> May 2020. Full details of a possibly revised location at Sydney University will appear in April 2020 Members' News. This meeting will follow a working session on the NTC, [details above](#). Inquiries to [Geoffrey.Clifton@sydney.edu.au](mailto:Geoffrey.Clifton@sydney.edu.au) 0405 387 478

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