



AUSTRALIAN TIMETABLE
ASSOCIATION

TABLE TALK

AUSTRALASIAN TIMETABLE NEWS

RRP \$4.95

No. 346, June 2021

Published by the Australian Timetable Association

RAIL & TRAM NEWS

NATIONAL



Budget 2021

In May, the federal government set out its Budget for the 2021/22 financial year.

The government says the record investment of a “\$110 billion, 10-year infrastructure pipeline forms part of our Economic Recovery Plan... delivering nation-building infrastructure projects, water security to inland Australia, meeting our national freight challenge and getting Australians home sooner and safer”. The budget includes “an additional \$15.2 billion in new commitments... supporting 30,000 jobs across Australia”.

“The government ... [has] major infrastructure projects right across the country, including:

- \$2 billion for **Great Western Highway Upgrade - Katoomba to Lithgow - Construction of East and West Sections** in New South Wales;
- \$2 billion investment to deliver a new **Melbourne Intermodal Terminal**;
- \$400 million for **Bruce Highway Additional Funding** in Queensland;
- \$237.5 million for **METRONET: Hamilton Street / Wharf Street Grade Separations and Elevation of Associated Stations** in Western Australia;
- \$161.6 million for the **Truro Bypass** in South Australia;
- \$150 million for **National Network Highway Upgrades (Phase 2)** in the Northern Territory;
- \$80 million for **Bass Highway Safety and Freight Efficiency Upgrades** in Tasmania; and

- \$26.5 million for **William Hovell Drive Duplication** in the Australian Capital Territory.

The budget also provides the following:

- An **additional \$1 billion** for the Road Safety Program, now totalling \$3 billion for the whole program.
- An **additional \$1 billion** for the “highly successful” Local Roads and Community Infrastructure Program, now totalling \$2.5 billion for the whole program.
- **Up to an additional \$258 million** for National Water Grid projects.
- An **additional \$250 million** for a sixth round of the Building Better Regions Fund.

New rail project commitments in the 21/22 Budget include:

- QLD – Gold Coast rail line – Capacity Improvement (Kuraby-Beenleigh) – pre-construction – \$178.1 million
- QLD – Beerburrum to Nambour – Duplication Study - \$5 million
- ACT – Canberra Light Rail – Stage 2A - \$132.5 million
- VIC – Melbourne Intermodal Terminal – planning and development - \$61.8 million
- VIC – Melbourne Intermodal Terminal – delivery - \$2 billion

- WA – Metro net – Hamilton & Wharf Streets Grade Separation & Stations Elevation – \$237.5 million
- WA – Kalgoorlie Rail Realignment – Business Case - \$2 million
- NT – Pennant Creek Multi modal Facility and Rail Terminal – Development Study - \$300,000

Other **ongoing** rail project commitments include:

Queensland

- Gold Coast Light Rail (Stage 3) - \$126.6 million

Victoria

- Commuter Car Park upgrades at Heathmont, Berwick, Ferntree Gully, Frankston, Ringwood - \$87.8 million

Tasmania

- Tasmanian Freight Rail Revitalisation (Tranche 3) – Port of Burnie Shiploader Upgrade - \$24 million

South Australia

- Gawler Line Electrification - \$60 million

Western Australia

- Assorted Metronet projects:
 - Byford extension - \$110 million
 - High Capacity Signalling - \$31.5 million

FEDERAL MINISTER FOR INFRASTRUCTURE, TRANSPORT AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

NEW SOUTH WALES



Sydney Trains timetable update

Sydney Trains' latest timetable update, designated version 8.00, will come into effect across the network from the morning of Saturday, 12 June.

Once again, the majority of changes are small in nature, but include:

- Altered departure platforms for some services at Sydney Terminal.
- Introduction of three NIF (D-set) trains for the Intercity Newcastle and Central Coast line.
- Renumbering of train rosters and run numbers across sector 2, due to the full rollout of the

second tranche of B Sets.

- V Set attach and detach activities centralised from Broadmeadow and Hamilton Yards to Newcastle Interchange.
- A small number of train services at Emu Plains, Penrith, Blacktown, Clyde, Hornsby, St James, Museum, Revesby, East Hills, Holsworthy, Wyee, Dora Creek, Awaba, Hamilton, Newcastle Interchange, Lapstone, Glenbrook, Blaxland, Warrimoo, Valley Heights, Springwood and Hazelbrook stations arriving/departing either one minute earlier or later.

As previously advised, the new D-sets will not actually enter passenger service until agreement is reached between the state government and unions. **SYDNEY TRAINS**

Sydney Trains disruption

On Monday, 10 May, most Sydney Trains suburban services ground to a halt during the afternoon peak as a result of a person threatening self-harm on the O'Connell street rail overbridge in Parramatta.

The T1 Western line was shut down between Parramatta and Seven Hills as a result of the blockage, with a police negotiator required to deescalate the situation, lasting until well around 19:00 hours. Intercity Blue Mountains line services were also severely impacted with no movements between Central and Penrith. T1 Western and T9 Northern line services experienced delays of up to several hours, also impacting T2 Inner West and Leppington lines then spreading to T8 Airport and T3 Bankstown line trains. Trains across most of the network were severely disrupted for the remainder of the night.

News media reported the next day that the male had been charged with trespass.

On the next afternoon, the T4 Eastern Suburbs & Illawarra and Intercity South Coast lines experienced significant delays to services due to a power supply issue affecting signalling equipment at Oatley. Delays and cancellations impacted these lines for the remainder of the night. **SYDNEY TRAINS, NINE NEWS**

COVID lockdown

Victoria's acting Premier, James Merlino, announced a snap seven-day lockdown starting 00:01 on Friday, 28 May. This necessitated the termination of Melbourne XPT services at Albury, starting with the Sydney night departure on Thursday, 27 May. Road coaches are operating in lieu between Albury and Melbourne. **TRANSPORT FOR NSW**

Hunter Valley shutdown

Australian Rail Track Corporation (ARTC) delivered its planned three-day shutdown (from 06:30 on Tuesday, 27 April to 06:30 Friday, 30 April) from Newcastle to Boggabri, and from Muswellbrook to Ulan.

The works were initially pencilled in for earlier on the month, but postponed due to heavy rainfall and flooding.

Works included turnout replacement in Quirindi, 9,976 metres of rail replaced, 4 kilometres of ballast replacement, 450 metres of track formation upgrades, as well as general track maintenance and defect remediation works.

ARTC said that NSW TrainLink Regional Hunter services operated as far as Maitland, the XPT also operated through to Casino/Brisbane, while all other services were replaced by coaches.

ARTC also reinforced that work is in full swing on the Narrabri to North Star section of the Inland Rail project (see page 1 of March's *Table Talk*), where "10,000 sleepers and 11 kilometres of rail have already been removed".

Another shutdown is planned for 25-27 May. **ARTC**

Parramatta Light Rail progress

The weekend of 29-30 May saw the installation of the new 1425-tonne steel and concrete James Ruse Drive bridge at Rosehill between 20:00 Saturday and 08:00 Sunday. Initially scheduled to occur the prior weekend, "technical challenges" saw this work postponed.



Artist design of bridge over JRD (source: Parra Connect)

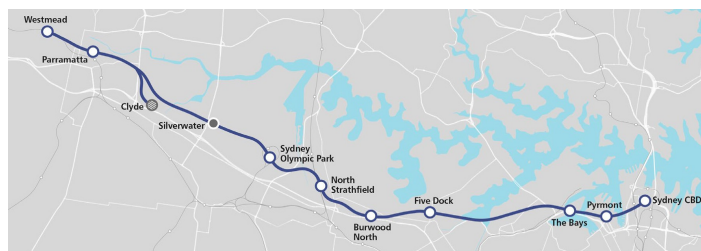
The works necessitated the closure of James Ruse Drive between Parramatta and Victoria Roads, with bus **M92** diverted to operate via Alfred Street, Granville. Also, a temporary bus stop was created for route **535** services at Parkes Street opposite Hambledon Cottage Reserve (TSN2150416, to Carlingford), and Hassall Street after Factory Place (TSN 2150264, to Parramatta) in lieu of Hassall Street before/after Arthur Street bus stop. **PARRAMATTA CONNECT, TRANSPORT FOR NSW**

Bankstown line shutdown

From 28 June to 11 July, there will be a closure of the section of the T3 Bankstown Line that will be converted to metro operation, coinciding with the next NSW school holidays. Buses will replace trains between Bankstown and Sydenham/Central. On weekdays, limited buses are also proposed to extend to Kingsgrove, Beverly Hills, and Padstow stations on the T8 Airport Line. **NSW GOVERNMENT**

Sydney Metro West progress

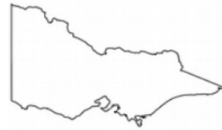
In May, the state government announced the final locations for two new city stations as part of the 24-kilometre nine-station Sydney Metro West line, with works to take the best part of a decade to complete.



The line starts with the CBD station located underneath Hunter Street, between O'Connell and Macquarie Streets (named Hunter Street station). Other locations within the CBD were also shortlisted for consideration, including Elizabeth Street, Museum, Martin Place and Circular Quay. Hunter Street station will also provide interchange with other public transport options, including Wynyard and Martin Place stations on the Sydney Trains network, the light rail stop at Wynyard, and Pitt Street station on the Metro CSW (City & South West) line. 11 commercial buildings will be compulsorily acquired.

The second station, Pyrmont, will be built underneath the area between Pyrmont Bridge Road, and Pyrmont & Union Streets. Two commercial buildings will be compulsorily acquired.

Readers will recall that Pyrmont was a subsequent addition to the project by the government, following strong local support. The government claims travel time between these two stations will be just two minutes, with travel time from Hunter Street station to Parramatta now being billed as "around" twenty minutes, although the Transport Minister's steadfast insistence that it would not be longer than 20 minutes has been noted previously. It has yet to be clarified if the 20-minute target will be achieved with the inclusion of the station at Pyrmont. **TRANSPORT FOR NSW, GEOFF LAMBERT, ABC NEWS**



X'Trapolis 2.0

The state government announced on 18 May that it will engage Alstom to build 25 new six-carriage “X'Trapolis 2.0” suburban trains which will replace around half of the 35-40 year old Comeng-built fleet. The \$986 million deal will provide for at least 60 per cent local content with the final assembly of the trains in its Ballarat factory.

The Transport department says it plans to run these new trains on the Craigieburn, Upfield and Frankston lines as they enter service between 2024 and 2026.

The deal also provides for an upgrade of the Craigieburn Train Maintenance Facility. *THE AGE, VICTORIAN GOVT – TRANSPORT*

Yarra Trams: timetable update

Yarra Trams finally announced in May the direct impacts on the timetable for selected lines during peak service times caused by the temporary withdrawal of some A-, B- and Z-class vehicles from service (see last month's edition of *Table Talk*). Yarra Trams has also provided an expected end date of the service reduction as 11 July, although this will obviously depend on their receipt of replacement wheel deliveries.

Yarra Trams advises, from Sunday, 2 May until Monday, 11 July, during peak service periods:

- Routes **19** and **59**: Services operate every 6 minutes.
- Route **58**: Services operate every 5 mins.
- Route **70**: Services operate every 10 mins, re-designated temporary route **70a**.
- Routes **75** and **109**: Services operate every 10 mins.

Yarra Trams advises that temporary route 70a operates in two halves, with low-floor vehicles operating between Docklands precinct and John Cain Arena. Meanwhile, high-floor vehicles operate the service between John Cain Arena (Melbourne Park) and Wattle Park (Burwood). *YARRA TRAMS*

V/Line: Ballarat line

Ongoing maintenance and improvement projects have led to disruption to Ballarat line services recently.

26 April-7 May: Line shutdown. Coaches replaced trains.

14-16 May: Coaches operated on all or part of the line.

17-20 May: Every evening after 22:00, services were replaced by coaches.

30 May-1 June: Every evening from around 20:30, services were replaced by coaches.

4-5, 7-10 and 14-19 June: Every evening after 23:00, services are replaced by coaches.

Works included general maintenance, bridge maintenance at Ingliston, and level crossing removal works at Ardeer and Deer Park.

Meanwhile, the Lydiard Street rail crossing is finally closer to reopening after the state government provided \$10.5 million in funding to replace the damaged replica heritage gates with automated gates.

Public Transport Minister Ben Carroll said the money would provide a temporary 'half-boom barrier crossing' by October, with the new automated gates coming next year. The Minister claimed the gates would be brought into line with the rest of the state, while also stating “we're equally mindful of the heritage of Ballarat – that's why I'm very pleased to say we have engaged heritage consultants”. The Minister then clarified, saying “we're working very hard to ensure that those gates still remain part of the Ballarat precinct”.

Local councillor Samantha McIntosh displayed her disappointment with the delay in providing the temporary solution – almost 18 months, with the road crossing being closed to road traffic; with further disappointment that “the issue was about the fault of the train, not the fault of the gates. I certainly believe over the time the focus has been shifted to be on the gates – not for the right reasons”. A Transport department spokesperson countered that the heritage gates took two minutes to open, were manually monitored through CCTV, and responsible for 60 per cent of delays on the Ballarat line. *V/LINE, ABC NEWS, BALLARAT COURIER*

V/Line: Gippsland line

From Friday 21 to Sunday, 30 May, all Traralgon and Bairnsdale V/Line services on the Gippsland line were replaced by coaches due to maintenance and infrastructure works.

V/Line also advised, from Monday, 31 May until 28 June, speed restrictions would be in place, leading to slower journey times for passengers, in order to “allow the tracks to bed down”. In the Up direction, the temporary timetable changes see most services depart

from Bairnsdale, Traralgon and Nar Nar Goon four minutes earlier than the regular timetable. The services **excepted** from the earlier departure times are:

- All weekday services departing after 17:20 (however, the 18:07 service from Traralgon arrives at Southern Cross (SX) 24 minutes later than usual; while only on Thursdays and Fridays, the 18:06 from Bairnsdale and 20:22 from Traralgon services arrive at SX up to 23 minutes later than usual, and
- On Saturdays, the 11:27 service from Bairnsdale.

Meanwhile, in the Down direction, most services arrive from Nar Nar Goon at least up to five minutes later than usual, with selected services up to 18 minutes later than usual. *VLINE*

WESTERN AUSTRALIA



Airport line behind schedule

The state government confirmed another delay for the Airport line project, now estimating the line to not be operational until early 2022, which has been blamed on delays to the supply of steel and other materials due to the pandemic; however the project was still meeting budget due to inbuilt contingencies.

This shortage has also been said to be the cause of the unfinished works associated with the 2018 sinkhole at Dundas Road in Forrestfield, with flooding causing damage to 26 metres of tunnelling.

Meanwhile, the Airport line is now physically connected to the existing rail network at Bayswater Junction, following two 56-hour weekend shutdowns in February and March. *WATODAY, METRONET*

Perth to Albany train

The state government has poured cold water on the idea of running passenger trains between Perth and Albany. Passenger services previously ran between the two cities in the 1970s.

Proponents suggest the service could operate in four hours from Perth through Narrogin, Wagin and Mount Barker to Boddington, using the existing Great Southern lines.

Transport Minister Rita Saffioti said "Our ability to extend passenger rail to Albany is limited due to services being cancelled many decades ago. While the

rail infrastructure does remain in place, some sections of these lines have been closed for some years and have not been maintained." *ABC NEWS*

Kalgoorlie Duplication

City of Kalgoorlie-Boulder's mayor, John Bowler, says the 18-year plan to realign the rail line in Kalgoorlie's west, is starting to "see the stars align", with the federal government's \$2 million Budget allocation for a business case, together with a \$500,000 contribution from the state government.

Proponents say that the project, estimated to cost around \$150 million to complete, together with an intermodal terminal, would provide a worthy option to load freight onto trains to run into Perth, rather than it being trucked in. It would also enable industry to bypass Arc Infrastructure's existing, and more expensive, corridor.

A feasibility study was previously conducted in 2003, which was not favourable for the project, then the state Portlink study in 2013, which assessed alignment options through Kalgoorlie. *ABC NEWS*

NEW ZEALAND



Enhanced freight planning and funding

The NZ Transport Agency manages the National Land Transport Fund (NLTF) in funding land transport projects as part of its three-year National Land Transport Programme. The Programme covers the full cost of the state highway system and road safety programs, and provides significant funding for local roads projects across the country; \$5.3 billion were invested in FY 2019/20.

Radio New Zealand reports that as part of the NZ Rail Plan, KiwiRail will start to receive funding from the NLTF for the delivery of infrastructure projects. In return, new rail access charges will be levied, which will go back into the Fund.

The Transport Minister, Michael Wood, said that the move was about having a "linked up transport system in which we make our decisions on a mode-neutral basis. We don't start out and say we're going to invest in road, we're going to invest in rail... [rather] have a national transport system and make rational investments to get the best outcomes to move people and move freight around the country. For too long, rail was shunted off to the side and was ignored and have to kind of plead for money on an annual basis". *RADIO NZ, NZ GOVT - OFFICE OF AUDITOR-GENERAL, NZ TRANSPORT AGENCY*

Auckland Transport - fare cap

Updating the March 2021 article on Auckland Transport's fare cap "tech hurdle" (p. 13), the \$20 daily cap for AT HOP cards came into effect from Sunday, 23 May. **AUCKLAND TRANSPORT**

INTERNATIONAL

UK: Rail services increased

From Monday, 17 May, the UK government eased social restrictions across the country, forming Step 3 of its roadmap out of COVID lockdown. This means gatherings in greater numbers, and more flexibility, including with air travel, where previously there was a "Stay in the UK" requirement, which has been replaced by the ability for Britons to travel to 'green list' countries. The government also reported that at least 18 million Britons had received two doses of a COVID-19 vaccine, with another 17 million halfway there.

The Guardian reports that rail companies boosted their services with 2,500 additional services a day returned across the network - returning to levels not seen since early December (85 per cent of normal timetable). Meanwhile, bus service levels across London were said to have doubled from the same date. **THE GUARDIAN, UK GOVT**

UK: Cracks found in dampeners

Hitachi 800 class trains were removed from service on Saturday, 8 May due to cracking found in some aluminium dampeners, which connect the carriage body to the bogies. Over 180 trains were pulled for safety inspections, with many high-speed services cancelled until Monday, 10 May.

A Rail Delivery Group spokesperson said that operators were running as many services as possible, including rail replacements buses, with extra staff at affected stations and pre-booked tickets could be used on some alternative services.

GWR was the most affected operator, with a total of 93 of the 800-class trains in its fleet, resulting in just 10 per cent of timetabled services running on Sunday 9 May, with limited rail replacement. GWR also removed six of their 800-class trains from service in April after hairline cracks were found in the suspension system during routine maintenance. On Monday, 17 May, most of the fleet was reported to be back in service.

LNER operated a limited service on the East Coast Main Line, reporting that it was however unable to operate trains between Edinburgh and Inverness/Aberdeen until at least Saturday, 15 May.

After an initial impact to some services, by 9 May, normal services were operating with **Hull Trains**, while a reduced timetable operated on **TransPennine** services between York and Edinburgh/Newcastle from Tuesday, 11 May.

Although the trains were to be gradually returned to service after satisfactory checks from the precautionary inspections, Hitachi Rail warned that it was possible "some which aren't yet showing a crack might also need remedial work". Hitachi Rail also said it was working to final a proper solution. **BBC NEWS, SWINDON ADVERTISER**

Great British Railways

In May, the UK government announced the creation of Great British Railways, a state-owned entity tasked with setting fares and timetables, simplifying the sale of train tickets, and managing rail infrastructure across England.

The government said this would lead to "high-quality, consistent services" from 2023.

Additionally, the Transport Secretary, Grant Shapps, announced that, in light of changed travel behaviour due to COVID-19, flexible season tickets would be sold from 21 June enabling the ticket holder to travel on any 8 days within a 28-day period. **BBC NEWS**

UK: Northern line extension

The £1.2 billion extension of London Underground's Northern Line to Battersea will open to passengers in September, according to newly re-elected London mayor, Sadiq Khan.

Meanwhile, a proposed Bakerloo line extension has been postponed until at least 2030, with Transport for London's funding issues being blamed. **THE EVENING STANDARD**

Transport for London bailout

In November, Transport for London (TfL) secured a five-month bailout (ending 31 March 2021) to cover a larger proportion of its ongoing costs, due to significant declines in its fare revenue from COVID-19 impacts on travel. The bailout included £1.8 billion in emergency funding to enable the entity to continue providing existing services. Whilst London Mayor, Sadiq Khan conceded the deal was not ideal, he said it was proof of their commitment. The final amount was subject to change depending on the fare revenue received in that period.

In March, an extension had been agreed to, which saw a rollover of the November deal's terms for a further seven weeks (to 18 May) – past the Mayoral election

held on 6 May. Additional funding of up to £485 million would be made available.

In May, another extension was announced, for a total of 10 days, again on the same terms. An estimated value of around £100 million in funding was agreed to, expiring on 28 May.

TfL said it was continuing discussions with the Mayor and the UK government on a longer-term funding plan, which it hoped to finalise soon. **BBC NEWS (2), YAHOO NEWS**



Source: Exid Concept & Developpement.

Eurostar post-COVID refinance

Western Europe's Eurostar has successfully refinanced its debt after COVID-19 impacts led to financial issues at the international rail operator (see *Table Talk's* Feb 2021 article, p. 5).

Effectively, Eurostar's owners (including rail operators SNCF and SNCB, and pension funds CDPQ and Federated Hermes) have provided guarantees for additional debt totalling \$AU275 million, \$90 million in additional equity from said owners, and another \$90 million in existing debt restructuring.

Following on from the above, Eurostar has confirmed it will increase its service output from 27 May, doubling to two services a day between London and Paris, then increasing this further as international restrictions ease across western Europe. Eurostar also currently operates one service a day between Amsterdam and Brussels. **GLOBAL RAILWAY REVIEW, BBC NEWS**

France: T9 light rail line opened

On 10 April, the Keolis-operated T9 light rail line opened, running between Paris and Orly. The 40-kilometre line has 19 stations, with an anticipated daily patronage count of 70-80,000 people.

The line is reported to operate with 5-minute service frequencies during peak, with a 30-minute journey time end-to-end, and services operating between 05:30 and 00:30 weekdays (to 01:30 on weekends). **INTERNATIONAL RAIL JOURNAL**

France: Taxirail

International Rail Journal reports that Exid Concept & Developpement, in conjunction with rollingstock leasing firm Akiem and track maintenance vehicle specialist Geismar, are working on delivering a prototype "Taxirail" vehicle to provide a light, 'on demand' rail service for lightly-used regional lines across France. This would negate the potential closure of some regional railway lines.

The prototype is planned to undergo testing next year on a disused freight line in Normandy. Powered by either bio-methane or hydrogen, the vehicle is planned to seat 16 people, with up to another 24 standing in a six-metre-long vehicle measuring 2.9 metres in width.

Like an automated metro, vehicles would be operated from a control centre, with cameras and sensors mounted. Negotiations are underway to see changes in national rules that would allow the Taxirail to operate. At least initially, it is planned to run on lines separate from the main network, keeping infrastructure costs down. **INTERNATIONAL RAIL JOURNAL**

US: City patronage gains

Finance site *Marketwatch* reports that some of the country's biggest cities are now seeing usage of public transport systems at their highest levels since the pandemic forced governments to implement social restrictions to curb the spread of the virus.

These gains are based on trip planning data through the Moovit mobile application, while the federal government also reports vaccination rates reaching a quarter of the country's population, with another 15 per cent partially vaccinated.

As at 19 April, New York patronage was at 74 per cent of pre-COVID levels, while the Metropolitan Transportation Authority also recently reported that 36 per cent of surveyed pre-pandemic users were deliberately avoiding using the transit system, but due to safety concerns from "crime and harassment".

Private vehicle usage across New York was reported at 96 per cent of pre-pandemic levels, echoing the bigger gains in private vehicle usage seen in other world cities, such as Sydney, Australia.

Meanwhile, in Miami, where bus and Metrorail has been free since 22 March last year, patronage has fully returned to pre-pandemic levels. The fare-free travel will finish on Sunday, 31 May. **MARKETWATCH**

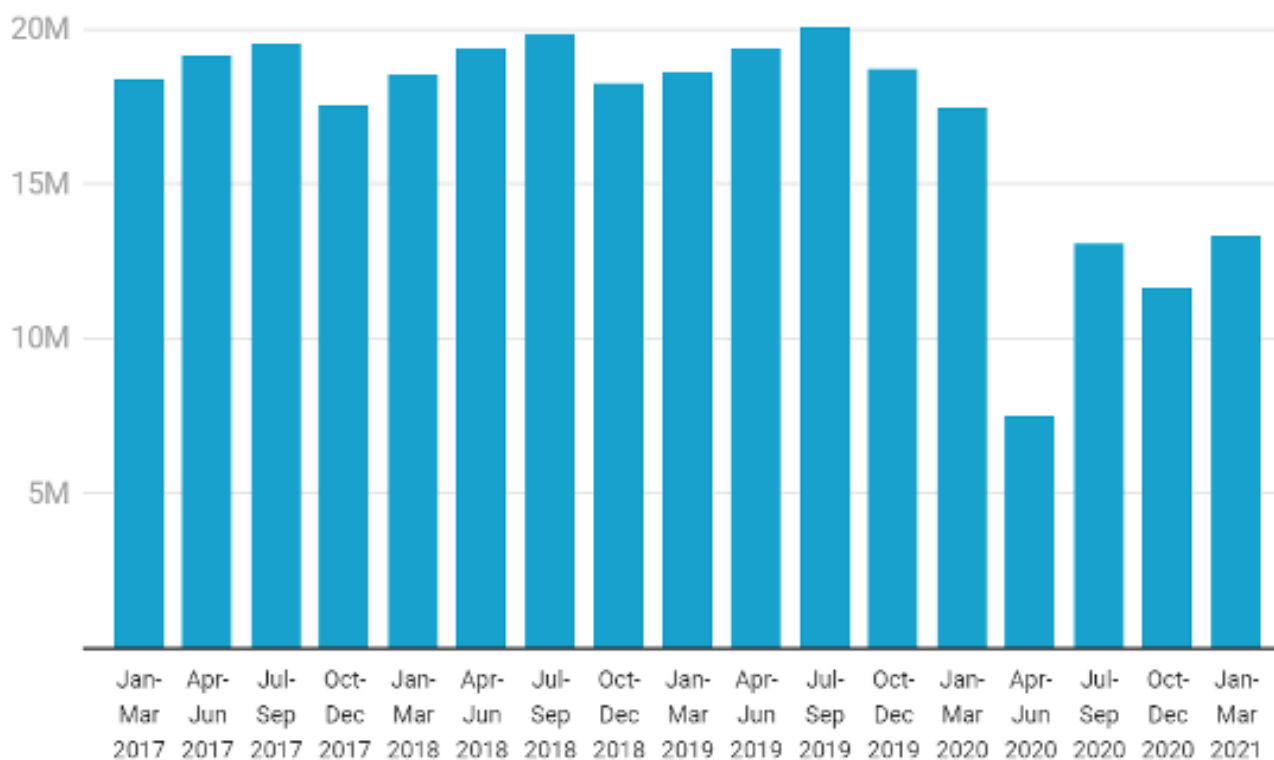
Indonesia: Jakarta metro contract award

A joint venture of Sumitomo Mitsui Construction and Hutama Karya has been awarded a construction contract as part of the new stage 2A of Jakarta's first metro rail line. The joint venture was also involved with construction of the first 16-kilometre stage between

Lebak Bulus and HI Roundabout, which opened in 2019 .

The whole of stage 2 will add 12 kilometres to the line.
INTERNATIONAL RAIL JOURNAL

ENDS



Adelaide trains – passengers boarding trains (quarterly) since 2017 (sources: ABC News, Department of Transport and Infrastructure).

BUS & COACH NEWS

QUEENSLAND



SkyBus expands into Brisbane

Translink announced on 7 May it had signed a 7-year contract with SkyBus to provide a “fast and affordable” bus service between Brisbane CBD and Brisbane Airport. There are 11 stops serviced by its 'Brisbane City Express' service across the CBD to both the Domestic and International Terminals.

Having started on Monday, 10 May, it runs every two hours, operating on weekdays between 06:00 and 00:00, and weekends between 06:00 and 20:00 (Airport departure times). SkyBus charges a \$15 one-way fare. *The Brisbane Times* reports that the SkyBus service has replaced the Con-x-ion Airport Transfers service which operated every 40 minutes on weekdays, and hourly on weekends.

Rail competitor, AirTrain, is remaining calm about the new competition, with its chief executive telling *The Brisbane Times* that “traffic congestion in the city has been really poor lately and we think AirTrain’s product stands us on its own “. AirTrain is majority-owned by British pension fund Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS), which also owns and operates Sydney’s AirportLink train stations.

SkyBus says that, with increased demand, it plans to eventually increase the service frequency to as often as every 15 minutes. *TRANSLINK, THE BRISBANE TIMES*

NEW SOUTH WALES



South-east Sydney bus changes

Member, Hilaire Fraser has provided the following report of the proposed bus changes to integrate the L2/L3 Light Rail lines with the pre-existing bus network:

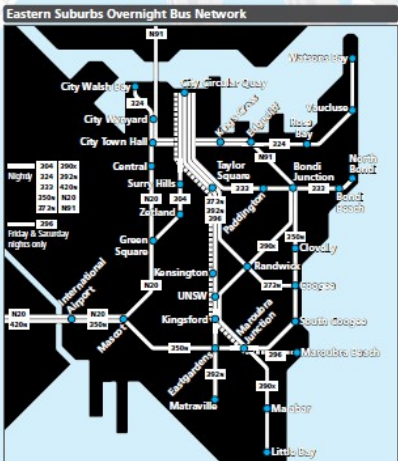
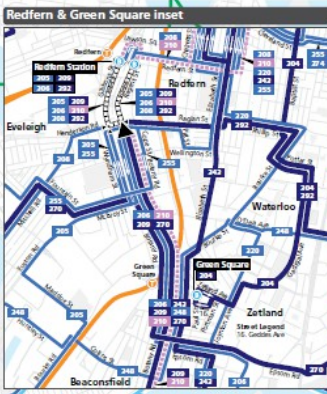
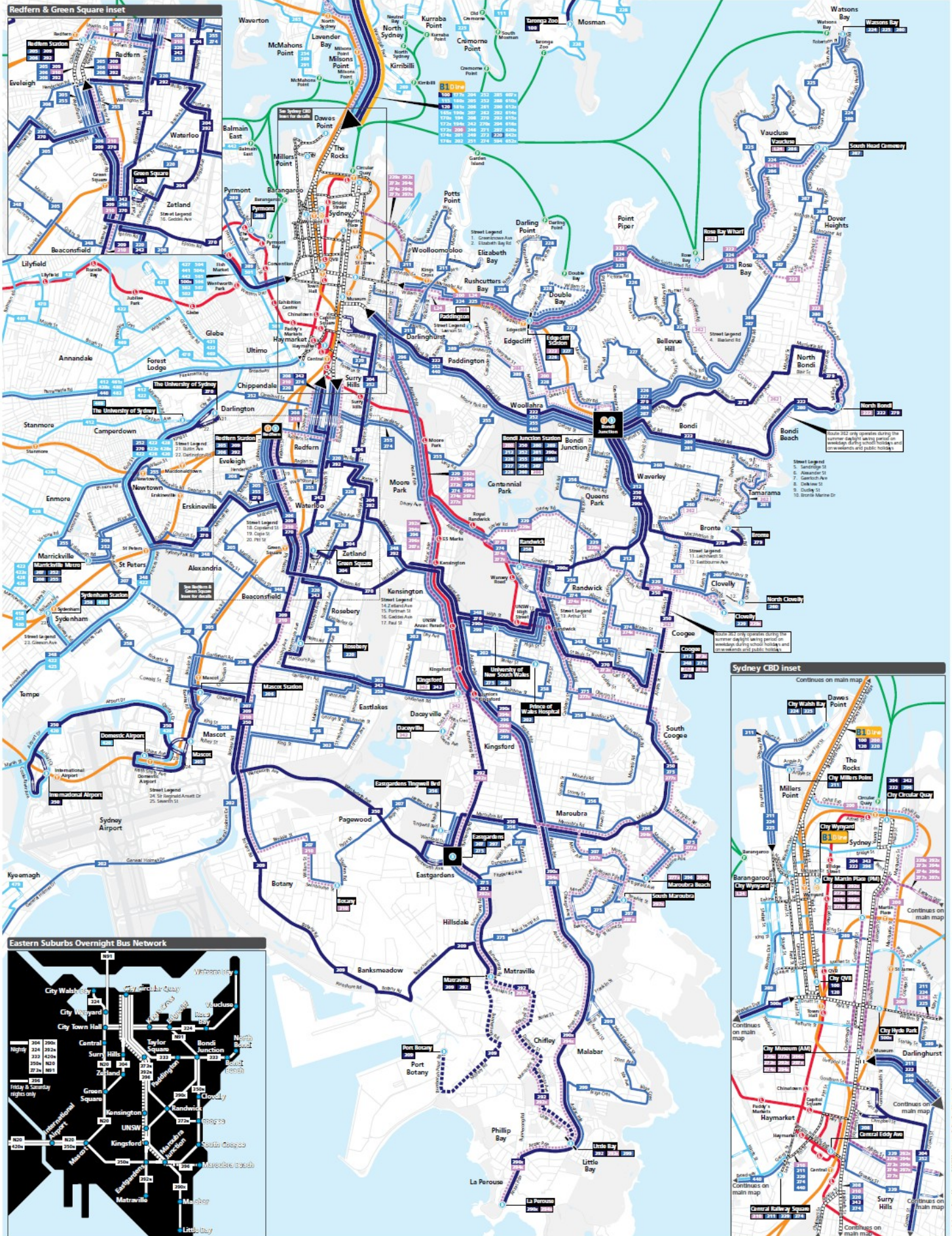
On Thursday, 6 May, details were released of proposed changes to Sydney's south-eastern bus network to integrate it with light rail services. These changes are to be implemented in late 2021. A public consultation period closes on 18 June. Details are below. More information can be found at https://www.mysydney.nsw.gov.au/SE_bus_changes.

Frequent Services

- **304** (Circular Quay-Green Square) - *previously Circular Quay-Rosebery.*
- **309** (Redfern-Matraville) - alternating services extend to Port Botany. *Previously Railway Sq-Banksmeadow.*
- **343** (Circular Quay-Kingsford) - now operates via Green Square railway station in lieu of Joynton Ave.
- **350 New Route** (Sydney Airport via Eastgardens, Maroubra Jct & Coogee) - replaces 400 Airport-Maroubra Jct and 353 between Maroubra Jct-Bondi Jct.
- **370** (Uni of Sydney-Coogee) - *previously Leichhardt-Coogee.* Now via Carr St replacing 373 Randwick-Coogee.
- **390X New Route** (Bondi Jct-La Perouse via Randwick & Kingsford) - replaces 314, 316, 317 and 400 between Bondi Jct-Randwick, and also 393, 394, and L94 Kingsford-La Perouse.
- **392** (Redfern-Matraville via W Kensington & Bunnerong Rd) - alternating services extend to Little Bay. *Previously operated to Circular Quay.* Replaces 302 and 303 Redfern-UNSW via West Kensington.

Local Services

- **303** (Prince of Wales Hospital-Sans Souci via Kingsford & Eastlakes) - *previously Redfern-Sans Souci.*
- **306 New Route** (Redfern-Mascot Stn via Rosebery & Eastlakes) - replaces 301 between Rosebery & Mascot.
- **307** (Eastgardens-Marrickville Metro via East Botany) - *previously Mascot-Port Botany.*
- **310 New Route** (Railway Square-East Botany) - replaces 310X Railway Sq-Banksmeadow.
- **313** (Bondi Jct-Coogee) - now via Albion St, Waverley in lieu of 314, 316 and 317.
- **320** (Rosebery-Gore Hill) - *previously Mascot-Gore Hill.*
- **339** (Railway Sq-Clovelly) - *previously operated to Gresham St, City.*
- **348** (Coogee-Wolli Ck via Coogee Bay Rd) - *previously Bondi Jct-Wolli Ck.*
- **356 New Route** (Eastgardens-Bondi Jct via Maroubra Jct, South Coogee & Randwick) - replaces 316/7 Maroubra Jct-Randwick & 357 Randwick-Bondi Jct.
- **358 New Route** (Sydenham-Randwick) - replaces 418 Sydenham-Kingsford & 357 Mascot Stn-Randwick.
- **362** (Rose Bay Wharf-Coogee) - *previously Bondi Beach-Coogee (summer route).*
- **374** (Railway Sq-Coogee via Cleveland St & Bream St) - *previously via Surry Hills.*
- **375 New Route** (UNSW-Eastgardens via Randwick & South Coogee) - replaces 376/7 Randwick-Maroubra Beach & 317 Maroubra Beach-Eastgardens.
- **396** (Circular Quay-Maroubra Beach) - unchanged.
- **397** (Eastgardens-South Maroubra) - *previously operated to Circular Quay.*
- **399** (UNSW-Little Bay via Malabar Beach) - *previously operated to Circular Quay.*
- **418** (Burwood-Sydenham) - *previously operated to Kingsford.*
- **420** (Burwood-Sydney Airport) - *previously operated to Eastgardens.*
- **469 New Route** (Leichhardt-University of Sydney) - replaces 370 western section.



Bus - service types

- Line
- Request
- Request - route extension (operating at least every 20 mins)
- Local
- Peak only
- Limited
- Bus services in other regions

Bus - common routes

- Multiple service types
- Peak only

Bus - details

- Route number
- Terminal
- Line stop

Other transport modes

- Train line & station
- Ferry routes & wharf
- Light rail line & stop

North

NSW GOVERNMENT

Transport

Peak Period Express Services (Inward services to Museum via Eastern Distributor)

- **339X** Martin Place-Clovelly (*previously X39*)
- **373X** Martin Place-Coogee via Carr St (now via Cowper & Cook Sts, *previously X73*)
- **374X** Martin Place-Coogee via Bream St (now via Cowper & Cook Sts, *previously X74*)
- **377X** Martin-Maroubra Beach via Randwick (now via Cowper & Cook Streets, *previously X77*)
- **392X** Martin Place-Little Bay via Bunnerong Rd (*previously X92*)
- **394X** Martin Place-La Perouse via Anzac Pde (*previously X94*)
- **396X** Martin Place-Maroubra Beach via Anzac Pde (*previously X96*)
- **397X** Circular Quay-South Maroubra via Anzac Pde (*previously X37*)

Night Services

- **350N** Bondi Jct-Sydney Airport bypasses Domestic Terminal.
- **373N** Circular Quay-Coogee.
- **392N** Circular Quay-Matraville.
- **420N** Burwood-Sydney Airport, *previously operated to Eastgardens*.

Light Rail Interchange is encouraged. Of the 370 series through Randwick only 374 continues to the CBD at Central Railway. Of the 390 series down Anzac Pde only 396 continues to CBD at Circular Quay. In addition to light rail interchange, 309 down Botany Rd terminates at Redfern requiring a change to a train to reach the City. However, peak period express services continue as 339X 373X 374X 377X 392X 394X 396X 397X.

The division of 370 Leichhardt-Coogee into 469 Leichhardt-Uni of Sydney and 370 Uni of Sydney-Coogee and 418 Burwood-Kingsford into 418 Burwood-Sydenham and 356 Sydenham-Randwick splits the routes between Transit Systems, operator in Region 6, Inner West and State Transit, operator in Region 9, the Eastern Suburbs. Region 9 is due to be privately tendered in the near future.

Some shortcomings of the proposed network are:

- The 306 replacement for 301 through Rosebery and Eastlakes requires a change at Mascot to reach Eastgardens, the large regional shopping centre.
- The 350 Airport-Bondi Jct service operates through the traffic bottleneck at Coogee Beach.

- 397, previously City-South Maroubra is now Eastgardens to South Maroubra requiring a change at Maroubra Jct to 390X bus to Kingsford, then Light Rail to City.

New routes

306 310 350 350N 356 358 373N 375 390X 392N 469

Modified routes

303 304 307 308 309 313 320 339 339X 343 348 362 370 373X 374 374X 377X 392 397 399 418 420 420N

Withdrawn routes

300 301 302 309X 310X 314 316 317 338 353 357 372 373 376 377 391 393 394 395 400 400N L94 X40 X93 X99

Adjacent routes with no change

200 305 308 311 323 324 325 326 327 328 333 342 352 355 360 379 380 381 386 387 388 L24

HILAIRE FRASER

Government unveils new R8 operator

The state government announced on 28 May that Keolis Downer has secured a new \$900 million eight-year contract to take over Sydney metropolitan region 8 commuter bus services, which operate through the lower North Shore and up to Palm Beach.



Remaining 3 STA regions (source: State Transit Authority).

The move will see government agency, State Transit Authority, lose its second of four commuter bus regions, as part of the state government's determination to have all Sydney bus services operated by private operators. The 31 October changeover will see existing State Transit staff from bus depots in Mona Vale and Brookvale offered a two-year job guarantee with the new operator. The B-Line route is also included in the new contract.

As part of the announcement, the existing "trial" On Demand bus operated by Keolis Downer, which operates in the upper Northern Beaches, will be made permanent. The state government says around 540 people use it every day to connect to transport hubs, like the B-Line. Keolis also said that it planned to introduce "125 electric buses" over the life of the agreement, running out of the two depots.

Transport Minister Andrew Constance claimed, that over the life of the new agreement, around \$100 million will be saved for taxpayers.

As per the previous map, regions 7 and 9 will remain; however, their new operator(s) are expected to be finalised over the next 6-12 months. **TRANSPORT FOR NSW, STATE TRANSIT AUTHORITY, KEOLIS DOWNER**

Route 161 back to normal

According to the National Parks and Wildlife Service, from Friday, 28 May, State Transit resumed operating its route 161 'loop services' from Manly through the loop at North Fort. Although timetabled to do this, fire damage last October forced road closures around North Fort, with route 161 services since curtailed to the Quarantine Station. **GEOFF LAMBERT**

New 861 Leppington bus route

On 21 May, Transport for NSW announced a new bus route, 861, would begin operating from Sunday, 30 May between Carnes Hill and Denham Court via the suburb of Austral and Leppington railway station.

The route operates seven days a week, as follows:

- **Weekdays:** Half-hourly 05:30-08:30, hourly 08:30-14:30, half-hourly 14:30-19:30, then hourly till 21:30.
- **Saturdays:** Hourly between 07:00 and 21:00.
- **Sundays & PHs:** Hourly between 08:00 and 21:00.

Route 861 is operated by Interline, as part of their Region 2 contract. **TRANSPORT FOR NSW**

NSW TrainLink coach trials extended

The following NSW TrainLink trial coach routes have had their trials extended by a further 12 months until June 2022:

- **Broken Hill to Adelaide**
- **Broken Hill to Mildura**
- **Forster to Coffs Harbour**
- **Canberra to Goulburn** (the 2020 route amendment stays intact)

TRANSPORT FOR NSW

TASMANIA



Government's \$80 million election pledge

In the lead-up to the state election, the Liberal government pledged \$81.5 million more money into the transport system over the next four years, as follows:

- \$31.5 million for a statewide ticketing system,
- \$20 million for additional school buses,
- \$20 million for more park and ride facilities in Southern Tasmania, and
- \$10 million for bus stop upgrades.

Editor's comment: On the 1 May election, the Liberals, led by Premier Peter Gutwein, retained government, with only its size under dispute. Whilst preference distribution was ongoing as at 13 May, renowned ABC election analyst Antony Green predicted that the Liberals would just make the 13-seat majority. THE EXAMINER, ABC NEWS

School route timetable changes

Due to "the effects of traffic congestion on the timetable", from Monday 24 May, Launceston's route **811** morning school bus service departs Prospect Marketplace nine minutes earlier than previously timetabled, with other times adjusted. Metro also advises that this change means that route **161** bus from Blackstone Heights (departing 07:52) no longer connects with the 811 bus at Prospect Marketplace.

Meanwhile, in the same vein, "Metro Tasmania and the Department of State Growth have been reviewing the on-time performance of school buses throughout Term One." As a result, from the same date, Burnie's route **881** and **899** morning school bus services also "require

additional travel time”, meaning these services also depart their points of origin earlier than previously timetabled. **METRO TASMANIA**

WESTERN AUSTRALIA



Go West Tours sold to Sealink

Sealink Travel Group announced another Australian bus acquisition in mid-May, with the purchase of mining services operator Go West Tours, in a minimum \$88.5 million deal.

The acquisition involves the transfer of “approximately 287 buses”, 181 employees and land from the Haoust family. It also provides Sealink’s first foray into resources transportation, and adds a number of school bus services, under contract with the Public Transport Authority.

Providing “limited passenger risk”, Sealink said that Go West generated \$46.2 million in revenue in the 12 months to 30 September 2020. Sealink chief executive officer Clint Feuerherdt said in a statement that “the operations of Go West were unaffected by [COVID] and continued at near 100 per cent levels throughout”. **SEALINK**

NEW ZEALAND



Auckland: Rodney trials made permanent

Just two years into their three-year trials, Auckland Transport (AT) confirmed in mid-May that the three trial route services, **126** (Westgate-Coatesville), **128** (Helensville-Hibiscus Coast station), and **998** (Wellsford-Warkworth), will be integrated permanently into the Auckland Transport network, with AT to begin funding them.

Initiated in early 2019, the trial services have been funded by the local council, Rodney Local Board, with AT only agreeing to take over the routes permanently providing that patronage targets were met.

Local Board chairperson, Phelan Pirrie said, “It was a tough call... to set up this targeted rate and to focus on new bus services, but the community consistently told us that local transport infrastructure and services are important to them”, while AT also acknowledged the Local Board for trialling the initiative.

The Local Board also recently resolved to increase service levels on route 128, despite “more modest growth”, based on public requests. **AUCKLAND TRANSPORT**

Auckland: SkyBus feels COVID pinch

SkyBus reports its patronage in Auckland is down 80 per cent on pre-COVID levels, despite the loosening of social restrictions in more recent months.

A limited timetable continues to operate on the Auckland City Express, operating between Downtown Auckland and the airport. However, the North Harbour Express continues to be suspended until further notice.

SkyBus owner Kinetic's local general manager said that, without an opening up of international borders, ticket sales on the City Express service would have to lift further before any consideration of restarting the North Harbour Express. **STUFF.CO.NZ**

Palmerston North: Patronage declines

Stuff Online has reported on data produced at a local council committee meeting for bus patronage in the North Island city of Palmerston North. Like all other cities, social restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic has seen big drops in patronage for the city's bus network.

Data presented to Horizons Regional Council provides that year-on-year patronage dropped by 33 per cent in 2020 across the city. In other regional centres, Marton was down 44 per cent, Taihape down 30 per cent, with Whanganui down a comparatively small 13 per cent from 2019.

Council's transport manager, Rhona Hewitt, said that Palmerston North's patronage has been particularly hit hard by a drop in international students. Bus services at Massey University have reflected the drop, in tandem with changes in the way that many tertiary students now undertake their coursework, with patronage at the University stop down 61 per cent. Local students and staff do not pay bus fares, due to a scheme funded between the University, Council, and New Zealand Transport Agency.

The Massey University community also recently moved to using the Bee Card, which is a tap-on and tap-off smartcard already used across Palmerston North and nine regions in New Zealand. It replaced the manual requirement to show the University identification card to the driver. **STUFF.CO.NZ**

Wellington: Bus drivers strike

Bus drivers went on a 24-hour strike from 04:00 on Friday, 24 April, following a breakdown in negotiations over a new employment agreement between NZ Bus and the local union.

In response, NZ Bus staged an employee lockout at Kilbirnie depot, which lasted until the next day, when an urgent court injunction was granted to stop the lockout. In granting the injunction, the judge also reportedly considered the impact on the travelling public.

Services across 26 of the city's routes were suspended until the injunction against the lockout was granted. Both parties returned to mediation following these events.

On Thursday, 20 May, around 200 services were cancelled during the day, due to a union meeting attended by over 200 employees. In the meeting, another pay offer was resoundingly rejected (98.6% against) which reportedly included a one-off cash bonus of \$5,000-10,000. It was reported more strikes would occur no earlier than 28 May if a "fair offer" was not provided by NZ Bus. *STUFF.CO.NZ, THE DOMINION POST (2)*

ENDS

FERRY & SHIP NEWS

NEW SOUTH WALES



MV Freshwater returns into service

The 39-year-old MV Freshwater vessel has returned to passenger service on the Harbour City Ferries F1 Manly route after a \$7 million three-month refurbishment. Changes include 750 square metres of new flooring, 4,000 litres of paint, lighting upgrades, over 50 CCTV cameras, and improved ease of access. *TRANSPORT FOR NSW*

River Class delay

The introduction of 10 new River Class ferries has again been delayed by Harbour City Ferries. In March, the state government said they would be introduced in the "coming months".

On 26 May, the operator advised that reflection issues with the glass in the wheelhouse at nighttime has necessitated further structural changes to fix the angle of the glass.

Transdev did not provide an updated timeline for the fleet's introduction into service. *SYDNEY MORNING HERALD*

SOUTH AUSTRALIA



Kangaroo Island RoPax ferry

The state government announced in late April that three companies had been shortlisted in the tender to operate the Kangaroo Island RoPax ferry service over the coming 15 years, with an option for two further five-year extensions:

- SeaLink (existing operator)
- Peninsula Searoad Transport
- Kinetic/Oceanex consortium.

The existing agreement with SeaLink, which has operated the service for over 20 years, expires on 30 June, 2024. A cheaper passenger-only ferry service also operates, Kangaroo Island Connect. *VICTOR HARBOR TIMES*

ENDS

AIR NEWS

DOMESTIC



Canberra

QantasLink has announced that it will operate a direct Canberra-Darwin route five days per week from 21 June, initially for the peak holiday season, until October. The non-stop flight will take four hours and 35 minutes. The flights will be under the banner of Alliance Airlines, which recently signed a three-year deal to service particular Qantas routes. Alliance also flies from Canberra to the Sunshine Coast.

Regional Express (Rex) will add a return Canberra-Melbourne route twice per day from 10 June. This follows Rex's launch in April of the Canberra-Sydney route with 7 return flights per day. The price of a one-way Canberra-Melbourne ticket will be from \$69, thereby starting a price war with Qantas and Virgin, and cheaper also than the cheapest Canberra-Melbourne Greyhound bus fare of \$99.

There are now four small route service airlines flying to Canberra: Pelican, Alliance, Link and Rex. They fly to Sydney, Melbourne (from 10 June), Hobart, Cairns, Sunshine Coast, Port Macquarie, and Newcastle.

Canberra's air connections using major airlines have also improved. ACT Chief Minister Andrew Barr noted that for the first time in more than a decade Canberra has direct flights to every capital city in the country.

Supplied by – AGNES BOSKOVITZ

Sources - CANBERRA TIMES, QANTAS, REGIONAL EXPRESS, FLY PELICAN, ALLIANCE AIRLINES, LINK AIRWAYS, ANDREW BARR

INTERNATIONAL



US: Here comes a Breeze

JetBlue founder, David Neeleman, has unveiled his new airline's US domestic network - "we created Breeze Airways as a new airline merging technology with kindness[, with] non-stop service between under-

served routes across the [country]... 95 per cent of Breeze routes currently have no airline serving them non-stop... many secondary markets have seen a significant reduction in flights (due to COVID)."

Using 10 Embraer E190, three Embraer E195, and (progressively taking delivery of) 60 Airbus A220 planes, Breeze's flights will average under two hours. The longer routes in the network are planned to be covered by the Airbus planes.

The airline's fares are in-keeping with the theme, in order from cheapest to dearest, named "nice", "nicer" and "nicest". The airline will largely operate in the south-eastern US. These routes will progressively launch between 27 May and July.

Sources – SAMCHUI.COM

Iceland starts to PLAY

Throughout June and July, PLAY Air will begin flights out of Iceland, to numerous destinations across Europe, including London, Berlin, Paris, Barcelona and Copenhagen.

The chief executive officer of the airline said it was "brilliant" to be able to open up Iceland to UK travellers", with the UK relaxing travel restrictions to 'green list' countries on 17 May, provided they are vaccinated, and submit to a COVID test. *SAMCHUI.COM*

ENDS

About *Table Talk*

Print ISSN 1038-3697, Online ISSN 2209-718X.

Table Talk is a monthly publication produced by the Australian Timetable Association Inc. (ATA) (Registration No. A0043673H) as a journal of record covering timetable and other transport-related news. The ATA also publishes **The Times** covering timetable history and analysis. **Table Talk Newswire** is an advanced and concise monthly email of Rail News. To obtain this, contact the Rail Editor. ABN 74248483468.

All times listed in *Table Talk* are in 24-hour time, unless stated otherwise. Any commentary or letters provided by individuals within *Table Talk* are not to be taken as a representation of the views of the Australian Timetable Association, its Committee or its Editor(s). Original material appearing in *Table Talk* may be reproduced in other publications with kind acknowledgement. The ATA's members often contribute items for consideration in *Table Talk* for which kind acknowledgement is made, however, most articles are re-written for *Table Talk* by the Editor. Contributions are invited and welcome at all times – please send these to the appropriate Editor.

Membership of the Australian Timetable Association includes monthly copies of *The Times*, *Table Talk*, the ATA Distribution List of timetables, and Auction catalogues. The membership fee is Adult \$60, Student \$36, Family \$5 pa. All membership enquiries should be directed to our Membership Officer, Len Regan, at membership@timetable.org.au.

Back issues of *Table Talk* are available on our website, www.timetable.org.au, after two months from print publication.

Editor for Rail, Tram, Air and Ferry & Ship: Chris Pandilovski, tabletalk@timetable.org.au.

Editor for Bus: Steven Haby, busnews@timetable.org.au.

Production and Mailout: Geoff and Judy Lambert.

Proofreaders: Agnes Boskovitz, David Cranney and Geoff Hassall.

Table Talk is a production of the **Australian Timetable Association**