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TABLE TALK

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RAIL & TRAM NEWS

QUEENSLAND



Cross River Rail shutdown

On the weekend of 13-14 November, trains were impacted by a CBD shutdown due to Cross River Rail works.

According to Translink, trains operated as follows:

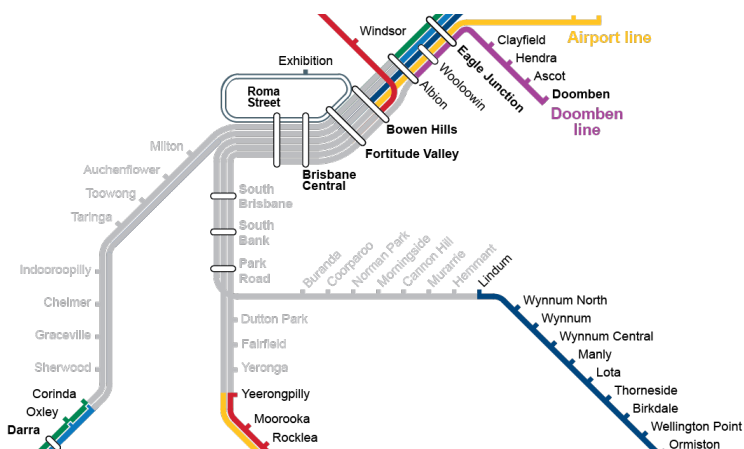
- **Sunshine Coast/Caboolture, Redcliffe Peninsula and Airport** lines ran through to Roma Street, running express from Albion via Exhibition,
- **Ferny Grove, Shorncliffe, Doomben and Northgate** services terminated at Bowen Hills,
- **Ipswich/Rosewood and Springfield** line services terminated at Corinda,
- **Gold Coast/Beenleigh** line services terminated at Yeerongpilly, and
- **Cleveland** line services terminated at Lindum.

A visual overview of the train services directly impacted is provided with this article. **TRANSLINK**

Yeronga and Fairfield

Translink has confirmed that Yeronga railway station will reopen on Monday 13 December for train services, while some construction activities will continue until mid-next year. As reported in the April 2021 edition of *Table Talk*, StationLink buses serviced the station since mid-April due to Cross River Rail (CRR) works.

Meanwhile, also from 13 December, CRR works will see Fairfield railway station close until mid-2022. StationLink bus route 109 will be available from bus stops on Fairfield Road. **TRANSLINK**



Brisbane rail CBD shutdown on 13-14 November (source: Translink).

Buses replaced trains between Bowen Hills/Roma Street and Corinda/Yeerongpilly/Lindum.

NEW SOUTH WALES



Sydney Trains: Timetable update

Effective from Saturday 20 November, a new Sydney Trains Standard Working TimeTable (SWTT), designated as version 9.05, came into effect.

The timetable update included:

- Minor adjustments (one minute difference) to selected service departure times at Museum, St James, Harris Park, Booragul, Teralba, Adamstown, Hamilton, North Wollongong, and many T8 Airport line stations;
- The release of 2x 8T sets for the long-running Tangara Technology Upgrade: Stage Two project (with a cascading of train types and review of run numbers in sectors 2 and 3). 2x 8K sets re-introduced to cover the difference,
- For the first time, Waratah B sets now rostered to operate on sector 3 (T1 Western/North Shore and T9 Northern lines) on weekdays (3 sets, numbered 1190-1192);

- The New Southern Railway (Airport Line) has adjusted speed limits as part of the More Trains More Services project (upgraded track signalling); and
- Asset rationalisation with the upcoming removal of crossover infrastructure at Kingsgrove, Campsie and Edgecliff.

Further to the above changes, additional K sets will run on some other sector 2 train rosters due to various Sydney Trains project requirements.

The next SWTT update will be due to commence from 19 February 2022. **SYDNEY TRAINS**

Inner West Light Rail: Suspension

Services on Sydney's L1 Inner West light rail line, running between Central railway station and Dulwich Hill, have been suspended since Thursday, 28 October. Initially for a period of just four days, the suspension has now been extended for up to 18 months, a "worst-case scenario" according to new Transport Minister Rob Stokes.

According to Transdev, 40 replacement buses were arranged to operate on the days immediately following the suspension, with standard light rail fares charged on board replacement buses. Services operated at the following frequencies:

- 06:00-07:00 – every 8 to 15 minutes,
- 07:00-19:00 – every 6 to 10 mins, and
- 19:00-23:00 (00:00 on Friday) – every 8-15m.

The emergency bussing program continued until Thursday, 4 November with reports of coaches from a variety of charter companies in use to provide the service.

Effective from **Friday 5 November**, Transport for NSW (TfNSW) issued a special 1L1 timetable, covering the replacement service, for a duration of eight days, operated by "train replacement bus operators".

1L1 provided for daily bus replacement services (from both Central and Dulwich Hill), with a total end-to-end trip time of 70 minutes and using around 24 buses/coaches in total, as follows:

- 06:00-07:00 – every 12 minutes,
- 07:00-09:30 – every 10 mins, and
- 09:30-22:54 – every 12 mins.

In addition, a supplemental short-working loop service was provided between Central station-The Star-Central station, running every 15 minutes between 07:00-11:00, and 15:00-23:00. The whole loop had a journey time of 32 minutes, meaning a minimum of three buses were required to provide it.

Further operational amendments came into effect from **Monday, 8 November** when State Transit commenced operating these services, which included route designation changes. While the timetable remained the same on a service standpoint, the

Central-Dulwich Hill services was newly designated as route **499**, while the time-limited Central-The Star-Central yo-yo services was newly designated as route **498**.

On **Tuesday 9 November**, the state government announced it would halve the fares charged for travel onboard these replacement buses, to compensate travellers for the disruption experienced. Keen to assuage commuter anger over the anticipated long-term disruption, Minister Stokes was so quick to announce the discount that it was also revealed that it would take up to a fortnight for the discount to be applied at Opal readers, although the minister advised that refunds would be backdated to trips from 8 November.

From **Monday 29 November**, further changes to replacement services came into effect, with route 499 now replaced by two routes:

3L1 - Central-Lilyfield (06:00-23:00 [to midnight on Friday nights]).

4L1 – The Star-Dulwich Hill.

This means that the section The Star-Lilyfield is effectively double-served. Meanwhile, route 498 has been redesignated as route **2L1** (Central-The Star and return [06:00-23:00, to midnight on Friday nights]).

According to Transport for NSW, each of the above three routes operates every 10 minutes during weekday peak periods, and every 15 minutes weekday off-peak and weekends.

Meanwhile, an additional ferry shuttle service, designated as **F10**, also commenced on the same date, although it does not accept Opal cards nor cash for the payment of fares. Instead, passengers can only use a credit/debit card. The ferry operates every 30 mins between 07:00 and 20:00 daily, between Blackwattle Bay and Barangaroo wharves. **TRANSPORT FOR NSW, ABC NEWS, TRANSDEV, NSW GOVERNMENT, THE WEEKEND AUSTRALIAN**



An L1 Urbos 3 light rail vehicle (source: Transdev Sydney).

Inner West Light Rail: Fleet issues

The Sydney Morning Herald reported that cracks were found on some Sydney Inner West Light Rail (IWLR) trams during routine inspection, although an internal document sighted by the paper was quoted as saying that "We do not believe that the identified cracks pose an immediate threat or major risk to the network". As a precaution, the line's fleet of Spanish-built Urbos 3 trams has been suspended as a safety precaution to

enable all of the trams to be inspected prior to determining the next steps. These inspections found that all trams had some level of cracking identified in the wheel frames.

These trams are of same type and age to the trams used on Birmingham's **West Midlands Metro** light rail line in England, which has recently had its own cracking issues (see the article in the International sub-section of Rail News for further on this). Both this and the IWLRL had their Urbos 3 trams delivered across 2014 and 2015, while they also share a designated mix of re-used heavy rail corridor and on-street running.

CAF's Urbos 3 trams also operate on the **Newcastle** and **Canberra** light rail lines, although they are both of younger age. 13x Urbos 3 vehicles have also been contracted by Transdev to supply the upcoming **Parramatta** Light Rail, which will run between Westmead and Carlingford in Sydney's west.

Following the suspension of the IWLRL, a spokesperson for Transport for NSW said that recent checks on Newcastle's trams had not identified any cracking. The ACT's shadow transport minister, Mark Parton, said it was only a matter of time before Canberrans faced months without a light rail service "due to a design flaw. To me it appears inevitable that our light rail vehicles will go down the same path, if they haven't already." However, a territory government spokesperson said it was aware of the issues identified by the NSW government and it had not "identified any issues to date. It should be noted that Canberra light rail vehicles operate on a different track type to Sydney light rail and are a much younger fleet." Those words should come back to bite the territory government if similar issues present with its fleet a few years down the track. *SYDNEY MORNING HERALD, ABC NEWS, CAF, BBC NEWS (2) (3), THE WEEKEND AUSTRALIAN*

Newcastle Light Rail: Disruption

The Newcastle light rail line has been suspended from service from Friday, 26 November to at least the end of the weekend due to "an operational issue".

News Online reports that transport bosses have said that the suspension was unrelated to the existing issues with the Inner West Light Rail line. However, the cause was indeed a "mechanical issue", with the fleet "suspended temporarily as a precaution until inspections are completed. Keolis Downer is working to urgently investigate and repair the fleet to restore passenger service as soon possible and at this stage the aim is to have some trams back in services by Monday".

The line has been operational since early 2019. *STEVEN HABY, TRANSPORT FOR NSW, NEWS.COM.AU*

Hunter: Train disruptions

Commuters on the Hunter line experienced multiple days of delays and emergency substitution, mostly due to environmental protesters repeatedly entering the rail

corridor to protest coal freight services around the Sandgate area.

On **Tuesday 9 November**, at around 09:30, services experienced delays of up to 60 minutes.

On **Wednesday 10th**, at around 19:00, services were delayed for several hours, with emergency buses procured to operate between Maitland and Newcastle Interchange.

On **Thursday 11th**, at around 16:30, services experienced delays of up to 120 minutes. Emergency buses were procured to operate Newcastle Interchange-Maitland/Scone/Singleton, with trains resuming from around 18:45.

On **Friday 12th**, this time due to flooding at Sandgate, 14 buses were procured to operate from first service, running between Newcastle Interchange and Telarah. First trains were to resume at around 19:00, however due to protesters, this was delayed until 19:30, with the emergency buses filling that gap.

Some delays due to flooding were experienced during the day on **Saturday 13th**.

On **Monday 15th**, trains were again stopped due to protesters near Sandgate, with trains delayed by up to 85 minutes., and emergency buses to supplement as required to bring trains back to schedule.

From the afternoon of **Friday 26th**, until at least midday Saturday, buses replaced trains between Muswellbrook and Scone due to local flooding. Flooding also affected services running through Sandgate on the Friday, with some delays reported.

ABC News reports that in early November, 19 arrests were made by Police. Since then, a 22-year-old male from Queensland has been sentenced to 12-month imprisonment, with a six-month non-parole period for his part in trespassing in the rail corridor, interfering with the operation of a freight train, climbing on top of a coal wagon, and live-streaming his exploits online. Whilst some segments of the community called the sentence "unjust", local Member of Parliament David Layzell said of the sentence, "They've taken police resources away from what they should be doing in our community, and there's been, to date, relatively light fines applied to these protesters and obviously that has not worked".

However, three days later, the male was released back into the community, pending an appeal against his sentence, with a night-time curfew, and the male is not permitted to enter the local government areas of Newcastle, Lake Macquarie, Maitland, Singleton, Cessnock, Muswellbrook, except to attend Court, nor enter any coal loading facility or rail corridor in NSW, other than as a fare-paying passenger on a train. *TRANSPORT FOR NSW, ABC NEWS*

Blue Mountains: ATP testing

Automatic Track Protection (ATP) network integration testing led to a strange sight over the weekend of 13-14 November. A four-carriage Oscar H set ran multiple empty runs between Katoomba/Mount Victoria and

Lithgow on both days.

This was only possible after works in the last couple of years to enable wider-width trains to operate between Springwood and Lithgow. Those works were done in anticipation of the introduction of the new NIF D set intercity trains into service, and included platform alterations and minor widening of the Ten Tunnels near Zig Zag.

As previously reported in *Table Talk*, the D set trains continue in testing whilst the industrial dispute between NSW Trains and employee representatives continues with regard to driver-only operation. **SYDNEY TRAINS**

AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY



Canberra Light Rail: Extra services added

Canberra Metro announced in late October that effective from Monday 1 November, the timetable was updated to expand the afternoon peak-period service provision, facilitating physical distancing on services. Some additional services were also added on Sunday mornings for the same reason.

Meanwhile, the new **Mitchell** light rail stop opened in mid-September. *The Canberra Times* reported that the extra 35 seconds in travel time resulting from the extra stop had been included in the light rail's timetable since the beginning of the year.

Additionally, a new 170-space 'park and ride' facility has been opened in Gungahlin, to service **Well Station Drive** stop as well as route 18 bus services. **AGNES BOSKOVITZ, DAVID CRANNEY, CANBERRA METRO, ACT GOVERNMENT, THE CANBERRA TIMES**

VICTORIA



Storm disruption

A wild storm, with wind gusts of up to 122 kilometres per hour, battered Melbourne late on Thursday 28 October (overnight), which impacted various public transport services across the city on Friday, 29 Oct.

Due to fallen trees, emergency buses replaced **trains** between Camberwell & Alamein; Box Hill & Ringwood on the Belgrave/Lilydale lines; North Melbourne & Craigieburn; Darling & Glen Waverley; Parliament & Hurstbridge; Parliament & Epping on the Mernda line; Richmond & Sandringham; Watergardens & Sunbury; and North Melbourne & Upfield. Buses also operated between Footscray and Newport due to a "train fault", affecting Werribee and Williamstown line services. The remaining train services experienced major delays, as did **V/Line** services, with some replaced by buses.

Due to fallen trees, power-lines and tram faults, **Yarra Trams** routes 1, 5, 6, 12, 19, 58, 59, 64, 70, 72, 75, 78, 82, 86, 96, 109 were "altered".

Update 20:00 Fri 28 Oct: Some services are still impacted, with buses replacing **trains** between Blackburn and Ringwood, Eltham and Hurstbridge, South Yarra and Sandringham, and Watergardens and Sunbury.

Yarra Trams route 16 (between stop 16 and Kew terminus), and routes 70 and 75 (between stop 18 and Camberwell Tram Depot) were replaced by buses until 22:00 and 21:00 Friday, respectively.

V/Line services between Southern Cross and Seymour, Pakenham and Traralgon/Bairnsdale, and Southern Cross and Gisborne were replaced by buses. Delays also impacted other train/tram services. **ROSS MORRISON, PUBLIC TRANSPORT VICTORIA**

Melbourne Cup Carnival

Loosening social restrictions after Melbourne's latest COVID-19 lockdown saw the return of limited crowds to special events. During the four days of the Melbourne Cup Carnival, held at Flemington Racecourse, the total capacity to attend Derby Day (Sat, 30 October) was 5,500, which was increased to 10,000 for Cup Day (Tue, 2 November), Oaks Day (Thu, 4 Nov) and Stakes Day (Sat, 6 Nov).

The daily special public transport arrangements to facilitate event goers' travel were as follows:

Derby Day (Sat, 30 October):

- Special event buses operating to the racecourse from both Ascot Vale and Footscray railway stations every 30 minutes.

Cup Day (Tue, 2 November):

- Direct trains from Flinders Street station to Flemington Racecourse station every 20 mins 08:29-12:19 (stopping at Southern Cross and North Melbourne).
- Direct return trains from Flemington Racecourse back to Flinders Street every 20 mins 15:19-19:59 (stopping at North Melbourne and Southern Cross).

Oaks Day (Thu, 4 Nov):

- Direct trains from Flinders Street every 20 mins 10:22-13:22. Direct return trains from Flemington Racecourse departing at 17:30, 17:44, 18:00, 18:11, 18:21, 18:30, then roughly every 20 mins until 19:51.

Stakes Day (Sat, 6 Nov):

- Direct trains from Flinders Street every 20 mins 10:24-13:24. Direct return trains from Flemington Racecourse departing at 17:31, 17:43, 17:55, 18:06, 18:19, 18:31, then every 20 mins until 19:51.

ROSS MORRISON, PUBLIC TRANSPORT VICTORIA

V/Line: VLocity standard gauge testing

This article continues from the previous two months' reports in *Table Talk* about the VLocity standard gauge testing, as documented in various V/Line circulars sighted by the Editor (as such, information provided is not to be taken as exhaustive), and all "pending crew availability".

On Wednesday 20 October, train **3VS93** was to depart South Dynon Loco at 07:30 for Seymour Loop, to then enter the absolute occupation at 11:04 (with Pilot), until 17:41. Testing was to continue daily within absolute occupation for duration six hours 40 minutes on the following two days.

Saturday 23rd was to initially see the first trial run from Seymour to Albury and return. Ten minutes dwell time was provided at each stop in both directions (with the exception of Wodonga, which had a stop on the Down only). The day's plan was later cancelled.

On Sunday 24th, the train was scheduled to run back into South Dynon Loco, via a 30-minute stopover at Tallarook.

On Wed 27th and Thu 28th, the train was to conduct testing out of Donnybrook. On Fri 29th, testing was to finally occur between Seymour and Albury, with the train returning to South Dynon Loco the next day.

On Friday 19 November, the train was scheduled to come out of South Dynon to run to Chiltern and return via Seymour on account of testing of the train between Seymour and Benalla. This working was supplemented with the 07:07 Southern Cross to Albury and 12:45 Albury to Southern Cross V/Line services being replaced by road coach.

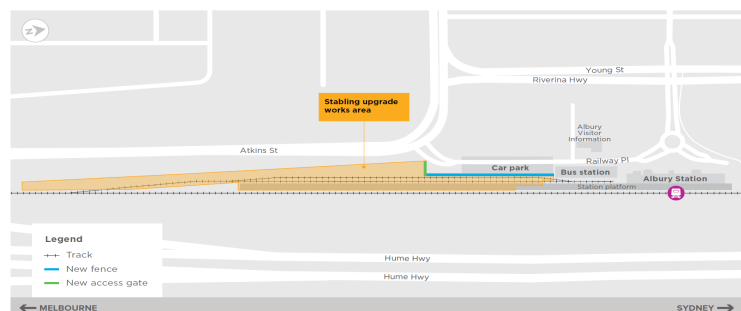
V/Line issued a circular to provide for the gradual introduction of standard gauge VLocity trains on Albury services commencing from Monday, 22 November. V/Line said no buffet service would be provided onboard during the "initial phase" of the rollout, while the schedule for timetabled trips Melbourne-Albury and return would not be altered to enable the train to be swapped out for a loco-hauled train "if the need arises". Stage 1 of the rollout sees the standard gauge VLocity train operating the 12:05 ex Southern Cross and 17:20 ex Albury weekday services. (*Editor's note: This did not happen, 3VS93's introduction into revenue service on the Albury line was pushed back to a date yet to be confirmed at time of publication.*)

Standard gauge VLocity train **3VS94** was scheduled to conduct its testing daily between 27 and 29 November (inclusive) out of Seymour under "absolute occupation", however, due to crew availability issues, this was subsequently postponed by V/Line, to now (as at 26 Nov) conduct the three days of testing from 30 Nov to 2 December.

See this month's edition of ATA's *The Times*, which further detail on the program.

Meanwhile, works continue to upgrade the train stabling facilities at Albury, to enable stabling capacity of 3x 3-car VLocity trains, under the **Albury Stabling Upgrade** project being completed by Downer. Albury line weekend services were replaced by bus on 27/28

November. A basic map of the project area is provided below. **LEN REGAN, V/LINE, BIG BUILD / VICTORIAN GOVERNMENT**



Albury Stabling Upgrade project map (source: Big Build).

High Capacity Signalling

In December, various substitutions will impact Cranbourne/Pakenham services to enable the installation and testing of 55-kilometres of High Capacity Signalling equipment. The system will enable trains to run closer together (every 2-3 minutes), whilst removing the need to rely on physical coloured signals along the railway line.

From 20:30 on Tuesday 14 December, buses replace sections of trains on the Cranbourne, Pakenham and Frankston lines until end of normal service on Thursday, 23 December. V/Line's Gippsland line trains will be replaced by road coaches on the evening of 14 Dec, while the remainder of the closedown sees Gippsland line services replaced between Southern Cross and Pakenham.

Further works will be undertaken in March as part of testing for the new High Capacity Metro Trains. **ROSS MORRISON, VICTORIAN GOVERNMENT**

Summer work blitz

The state government has announced planned works over the summer holiday period as part of Victoria's Big Build program.

Various dates will see buses replace trains on suburban Melbourne train lines, selected Yarra Trams routes, and many V/Line services for a mix of maintenance and various projects.

Meanwhile, minister for public transport, Ben Carroll, said "As Victorians once again enjoy major events, public transport will be boosted to ensure extra services to the events we have missed including the Boxing Day Test and Australian Open."

Metro Trains

The government teases that 10-minute morning peak services on the Cranbourne/Pakenham Line are just around the corner, with track duplication due to be completed early in the new year – 12 months ahead of schedule. Works also include installation of High Capacity Signalling equipment (see article above).

Yarra Trams

Routes 57, 58, 59, 82, 16 and 70 will be impacted by bus replacement. Various track renewals will be complemented by a February upgrade to the tram stop at Collins and William Streets in the CBD – becoming a level access stop.

V/Line

Platforms extensions at Nagambie and Murchison East railway stations sees Shepparton Line services replaced by coaches between 1-12 December, while Warrnambool Line and Waurn Ponds station upgrades sees coach replacement in late November.

Level Crossing Removal project

The works will see another four level crossings removed, bringing the grand total of the Level Crossing Removal project to 58 to be confined to history.

Crossings at Old Geelong Road in Hoppers Crossing and Ferguson Street, Williamstown are expected to be removed by December, while the Greens Road, Cranbourne and Clyde Road, Berwick crossings are anticipated to be gone early in the new year. **ROSS MORRISON, VICTORIAN GOVERNMENT**

WESTERN AUSTRALIA



Metronet: Mandurah line closures

Prior to the three-week partial closedown of the Mandurah line, a number of short-term closedowns across the month of December, as follows:

Sun 7-Tue 9 December and Thu 9 Dec

Each night, from 21:45, route 909 buses replace trains between Perth Underground (Perth Busport) and Aubin Grove. Trains continue to operate between Aubin Grove and Mandurah.

The all stations replacement bus has a total journey time of 55 minutes, while the express bus (from Perth Busport, stopping at Elizabeth Quay then direct to Aubin Grove) has a journey time of 32 minutes. Both stopping patterns, listed under the same route number, operate every 15 minutes until 22:30 then half-hourly until end of service across each of the four nights. The last two buses of the night departing Perth Busport extend through to Mandurah, with a total journey time of 125 minutes.

Sun 12 Dec

All day, buses replace trains between Elizabeth Quay and Aubin Grove. Trains continue to operate between Aubin Grove and Mandurah.

Again, there is a mix of all stations and express replacement services operating as route 909. From 08:00, both service types operate to a frequency of every 15 minutes in both directions. The express buses drop to a half-hourly service after 19:30. Once again, the last all stops bus of the night extends through to Mandurah.

Mon 13-Thu 16 Dec

Each night, from 20:15, buses will replace trains between Cockburn Central and Mandurah, although this one appears to be for general maintenance, rather than as part of the Thornlie-Cockburn Link project. Replacement bus route 909 will operate in lieu, while trains continue to operate between Cockburn Central and Perth Underground. **TRANSPERTH**

Metronet: Mandurah line Xmas/NY closure

Progress on the Thornlie-Cockburn Link project, part of the wider Metronet works program, will see trains on the Mandurah Line not running between Elizabeth Quay and Aubin Grove from Sunday 26 December until (at least) Friday 14 January.

Trains however continue to operate between Mandurah and Aubin Grove. Peak-hour service frequency is reduced to every 15 minutes. Replacement buses will operate to cover the gap, including some express buses. A temporary bus station will be used at Perth Convention and Exhibition Centre (PCEC) – PCEC is a short walk from Elizabeth Quay railway station. The bus routes are as follows:

- **909** - All stations between Aubin Grove and Canning Bridge, extends to PCEC after 19:00.
- **919** - Express from Bull Creek to PCEC.
- **929** - Express from Murdoch to PCEC.
- **939** - Express from Cockburn Central to PCEC.
- **949** - Express from Aubin Grove to PCEC.

At the time of publication, timetables were not available.

With route 909 and 949 buses using the regular bus stands at Aubin Grove, existing local route services will move across to temporary bus stops in the northern car park.

Until 19:00 daily, there is no direct replacement service between Perth and Canning Bridge “to ease congestion”. These passengers can use local bus routes instead, including 111, 114, 115, 158, 160 and 910. **TRANSPERTH**

NEW ZEALAND



Wellington: Snapper taps onto rail network

The Snapper ticketing smartcard is now in use on Wellington's Johnsonville rail line, as part of a "way overdue" pilot. The pilot is set to run for 12 months.

Metlink's general manager, Scott Gallacher, said that on the first day of the trial, Sunday 14 November, nearly half of all passengers on the line used the Snapper card.

Stuff Online reported that the pilot launch comes nine years after Auckland launched its AT HOP card on their rail network. Early plans to use HOP card in Wellington were cancelled in 2015.

The Snapper may not be deployed on other Wellington lines, as a planned National Ticketing Solution is scheduled to launch in the city by early 2023, although Greater Wellington Regional Council said they would consider expanding Snapper if the deployment of the national smartcard was further delayed. **PAUL BROWN, STUFF.CO.NZ**

INTERNATIONAL

US: Washington Metro fleet issues

Washington, D.C.'s regional "Metro" train network has been operating to a reduced timetable since 17 October, when over half of its fleet was sidelined.

The Washington Metrorail Safety Commission (WMSC), forced Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA or Metro) to immediately withdraw all 748 carriages of its Kawasaki 7000-series trains after a design flaw had been identified. The trains progressively entered service between 2015 and 2020. The flaw allowed carriage wheels to spread too wide on the axles, according to the National Transport Safety Board's (NTSB) chairperson, Jennifer Homendy.

The NTSB became involved after a Blue line train derailed on 12 October. According to *The Baltimore Times*, the rail operator had known about the wheel issue since 2017, with more than 50 occurrences identified over that time, and had been privately working with Kawasaki to find a remedy, with no further details provided. Before the withdrawal, Metro's passenger numbers were at about 30 per cent of normal levels due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

NTSB investigators have said the defect is unlikely to have originated during maintenance or repairs, and have focused on the construction of the rail cars and the pressing of the wheels to the axles.

From Monday **18 October**, Metro said it would operate a reduced timetable with services every 30 minutes on all lines, and all services would operate as six-car sets. Silver Line services were operating only between Wiehle-Reston East and Federal Center SW. From Tuesday **19 October**, Red Line services were doubled to every 15 minutes. From Monday **1 November**, services were adjusted, with Red Line services running every 15-20 minutes, Green Line services every 20 minutes, and Silver, Blue, Orange & Yellow Lines every 30-40 minutes. Silver Line services also now operate through to Largo Town Center.

Since **Monday 22 November**, some service levels have increased, including Red Line services now operating every 12 minutes, Yellow Line every 20 minutes, and Blue, Orange and Silver line every 24 minutes.

The operator said the gradual increases were possible following efforts to bring older 2000- and 3000-series trains out from storage, and return more 6000-series trains out of maintenance.

The Rockville Canopy Replacement project, which saw the closure of Shady Grove and Rockville stations, while Shady Grove Yard was physically cut off from the rest of the rail network, has been directly impacted by the requirement to bring 32 stored railcars back into service, with project completion now delayed until mid-January. A protective construction platform was placed over the tracks at Rockville Station, prohibiting trains to pass through to/from the rail yard. So to access these railcars, the construction site's platform had to be dismantled then reconstructed once the trains were retrieved.

WMATA has conducted a preliminary analysis of the measurements of 20 wheelsets identified as nonconforming in the fleet-wide special inspection of back-to-back distances. Assuming a linear rate of movement, this analysis permitted derivation of a calculated value of the maximum daily movement of wheelsets observed among the 20 wheelsets. This value is believed to serve as a reasonable worst case for estimating purposes. Based upon this calculation, an interval of 10 days is believed to represent the reasonable worst-case wheel movement rate that would result in nonconformance with specifications. Metro added a 20% factor of safety to this rate to arrive at a proposed inspection interval of every eight days per wheelset.

The calculation of this rate, which is integral to the establishment of an inspection interval, required a number of critical assumptions that require validation. To that end, Metro is proposing to conduct testing of two exemplar trainsets under simulated service conditions to confirm the calculated values align with real-time observations of wheelset movement rates. The test plan contains those assumptions and calculations for WMSC review.

Metro intends to conduct testing for no less than 12 days, which is 50% beyond the proposed worst-case inspection interval. Upon completion of the testing, Metro will compile a test report which analyzes the data and observations collected.

Excerpt of WMATA letter to WMSC dated 4th November (source: WMATA).

Reduced service levels will operate through to at least December, when Metro hopes to reinstate many of the 7000-series trains. Metro is initiating a test program of inspecting 7000-series carriage wheels every eight days, with the plan to be tested across a two-week period in late November. The test has been approved by the WMSC, with a spokesperson saying that the agency had no technical objections to Metro's plan after revisions were made, clearing the way for transit

officials to “road test” two 7000-series trains in simulated service at Metro’s Greenbelt yard.

Metro suffered a series of safety incidents, including derailments and track fires, throughout the 2010s, which the authority claimed in 2018 had been fixed.

A short video explaining the 7000-series wheel inspection process has also been made available at www.youtube.com/watch?v=Re7tnOs3QPk&t=4s.

Editor's note: In late November, Metro extended the duration of the reduced timetable until at least 31 December. THE BALTIMORE TIMES, THE WASHINGTON POST, WASHINGTON METROPOLITAN AREA TRANSIT AUTHORITY

UK: West Midlands Metro LR fleet issues

The West Midlands Metro, a light rail line running between Birmingham and Wolverhampton, is in the midst of its second bout of fleet issues in just six months. All services have been suspended until further notice.

Initially, from **Friday 11 June**, services were suspended after minor cracks were found on the chassis of one of the trams, with the operator then withdrawing the entire fleet to enable inspections to be undertaken on the other 20 trams. A limited service resumed from **Tuesday, 15 June** whilst selected trams were held for “temporary” repairs, according to BBC News. As a result of this issue, West Midlands Metro promised that the trams would henceforth undergo additional daily inspections as a precaution.

On **Saturday 13 November**, all services were suspended for a second time, with West Midlands Metro confirming that recent inspections had found the cracking to be more extensive, with “permanent” repairs now required, according to BBC News. West Midlands Metro said these repairs would take at least a month, while it was continuing to work with the manufacturer (CAF) “to understand the issues and carry out the repairs as quickly as possible”.

West Midlands Metro confirmed that its tickets would be valid for use on National Express West Midlands bus routes 9, 12/12A, 13/13A, 23, 24, 16, 74, 79, 82, 87, 101, 126, and X8, as well as West Midlands Railway and Avanti West Coast train services in lieu, until Sunday 5 December. After this date, passengers will have to pay the regular fares to use the alternative services. Local mayor, Andy Street, voiced his disappointment and frustration felt by passengers from the disruptions.

BBC News also reports that recent track replacement works in Birmingham are unrelated to the above fleet issues. An extension of the line to Dudley and Brierley Hill is expected to commence service in 2023, with CAF having already received an order to deliver more Urbos 3 trams. *BBC NEWS (2) (3) (4) (5)*



West Midlands Metro vehicles (source: West Midlands Metro).

Serbia: Belgrade Metro

Emerging Europe website reports the long-awaited Metro railway project in Belgrade, Serbia is about to see the start of construction. The 22-kilometre Line 1, with 23 stations, will be due to open in 2028. At a projected total cost of €4 billion (\$AU6.2 billion), the line will run from Makis to Mirijevo, largely bypassing the city centre in Belgrade.

Line 1 construction has been split into two phases, with Alstom to provide rollingstock, digital control systems and platform screen doors, as part of the Memorandum of Understanding signed at the beginning of the year. Parties to the agreement also include Egis Rail, while PowerChina will provide civil engineering services to the project.

The Serbian government's Transport Minister, Sinisa Mali, has conceded that the line is only step one as part of a larger plan - “The first line in itself does not mean much. We need synergy with the second line.” Line 2, from Mirijevo to Zemun, will not be open until at least 2030. *EMERGING EUROPE, RAILWAY TECHNOLOGY, INT'L RAIL JOURNAL*

Brazil: New rail lines planned

Brazil's Ministry of Infrastructure has revealed that it is in the process of reviewing applications by four companies to build ten new railway lines. The lines would include:

- Água Boa – Lucas do Rio Verde (557km)
- Uberlândia – Chaveslândia (235km)
- Estreito – Balsas (245km)
- Maracaju – Dourados (76km)
- Guarapuava – Paranaguá (405km)
- Cascavel – Foz do Iguaçu (166km)
- Cascavel – Chapecó (286km)
- Açailândia – Alcântara (520km)
- São Mateus – Ipatinga (420km)
- Suape – Curral Novol (717km), and
- Perequê – Tiplan and Port of Santos – 8km.

Totalling 3,300 kilometres, the review was announced whilst the national government was touting its “Pro Rail” agenda - “We are making a railway revolution, the biggest in the last 100 years”.

The government also announced that it had signed a 35-year concession contract with company Bahia Mineracao to complete construction of and operate the new 537km first stage of the West-East Integration Railroad (between Ilheus and Caetite). This line is expected to open in 2025, and to be used to transport over 18 million tonnes of freight annually.

The government also signed a contract with GRU Airport to build a new 2.7km automated rail line between Paulista Metropolitan Trains Line 13/Jade station with Sao Paulo Guarulhos Airport's three passenger terminals. This line is expected to be operating in January 2024, using three trains running a shuttle service and with a peak capacity of 2,000 passengers per hour in each direction. **INTERNATIONAL RAILWAY JOURNAL**

Canada: VIA Rail

VIA Rail is in the midst of a gradual resumption of its services, following from earlier impacts of COVID-19 restrictions. From Wednesday 8 December, the Ocean service (Montreal-Halifax) will operate twice a week. **PAUL BROWN**

China: Yangtze River Delta expansion

The government said in September that it plans to invest \$207.5 billion (1 trillion Yuan) to expand the rail network in the Yangtze River Delta region by 33 per cent over the next five years, including a tripling of the region's high-speed network. **RAILWAY TECHNOLOGY**

ENDS

BUS & COACH NEWS

NEW SOUTH WALES



Sydney SE bus changes confirmed

An overview of the confirmed south-eastern Sydney bus network, which will commence on Sunday 5 December, follows:

Frequent Services (ADFN)

304 Circular Quay-Green Square, previously Circular Quay-Rosebery

309 Redfern-Matraville, with alternating services extending to Port Botany. Previously Railway Sq-Banksmeadow

333 Circular Quay-North Bondi

343 Circular Quay-Kingsford

New route **350** Sydney Airport (Domestic Terminal)-Bondi Jct via Eastgardens, Maroubra Jct & Coogee. Replaces 400 Airport-Maroubra Jct and 353 between Maroubra Jct-Bondi Jct

370 Glebe Point-Coogee, previously Leichhardt-Coogee

373 City Museum-Coogee, previously Circular Quay-Coogee

379 North Bondi-Bronte

New route **390X** Bondi Jct-La Perouse via Randwick & Kingsford. Replaces 314, 316, 317 and 400 Bondi Jct-Randwick, 393 394 L94 Kingsford-La Perouse

392 Redfern-Matraville via W Kensington & Bunnerong Rd, with alternating services extending to Little Bay. Previously operated into the CBD (Circular Quay). Replaces 302 and 303 Redfern-UNSW via West Kensington

396 Circular Quay-Maroubra Beach

Local Services

303 Prince of Wales Hospital-Sans Souci via Kingsford & Eastlakes, previously Redfern-Sans Souci

New route **306** Redfern-Mascot Stn via Rosebery & Eastlakes, replaces 301 between Rosebery & Mascot

307 Mascot-Eastgardens via East Botany, previously Mascot-Port Botany

New route **310** Railway Square-East Botany, replaces 310X Railway Sq-Banksmeadow

311 Millers Point-Central, now terminates at Eddy Avenue, rather than Railway Square.

320 Green Square-Gore Hill, previously Mascot-Gore Hill

339 Central Station-Clovelly, previously operated to Gresham St, City

348 Randwick-Wolli Ck, previously Bondi Jct-Wolli Ck

New route **356** Eastgardens-Bondi Jct via Maroubra Jct, South Coogee & Randwick, replaces 316/7 Maroubra Jct-Randwick & 357 Randwick-Bondi Jct

New route **358** Sydenham-Randwick, replaces 418 Sydenham-Kingsford & 357 Mascot Stn-Randwick

362 Rose Bay Wharf-Coogee, previously Bondi Beach-Coogee (summer route)

374 Central Station-Coogee via Cleveland St & Bream St, previously via Surry Hills

New route **375** Randwick-Eastgardens via South Coogee, replaces 376/7 Randwick-Maroubra Beach & 317 Maroubra Beach-Eastgardens

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-Mascot Stn, previously operated to Eastgardens (includes former 420N)

New route **469** Glebe-Uni of Sydney, replaces 370 western section

Peak Period Express Services

324X Vaucluse-City Wynyard (previously L24)

Inward services to Museum via Eastern Distributor, Outward services via Castlereagh, Goulburn, Elizabeth and Albion Sts.

339X Martin Place-Clovelly (previously X39 and X40)

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 Place-Maroubra Beach via Randwick (now via Cowper & Cook Sts, 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 X97)

Night Services

304 Circular Quay-Green Square

324 City Walsh Bay-Watsons Bay

333 Circular Quay-North Bondi

350 Mascot-Bondi Jct

373 City Museum-Coogee

390X Bondi Jct-La Perouse

392N Circular Quay-Matraville

396 Circular Quay-Maroubra Beach

420 Burwood-Sydney Airport (International Terminal)

N20 City Town Hall-Riverwood via Airport

N91 Bondi Jct-Macquarie Park

New routes

306 310 350 356 358 375 390X 392N 469

Modified routes

303 304 307 309 311 320 324X 339 339X 348 362 370 373 373X 374 374X 377X 392 397 399 418 420

Withdrawn routes

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

Adjacent routes with no change

200 305 308 313 323 324 325 326 327 328 342 343 352 355 360 380 381 386 387 388

Whilst some routes have no changes to their routing, they will still incur adjustments to trip times or removal/addition of trips, including routes 200, 313, 324, 325, 343, 352, 355, 360, 386, and 387. Trip times in 324 and 325 have been coordinated with each other. Route 355 has been adjusted around Waterloo to support Sydney Metro works.

The proposal to discontinue route 373 was not acted upon, however 373 Coogee will now commence from Museum railway station, rather than Circular Quay. Inner West routes 412 423 423X 426 428 428X 430 431 438N 438X 461N 461X 470 departing the city via Castlereagh Street will now instead operate via Elizabeth Street, matching the inbound services.

The changes also see an expansion of the All-Day Frequent Network (ADFN) concept, with 11 routes across the eastern suburbs region now operating every ten minutes during the day, and at least every 20 minutes in the early morning and evening daily. Routes 370 and 373 have been upgraded, while new high-frequency route 390X is included from inception. These routes are listed above, under "Frequent Services (ADFN)".

Further information is available on the [MySydney website](http://www.mysydney.nsw.gov.au/SE_bus_changes) (www.mysydney.nsw.gov.au/SE_bus_changes), including region network map, region ADFN map (see page 13), region "night service" map, further summary of the changes, a consultation report, and also an 810-page booklet of the regions 6 and 9 timetables effective 5/12/2021 (but excludes route maps). *Report by HILAIRE FRASER, with information from TRANSPORT FOR NSW*

Harbour timetable adjustments

Due to minor changes made to ferry trip times, some trips on selected bus routes have been altered to maintain multi-mode connections between bus and ferry, effective from Sunday 5 December, as follows:

- Route 238 – maintain connections at Taronga Zoo.
- Routes 254, 269 and 291 – maintain connections at McMahons Point.

- Route 442 – maintain connections at Balmain East.

Meanwhile, as a consequence of the changes to route 442, the timetable for route 441 has simultaneously been adjusted. **TRANSPORT FOR NSW**

New Sydney Region 9 operator

Sydney metropolitan bus region nine, with routes across Sydney's eastern suburbs and the CBD, will be handed over to Transdev John Holland following a competitive tender process. It is one of the last government bus regions remaining in Sydney. The new contract commences on 3 April 2022 for a period of eight years.

The contract is good news for the parties, who failed earlier in the year in their bid to pick up the new Wellington (New Zealand) commuter train contract.

John Holland's executive general manager for rail and transport operations, Steve Butcher, said they were proud to be able to “bring our experience operating customer-focused networks like Sydney Metro, Canberra Metro and Metro Trains Melbourne to make sure customers are the biggest winners out of the transition”. The joint-venture's managing director, Rachel Spencer, said that all existing “operational employees” would be offered employment with the operator on their existing terms and conditions with full recognition of service. **TRANSDEV**

Lismore and Queanbeyan feedback

Transport for NSW is seeking community feedback about bus services in the regional cities of Lismore and Queanbeyan. Results from the review of these services may include changes to existing networks, new/amended routes/services, altered operating hours, and adjustments for connections with other services to reach key destinations.

This review forms part of TfNSW's *16 Regional Cities Services Improvement Program*. Consultation is due to close on Friday, 10 December.

Visit <https://yoursay.transport.nsw.gov.au/better-bus-network-lismore> (for Lismore), or <https://yoursay.transport.nsw.gov.au/better-bus-network-queanbeyan> (for Queanbeyan), where a survey has been provided along with an interactive map for comments. **AGNES BOSKOVITZ, THE CANBERRA TIMES, TRANSPORT FOR NSW**

VICTORIA



Flexiride expansion

From Sunday 5 December, there will be a new FlexiRide service in Melton South (map provided).

This area is already served partly by route 457 and the entire route 454 (Melton Station - Cobblebank station), both operated by Transit Systems (formerly Sita). At this stage, there has been no indication that these routes will cease or be altered in any way.



Presumably Transit Systems will utilise some of their Optaire Solo midi-buses for this service. What will be interesting to note will be uptake by the locals as anecdotal reports indicate the FlexiRide services in Mooroolbark and Lilydale have not been a resounding success. **STEVEN HABY**

SOUTH AUSTRALIA



Timetable adjustments

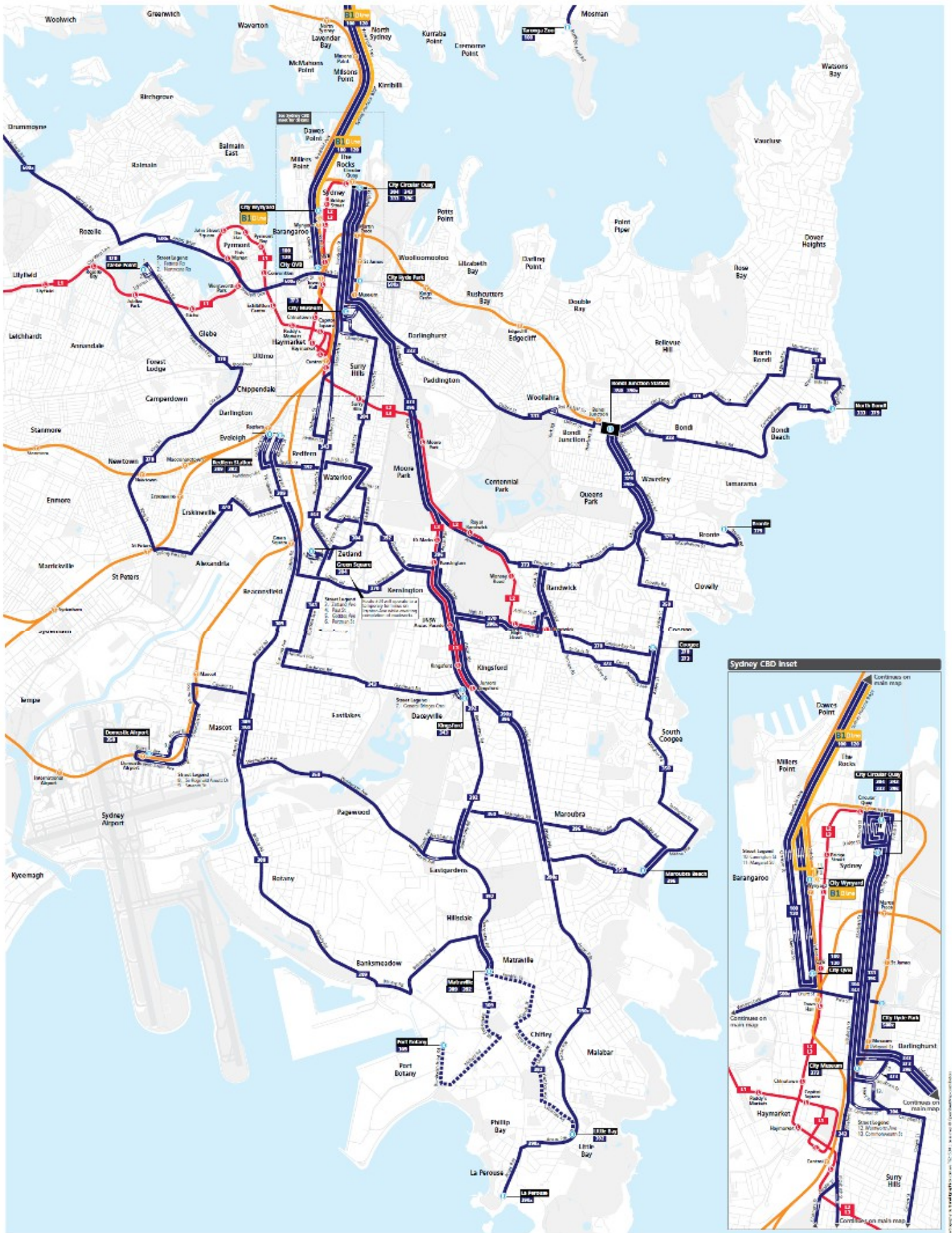
Effective from Monday 11 October, updated timetables have been published for routes 100, 101, 190, 195, 196, 197X, 230, 232, G20, G21, G22X, 320, N10 and N21. The changes consist of minor alterations to trip times, which Adelaide Metro says better reflect actual running times. **ADELAIDE METRO**

WESTERN AUSTRALIA



Alternative Bus Routes

The Transperth website has a page that provides a general list of alternative bus routes by train line then by station when “the train isn't running”. It is further split into lists for weekday, Saturday, and Sunday. The page is available at www.transperth.wa.gov.au/Track-Closures/Alternative-Bus-Routes. An example of multi-modal consideration.



<p>Bus service types</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Bus — Express — Frequent – includes weekend operation at bus only 30 min 	<p>Bus details</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bus route Station Link 	<p>Other transport modes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Train Light rail 	<p>North</p>
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Airport Line: Proposed bus changes

Further to last month's report on proposed Airport Line bus network changes (pp. 11-12), maps of these are provided on pages 17 and 18 herein.

NEW ZEALAND



Tauranga changes, eff 15 Nov 2021

The Bayhopper network consists of 26 routes covering the Western Bay and Tauranga urban areas, as well as a service out to Whakatane, under two contracts (East and West) from the Bay of Plenty Regional Council to Baybus (owned by NZ Bus) under a nine-year agreement that began in December 2018.

According to Baybus, Tauranga City, Mount Maunganui, Papamoa and Te Puke will benefit from revised bus routes that “are easier for passengers to understand”, effective from 15 November.



- New Route **2** (Tauranga City-Bayfair-Papamoa Plaza-Papamoa Beach): Replacing CL - City Link and HL - Hospital Link direct from Tauranga City to Bayside. Also incorporates 30 Bayside-The Boulevarde (now 2B), 33 Bayside-Papamoa Beach (now 2A) and 30x City-Golden Sands Express. Operating every 15 minutes weekdays, half-hourly weekends.
- New Route **5** (Tauranga City-Mt Maunganui-Bayside): Replaces CL - City Link and HL - Hospital Link from Tauranga City to Bayside via Mt Maunganui. Operating every 15 mins weekdays and half-hourly weekends.
- **20** (Bayside-Te Puke): Replaces weekday route 221, and the Te Puke extension of old route GL – Gold Line. Operating hourly daily. One AM and one PM trip diverts for Papamoa College students.
- **21** (Mt Maunganui-Bayfair-Papamoa Beach): replacing GL - Gold Line, excluding the Te Puke section, which is now covered by route 20. Operating hourly every day.

- **22** (Tauranga City-Maungatapu-Papamoa Plaza) replaces old routes 36 Tauranga City-Maungatapu-Papamoa Plaza and 41 Tauranga City-Maungatapu. The Papamoa-Maungatapu section only operates in the peak direction during peak periods.
- **51** (Pyes Pa-Tauranga Crossing): Weekend trips have been extended to Pyes Pa Memorial Gardens replacing old route 57.
- **71** (Matua – Tauranga City via Brookfield): An additional morning peak trip has been added.

Withdrawn routes

CL, GL, HL, 30, 30x, 33, 36, 41, 57, and 221.

Minor timing adjustments

CT – Crosstown Connector and 55.

The new Tauranga and Te Puke bus timetable booklet, effective 15 November 2021, can be found at www.baybus.co.nz.

The Regional Council Public Transport Committee's chairperson, Councillor Andrew von Dadelszen, said that the main catalyst for these changes is to better serve the Tauranga community, and make public transport use a more attractive option - “Tauranga continues to be one of the most dependent cities in the world on single occupancy vehicle use and this network refresh provides a great opportunity to get people out of their cars”. *Report by HILAIRE FRASER, with further from BAY OF PLENTY REGIONAL COUNCIL, BAYBUS, NZ BUS*

Auckland: 50A adjustment

Route 504 was withdrawn, effective from Monday, 29 November. To fill the gap posed by the withdrawal, two AM peak and three PM peak route 50A bus trips will now service Waiheke Road. The trips have been chosen as they also provide a 10-minute connection with ferries leaving Matiatia at 07:00 and 08:00, and ferries leaving Downtown at 16:00, 17:00 and 18:00 for Matiatia.

ENDS

PLAN YOUR JOURNEY

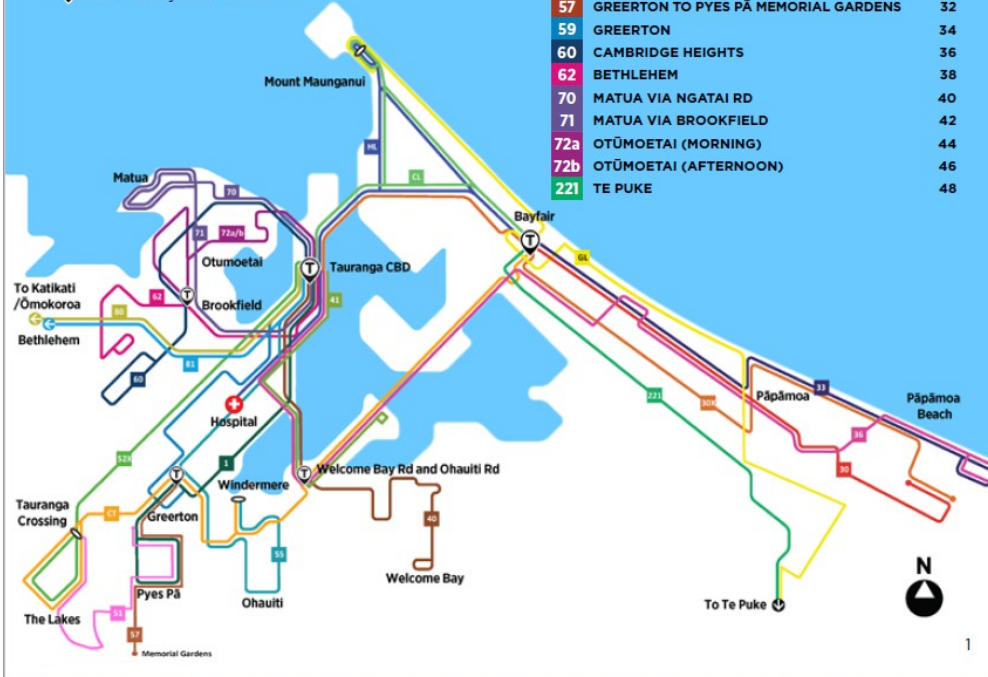
To plan your trip, use the Journey Planner at www.baybus.co.nz. Journey Planner provides you with all your trip information, including the location of your nearest bus stop and transfer details. Even better download the Transit App.



Free real-time bus app.
Download Transit



on the maps show transfer points and bus routes you can transfer to.



The previous Tauranga bus network, dated Feb 2021 (source: BOP Reg Ccl).

PLAN YOUR JOURNEY

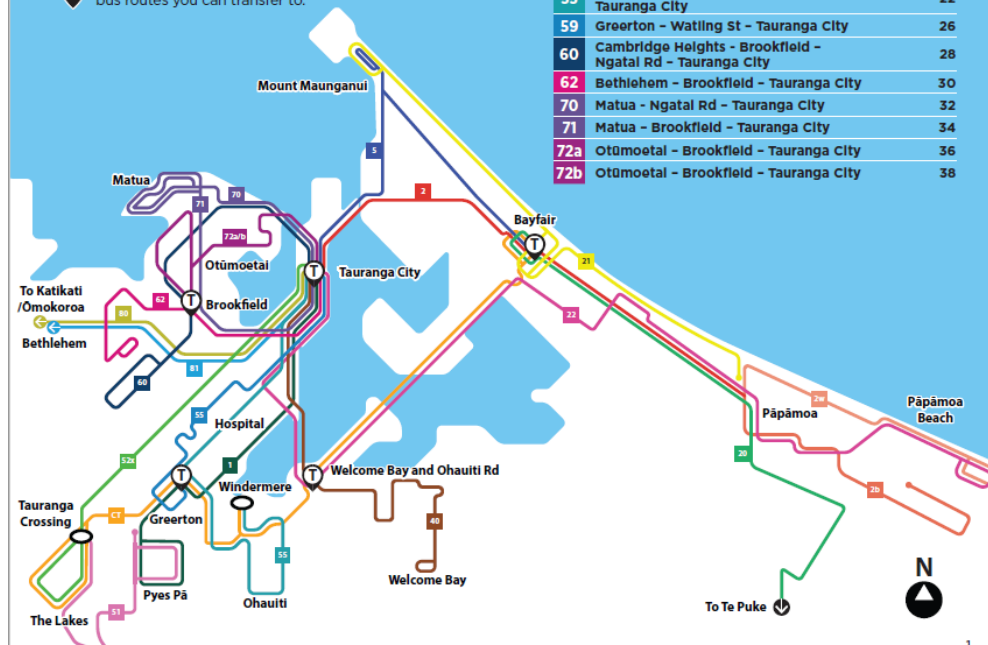
To plan your trip, use the Journey Planner tool at www.baybus.co.nz. Journey Planner provides you with all your trip information, including the location of your nearest bus stop and transfer details. Even better download the Transit App.



Free real-time bus app.
Download Transit



on the maps show transfer points and bus routes you can transfer to.



The revised Tauranga bus network, from 15 Nov 2021 (source: BOP Reg Ccl).

FERRY & SHIP NEWS

NEW SOUTH WALES



Sydney Ferries: timetable adjustments

Effective from Sunday 5 December, some trips on **F2 Taronga Zoo**, **F4 Pyrmont Bay** and **F6 Mosman Bay** had timing changes. Transport for NSW said that they are “shifting trip time by up to five minutes”.

Due to impacts on some bus connections, some buses had altered trip times implemented from the same date - to maintain service connections. A brief overview is provided in this month's Bus News. **TRANSPORT FOR NSW**

Sydney: Ferry fleet issues

On the continued issues plaguing the introduction of the new 10-strong River Class fleet onto the Transdev Sydney Ferries network, *The Sydney Morning Herald* reports that a previously reported fault with the angle of the glass in the wheelhouse, which causes reflection issues at times of low natural light, has yet to be fixed.

As a result, the sole member of the fleet that has entered service currently does not operate after sunset.

A Transdev Sydney Ferries spokesperson said remediation of the issue was expected to commence by December, with the fleet to fully enter service by mid-next year, attributing the COVID-19 pandemic for extensive delays - “it complicated what is already a complicated activity”. However, remediation of other issues, including the existence of asbestos, reports of the vessel stalling in emergency braking conditions, and some wiring and electrical issues, has already been rectified.

Meanwhile, after nearly a year in the country, Transdev has confirmed that the three new Emerald Class 'mark 2' ferries (*Balmoral*, *Clontarf* and *Fairlight*) will finally enter service on the F1 Manly route imminently, after works recently undertaken to reinforce their hulls. This will enable the ferries to withstand swells of up to 4.5 metres, much greater than the original 2.5 metres. **SYDNEY MORNING HERALD, THE DAILY TELEGRAPH**

Sydney Ferries: Reliability issues

In the period 5-20 November, reliability issues plagued Transdev Sydney Ferries services, with numerous cancellations. Whilst the bulk of these were on the **F3 Parramatta River** route, some also occurred on the **F2 Taronga Zoo**, **F4 Cross Harbour** and **F1 Manly**. These cancellations were reported to be due to a mix

of operational/staffing and mechanical issues, as follows:

Friday 5 November – mechanical cancellations:

- 17:05 Barangaroo to Olympic Park
- 18:22 Olympic Park to Barangaroo

Saturday 6 November – operational cancellations:

- 15:47 Circular Quay to Pyrmont Bay
- 16:15 Pyrmont Bay to Circular Quay

Monday 8 November – operational suspension:

During the morning peak, F3 ferries were not operating between Parramatta and Rydalmere.

Meanwhile, mechanical cancellations:

- 16:25 Circular Quay to Parramatta
- 16:38 Parramatta to Circular Quay
- 17:40 Circular Quay to Olympic Park

Friday 12 November – mechanical cancellation:

- 07:44 Olympic Park to Circular Quay

Saturday 13 November – mechanical cancellations:

- 10:07 Circular Quay to Parramatta terminated mid-trip (Cockatoo Island)
- 11:38 Parramatta to Rydalmere

Sunday 14 November – unexplained cancellations:

- 07:07 Circular Quay to Parramatta
- 07:38 Olympic Park to Circular Quay
- 08:37 Parramatta to Circular Quay
- 08:37 Circular Quay to Olympic Park

Meanwhile, operational cancellations:

- 09:38 Olympic Park to Circular Quay
- 12:32 Circular Quay to Pyrmont Bay
- 13:00 Pyrmont Bay to Circular Quay
- 15:12, 16:12 Barangaroo to Meadowbank

Monday 15 November – operational suspension:

During the afternoon peak, buses replacing F3 ferries between Parramatta and Rydalmere.

Wednesday 17 November – mechanical cancellation:

- 11:38 Parramatta to Olympic Park

Meanwhile, the 10:38 Parramatta to Circular Quay ferry operated express between Meadowbank and Drummoyne due to reaching passenger capacity, while the 17:40 Circular Quay to Olympic Park service was cancelled for a reason not supplied.

Thursday 18 November – mechanical cancellations:

- 17:25 Circular Quay to Rydalmere
- 18:24 Rydalmere to Circular Quay

Operational cancellations:

- 17:40 Circular Quay to Olympic Park
- 18:45 Circular Quay to Taronga Zoo

Friday 19 November – operational cancellations, with replacement buses provided:

- 21:30, 23:00, 00:20 Circular Quay to Manly
- 22:15, 23:40, 00:55 Manly to Circular Quay

It appears that the 22:15 Quay-Manly and 23:00 Manly-Quay services were initially cancelled, but the later 00:20 Quay-Manly and 00:55 Manly-Quay ferries were cancelled instead, with the former two reinstated.

Meanwhile, multiple F3 Parramatta River ferries have also been skipping stops on some Sunday services due to reaching capacity.

Transdev Sydney Ferries achieved 99 per cent customer satisfaction in Transport for NSW's recently released six-monthly survey, including 98 per cent for "the ferry turning up on time". It is unclear at this stage what impact recent unreliability may have on the next set of numbers, which will be due for release next February. *TRANSDEV SYDNEY FERRIES, TRANSPORT FOR NSW*

North Sydney wharf upgrade

Since Monday 22 November, North Sydney wharf has been closed for a six-month upgrade. Transport for NSW advises that passengers can use F5 services from Kirribilli wharf or Keolis Downer route 263 buses in lieu. *TRANSPORT FOR NSW*

ENDS

AIR NEWS

DOMESTIC



Sydney Airport: Virgin's excess slots

The Sydney Business Chamber has written to the federal transport minister and deputy prime minister about concerns of Virgin hoarding take-off and landing slots at Sydney Airport, saying they know they won't

use all of their allocated slots this Summer, whilst there is external demand for more slots at Sydney Airport.

The Chamber was reportedly approached by fellow airline Regional Express on the issue. According to the Department of Infrastructure, Virgin Australia was allocated around 31,700 slots at the airport for the period October 2021-March 2022, which is an increase of around 2,000 from two years ago. A fair number of these slots were previously used by discount offshoot Tigerair, which ceased operating after Virgin fell into administration. In the current schedule, around 13,000 slots that were allocated to Tiger have been split up, with 6,400 forwarded to Virgin proper, and the remainder opened up to other airlines. Virgin's fleet of aircraft dropped from 133 to just 68 following its fall into administration, with the airline being resuscitated by private equity firm Bain Capital.

The Chamber said in its letter "the more slots that are available for all aviation companies, the better it is in maximising this important infrastructure, and that's going to benefit Sydney and Australia". Virgin said in a statement that "as restrictions continue to ease and flying increases, Virgin Australia will assess and utilise the slots it requires to support customer demand". Regional Express declined to comment.

According to industry sources, Regional Express is unhappy, as they have been unable to secure permanent slots at the airport for their domestic expansion, instead being reliant on using the slots that have been temporarily vacated by international airlines. *THE SYDNEY MORNING HERALD*

Omicron enters NSW

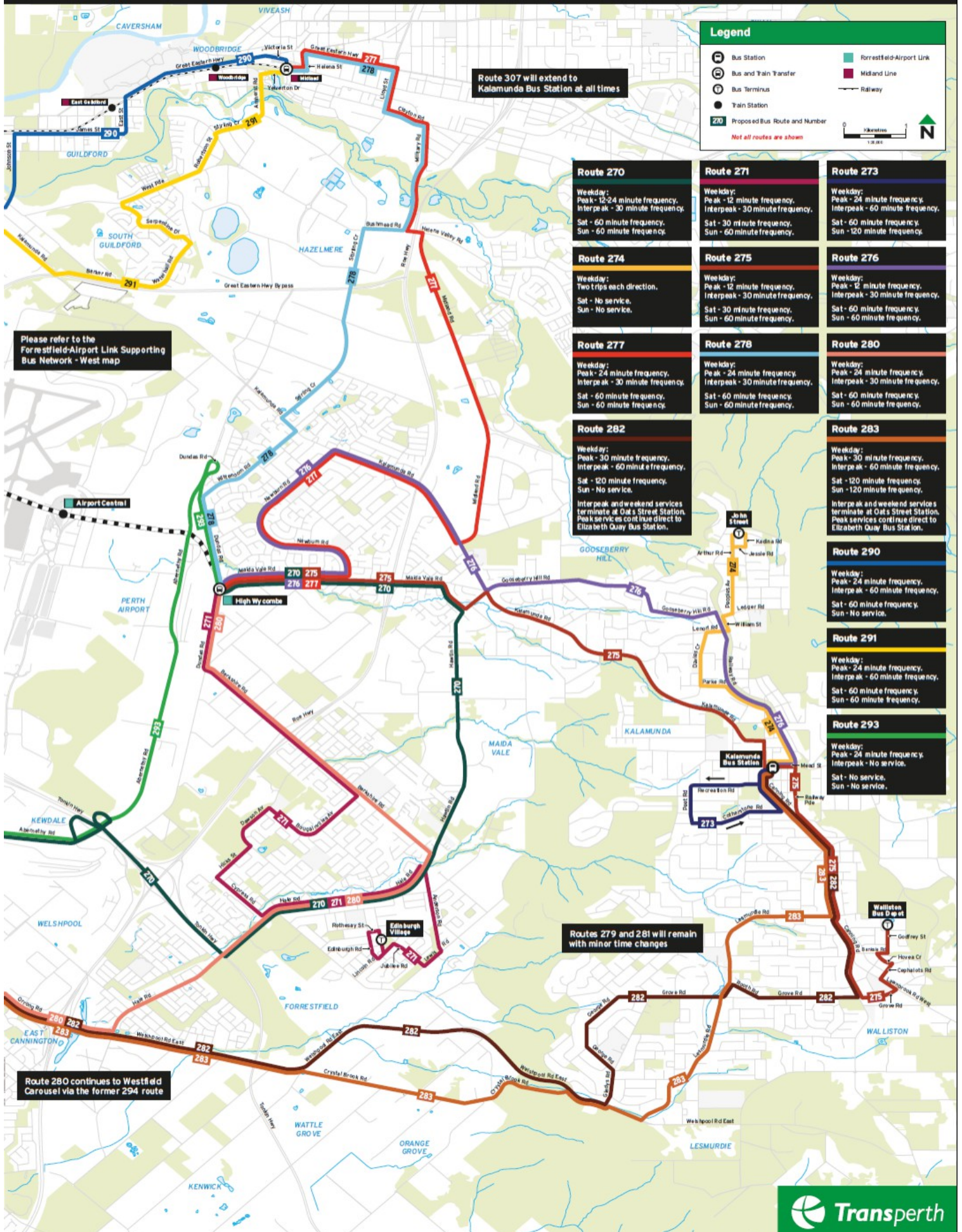
New South Wales' State Premier confirmed on 28 November that two cases of the new omicron COVID variant have reached the state. NSW Health said the pair came from Southern Africa off a flight from Doha, arriving around 19:00 Saturday 27 November. The pair have been isolated in Special Health Accommodation, while others from the total group of 14 have been placed in mandatory quarantine for a fortnight.

NSW Health says that in line with recent Commonwealth measures around the new Omicron variant, travellers that have been in South Africa, Lesotho, Botswana, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Namibia, Eswatini, Malawi or the Seychelles in the 14 days before arriving in NSW must quarantine for a fortnight, regardless of vaccination status.

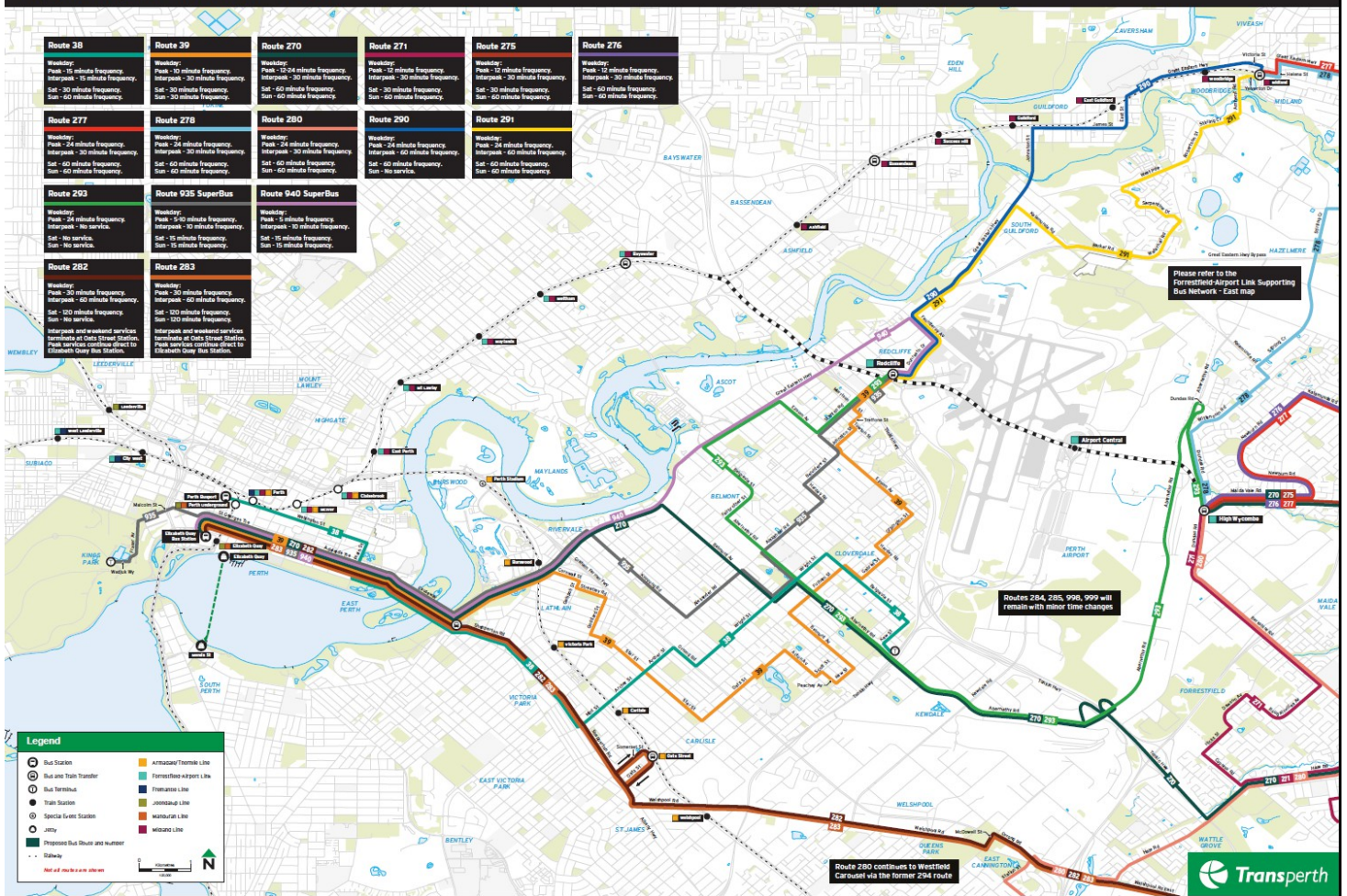
Flight crews that have been overseas in the previous 14 days are also required to travel directly to their place of residence/accommodation for 14 days of isolation upon arrival, or until they depart on another flight out of the country, consistent with rules for unvaccinated flight crew. *NSW HEALTH*

ENDS

Forrestfield-Airport Link Supporting Bus Network - East



Forrestfield-Airport Link Supporting Bus Network - West



Beware – Bing Maps Timetables

A source of timetable information is map apps, Google and Bing. Drill down when in the map, the transit stops appear. Click on the transit stop icon and page down, in Google, for the departure board.

On the **right** is an example for bus services at Chatswood, in Sydney.

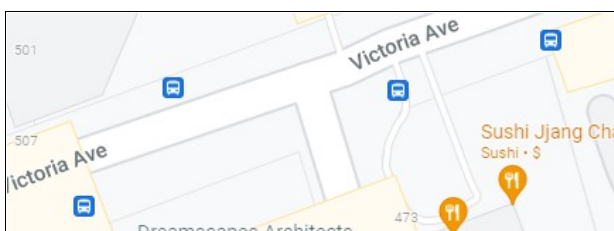
But where are the other services, you ask. The point here is that there are three stops (stands) along the south side of Victoria Avenue (see **below left**). You have to find the right one for your destination.

Bing provides much less info, but does make it easier to find the right stand (see images **below middle and right**)?

← Chatswood Station, Victoria... ×

COVID-19 information (144)
 From 1 November, COVID Safe capacity on public tr...

144	Manly	2:56 PM
144	Manly	3:05 PM
144	Manly	3:15 PM
144	Manly	3:26 PM
144	Manly	3:36 PM



Chatswood Station, Victoria Ave, Stand F

Directions

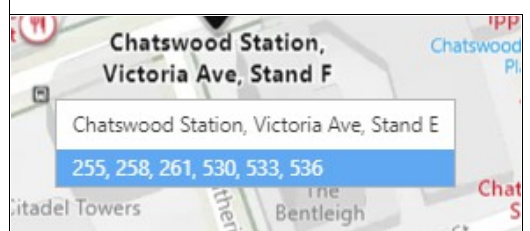
15 00

Thursday, 18 November 2021

Keolis Downer Northern Beaches

144

Manly



But the big problem with Bing is with trains. Bing does it by platform. See **right** for the map of Strathfield.

So one can drill down on an individual platform.

See **below** for Platform 3 at about 9 am on a Monday.



8	55	am
Monday, 15 November 2021		
NSW TrainLink Train		
31		
CASINO	2:52 pm	2:52 pm
	16/11/2021	17/11/2021
33		
CASINO	7:20 am	7:20 am
	16/11/2021	17/11/2021
35		
Grafton	11:53 am	11:53 am
	16/11/2021	17/11/2021
223		
Armidale	9:42 am	9:42 am
	16/11/2021	17/11/2021
427		
Dubbo	7:30 am	7:30 am
	16/11/2021	17/11/2021

First up is NSW TrainLink trains but these might be better referred to as Regional services.

Notice that the info is not just for the day but also for other days. A simple listing of services post 9 am for the current day would be less confusing. The display could be much more compact.

Now we have 'NSW trains' which cover the InterCity services (**below**).

NSW Trains	
BMT	
Mount Victoria	9:31 am
Katoomba	3:01 pm
Springwood	4:00 pm
CCN	
Newcastle Interchange	5:33 pm 6:33 pm
Wyong	7:58 pm

The correct listing would be more like (assuming post 9 am):

BMT 0931 Mount Victoria
1031 Lithgow

And

CCN 0901 Wyong
0931 Newcastle Interchange
1001 Newcastle Interchange

The suburban listing is quite weird (see **right**). Suburban trains don't often use Platform 3 and Bing should provide a message as at 9 am that passengers should transfer to Platform 6.

This listing reflects a timetable change effective November 20th. It is quite useless as meaningful passenger information.

The Hornsby times reflect the running of Northern line services out of Central Platforms 1 to 15 via the Main line in the evening peak. But why isn't the first of these, at 16:22 shown, plus others? **JIM WELLS**

Sydney Trains	
T1	
Penrith	12:24 am
	20/11/2021
Richmond	8:51 pm
	20/11/2021
T2	
MacArthur	4:58 am
	20/11/2021
	5:28 am
	20/11/2021
	5:58 am
	20/11/2021
T3	
Campbelltown	5:35 am
	20/11/2021
	6:06 am
	20/11/2021
	6:35 am
	20/11/2021
T9	
Hornsby	5:37 pm
	20/11/2021
	6:07 pm
	20/11/2021
	5:07 pm
	20/11/2021

ODD SPOT

ATA member Geoff Lambert talks regarding V/Line's numbering of its circulars:

Re: **S.21.6A00** “AMENDS **S.21.6988** Refresh VLocity Transfer SPE-SKS-DCE-SPE Fri 26th November 2021”

6A00 is interesting for numerological reasons – it’s a kind of pseudo hexadecimal number — thus 2021 seems to be the first year Vline has drafted over 1,000 Special Train Notices (Editor note: The NSW equivalent of a Circular) in the 6000 series. Only 909 seemed to have escaped into the wild. Why so many? I think it is because 159 of them have been cancellations of earlier versions. Does this indicate flexibility, confusion or incompetence?

About Table Talk

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