



RAIL & TRAM NEWS

QUEENSLAND



SEQ Rail Connect

On 2 August, the state government published a brochure online, providing information on south-east Queensland's "rail network of the future".

The immediate network priorities for the government, with SEQ Rail Connect, will be:

- **Getting ready for Cross River Rail (CRR) through simplification and consistency in service types and improve reliability.** These are to be delivered through new timetables and the opening of the CRR line.
- **Better journeys by increasing trains and seating capacity along with more frequent and faster services.** These are to be delivered through European Train Control System Level 2 commissioning, smart ticketing expansion, growth of the rail fleet, and various rail upgrades/planning initiatives.
- **Easier station access through new and upgraded stations.** This is to be delivered through level crossing and station upgrades, improving route and On Demand bus connections, and integration with Brisbane Metro.

Operationally, there will be a realignment of the existing line 'pairs' across the network, implementation of new timetables with two train services types ('suburban turn up & go' and 'long distance express'), and trains will either service existing surface stations or the new CRR stations.

The state government will also look to rollout its Smart Ticketing solution statewide, and the new ETCS2 (see last month's *Table Talk* for recent update).

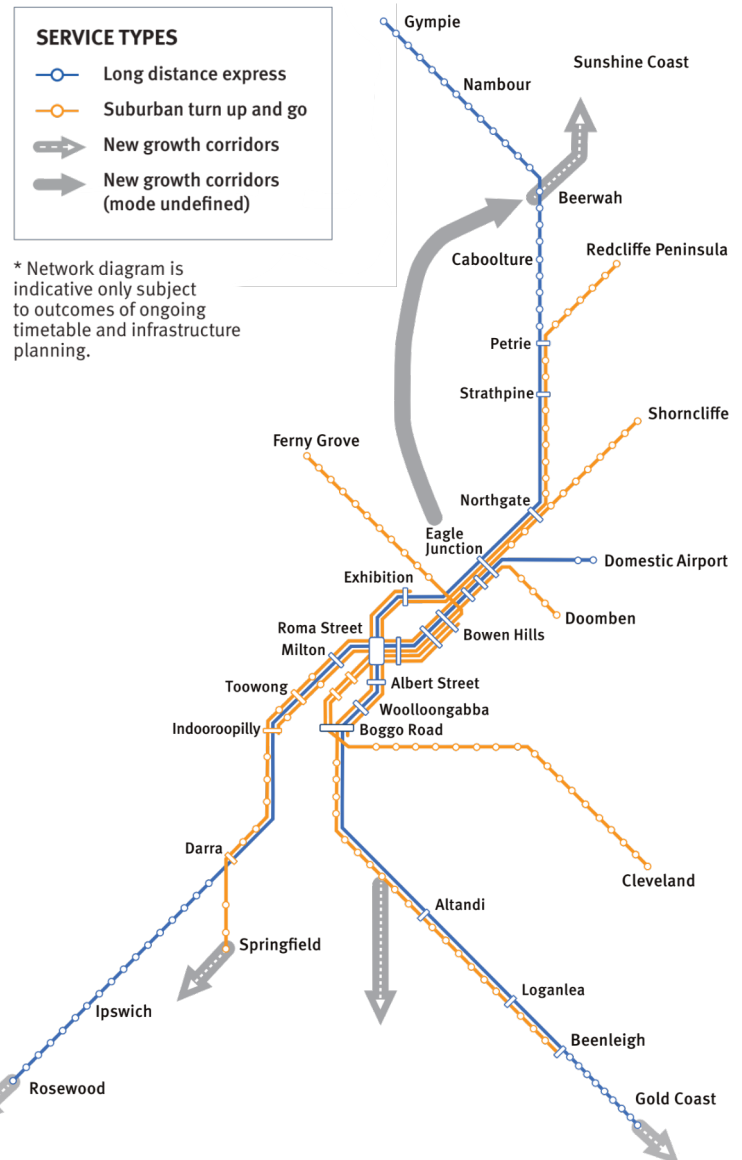
The existing two sectors (Mains and Suburban) will become three (numbered from one to three). Graphic provided right courtesy of Translink.

The publication also provides a four-year multi-billion dollar list of projects to be delivered as part of what is called QTRIP (Queensland Transport and Roads Investment Program).

The Gold Coast will lose its direct link with Brisbane Airport as part of the plan. According to Transport Department data, across the 2018/19 financial year, 18.4 per cent of Airtrain passengers travelled to/from the Gold Coast. **QUEENSLAND GOVT, TRANSLINK, BRISBANE TIMES**

Brisbane: Rail TT adjustments incoming

In line with the SEQ Rail Connect priorities outlined on this page, operational changes will be implemented over a series of timetable changes to be completed in time for the introduction of the Cross River Rail line, due to open in 2025. **QUEENSLAND GOVERNMENT, CROSS RIVER RAIL**



Sector 1 - Sunshine Coast/Caboolture/Redcliffe Peninsula through to Gold Coast/Beenleigh via CRR.

Sector 2 - Shorncliffe/Airport/Doomben through to Ipswich/Springfield.

Sector 3 - Ferny Grove through to Cleveland.

Rocklea station closure

From Monday 12 September, Rocklea station will close for upgrade works associated with Cross River Rail. At this stage, the station will be shut until late 2023.

As a result, StationLink bus 109 will extend from this date to operate through to Rocklea, while customer feedback will also see the bus service extend from Boggo Road through to Princess Alexandra Hospital busway station. The location of bus stops will also change - at Yeerongpilly, they will now be located opposite from the railway station; and at Yeronga, they will move to Park Road, around 400 metres away from the railway station.

A revised 109 timetable has been made available online, with a 24-minute (weekend), 25-min (weekday off-peak) or 29-min (weekday peak) end-to-end journey time scheduled. **TRANSLINK**

NEW SOUTH WALES



Blue Mountains working

Updating last month's item, the Blue Mountains line fully reopened for passenger services on the morning of Saturday 30 July.

Syd & NSW Trains: Industrial action

Industrial action continued to impact Sydney Trains and NSW TrainLink services throughout August.

On **Wednesday 10 August**, strike action between 10:00 and 16:00 saw T4 Eastern Suburbs, Cronulla and South Coast services (sector one) not timetabled between around 08:00 and 18:00 hours. On the day, three trains were arranged to operate an ad-hoc hourly shuttle service between Bondi Junction and Cronulla throughout the stop work period.

On **Wednesday 17 August**, strike action between 10:00 and 16:00 saw T2 Inner West, Leppington, T3 Bankstown, T5 Cumberland, T7 Olympic Park and T8 Airport East Hills (sector two) services reduced to bare skeleton service, using crews from other sectors between around 08:00 and 18:00 hours. A breakdown follows:

- T2 Inner West Leppington: Services operating every 30 minutes stopping all stations between the City and Leppington. Selected T1 Western line services made additional stops at Granville and Auburn.
- T3 Bankstown: Liverpool services operating every 30 minutes stopping at all stations during affected period, with buses replacing trains between Lidcombe and Bankstown every 10 minutes.
- T5 Cumberland: All services cancelled from first service until around 18:00 hours.
- T7 Olympic Park: Replacement buses operating every 10 minutes during the affected period in lieu of train service.
- T8 Airport East Hills: During the affected period, services every 30 minutes between City and Revesby, and also every 30 minutes between City and Macarthur (stopping all stations), therefore providing a 15-minute frequency for stations

between the City and Revesby. Replacement buses operating Campbelltown-Macarthur.

On **Tuesday 23 August**, strike action between 10:00 and 16:00 saw T1 Western, North Shore and T9 Northern line (sector three) services reduced to bare skeleton service, using crews from other sectors between around 08:30 and 17:30 hours. During the strike action, impacts included:

- T1 Western/North Shore: 2 trains per hour Emu Plains-Berowra (all stops to Granville, Lidcombe, Strathfield, Redfern then all stops). Two trains were used to operate an hourly shuttle service Blacktown-Richmond.
- T3 Bankstown: Lidcombe via Bankstown services halved to a train every 30 minutes, with the other two trains per hour diverted to operate through to Hornsby via Strathfield from City Outer. Two trains per hour continued to operate through to Liverpool (limited stops).
- T4 Eastern Suburbs: 2 trains per hour to/from Cronulla diverted to operate to/from North Sydney.
- T5 Cumberland: Services cancelled. Only selected services operated post-19:00.
- T7 Olympic Park: One train shuttling on a 20-minute frequency all day.
- T9 Northern: Half-hourly service Hornsby-City Circle Outer on the normal stopping pattern into the city.
- NSW TrainLink: Blue Mountains and Central Coast Newcastle services operated to a base hourly weekend timetable, with build-ups to 8-carriage consists and selected additional peak-hour trips. Bus replacement was organised for the Hunter line between 08:30 and 17:30. Dubbo XPT and Broken Hill Xplorer trips cancelled.

On **Thursday 25 August**, strike action affecting sector four location (City Circle) between 10:00 and 16:00 saw train services instead scheduled to operate to a base Sunday timetable across the day. NSW TrainLink's Southern Highlands, Hunter and Bomaderry diesel services were scheduled to the weekday timetable, while North XPT/Xplorer and South XPT/Xplorer services were to be cancelled.

Some additional peak services were rostered at late notice to alleviate expected overcrowding, including services Blacktown-North Sydney, Leppington-City Circle, and numerous additional South Coast, Blue Mountains, & Central Coast Newcastle services (list not exhaustive).

Throughout the day, plenty of services were transposed to cover extended service gaps caused by significant service cancellations (see three paragraphs down).

A shuttle bus service was provided between International Airport and Central station stopping at all stations, operating every 20 minutes using seven buses between 07:00 and 19:00, then two buses provided a minimal service until around 22:00. The role of the service was to cover train service gaps

Interestingly, there was a two-hour gap of services on the Blue Mountains line between Valley Heights and Lawson between 11:30 and 13:30. The 10:24 and 11:24 trains ex Central ended at Valley Heights to form return services departing at 12:37 and 13:38. The 11:18 ex Mount Victoria and 11:48 ex Lithgow terminated at Lawson to form 12:29 and 13:29 trains back to Lithgow and Mount Victoria respectively. Presumably, this working was due to maintenance requirements.

On **Wednesday 31 August**, a 24-hour ban on operating privately maintained rollingstock saw services across the

network scheduled to operate to the skeleton schedule. The ban led to only K, Tangara and V set trains being available to operate services across the suburban and intercity network.

On top of all of the above impacts, for the weeks commencing Monday 15 August, Maintenance Centre "minimum operating standards" were applied by crews across the network on trains. Arguably, this action had just as much impact on passenger journeys, with up to 1,000 trips per day cancelled across the network leading to sporadic service gaps of up to three hours between services. Most of the impact included specific trains being cancelled the entire day, with issues detected during train preparation, while a lesser amount occurred during the day due to impacts from vandalism and cleanliness. This action, in tandem with the ban on altering stopping patterns live (excluding strike action days), caused considerable impact on passenger journeys throughout the second half of the month, and into September.

SYDNEY TRAINS

Inner West Light Rail: Services added

Transport for NSW (TfNSW) announced on Sunday 31 July that from the next morning, it would commence operating additional short-workings in the morning and afternoon peak periods Monday to Friday between Central and Lilyfield.

The services are provided using the older CAF rollingstock that will be progressively returned to service, after the fleet was taken out of service late last year for significant repairs.

The added services operate every 15 minutes during time periods 07:00-10:00 and 15:00-18:00, which means an average 7.5 minute peak service in each direction between Central and Lilyfield, with a 15-minute service provided over the remainder of the line. The 30 per cent journey discount still applies for all fare types along the line.

It took some days for these short-workings to be added onto the online data feed. As at 27 August, TfNSW have not issued a revised timetable online. **TRANSPORT FOR NSW**

Parramatta Light Rail: Stop names revealed

The state government has finally revealed the final light rail station names for the upcoming Parramatta Light Rail line. They are as follows:

- Westmead
- Westmead Hospital
- Childrens Hospital
- Ngara
- Benaud Oval
- Fennell Street
- Prince Alfred Square
- Church Street
- Parramatta Square
- Robin Thomas
- Tramway Avenue
- Rosehill Gardens
- Yallamundi
- Dundas

- Telopea
- Carlingford

NSW GOVERNMENT

AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY



Canberra Light Rail update

The territory government announced on 9 August that the Canberra light rail line would be wireless through the Parliamentary Triangle, with five new wire-free vehicles to be introduced onto the system in 2024, while the existing vehicles would be retrofitted with battery technology. An upgrade of the Mitchell depot will also be undertaken in the same timeframe.

ABC News reports that overhead wires have been banned from the parliamentary zone, due to foreseen impact on the view of the area's monuments and national buildings.

As part of the upcoming stage 2A works to extend the line to Commonwealth Park, the street level of London Circuit will be raised, with this work expected to start imminently. **ABC NEWS**

VICTORIA



Hurstbridge line works

The Hurstbridge line will be partially shut down for two weeks in September to allow for round-the-clock duplication works, including a platform extension at Diamond Creek, the new station at Montmorency, and the new rail bridge at Greensborough.

From 20:30 Tuesday 6 September until end of service on Monday 19 September, buses will replace trains between Hurstbridge and Macleod. The project is expected to be completed mid-next year. **METRO TRAINS MELBOURNE**



Metro Trains: Mernda line update

Effective from Monday 5 September, services on the Mernda line are planned to recommence stopping at Preston and Bell stations, following a three-month closure for station reconstruction and level crossing removal works. **METRO TRAINS MELBOURNE**

Suburban rail loop cost blows out again

ABC News reports that an independent analysis by the state's Parliamentary Budget Office has costed the whole Suburban Rail Loop project at an eye-watering \$125 billion, with the project not expected to be completed until 2083/84. That figure is 150 per cent higher than the

number claimed by Premier Dan Andrews when he revealed the project back in 2018.

The Liberal opposition lashed the project, saying that the project will double the state's debt, with Victoria's debt "already more than NSW, Queensland and Tasmania combined". **ABC NEWS**

V/Line: New Albury timetable

V/Line will issue a revised timetable for the standard gauge Melbourne-Albury line services, effective Sunday 28 August. The timetable constitutes a substantial change for passengers, with significant journey time savings resulting from the North East Line Upgrade and the introduction of new VLocity sets to operate the rail services.

Ex Southern Cross (Melbourne) (SXS), the **07:07** service arrives into Albury 17 minutes earlier, the **12:05** instead departs 12:04 to arrive at Albury 15 minutes earlier, and the **18:02** arrives at Albury 27 minutes earlier.

Ex Albury, the **06:35** service instead departs at 06:45 to arrive at SXS eight minutes earlier, the **12:45** instead departs 12:51 to arrive at SXS seven minutes earlier, and the **17:20** instead departs at 17:27 to arrive at SXS one minute earlier.

These adjustments provide for end-to-end journey time savings of between eight and 27 minutes. All services along the line will now be timetabled to operate with VLocity rollingstock.

PTV also advised that coaches would replace Albury services from 6 to 25 August for drainage works near South Dynon. **PAUL BROWN, PUBLIC TRANSPORT VICTORIA**

South Gippsland rail push

Residents around Koo Wee Rup are petitioning the state government to restore passenger rail services. The plan being pushed involves a rebuild of the railway line between Clyde and Koo Wee Rup, and a rebuilt station at Tooradin.

Founder of the organisation pushing the petition, Travis Mitchell said that buses have been "a disaster", with many locals driving to Pakenham to use rail services, and said it was "very clear that a rail return would be used and welcome. I think it's time that we make a point to those in power that it's time for our fair share of rail infrastructure".

ABC News reports that Koo Wee Rup station closed in 1993. Local council, the City of Casey, said it expected the project to cost between \$1.5 and 3 billion dollars.

Committee member for think tank Rail Futures, Peter Tesdorpf, said it was unlikely such a project would be endorsed in the medium term because land east of Clyde is not "earmarked at the moment for urban development", but it would become more likely if a second airport near Koo Wee Rup was opened, or for freight if nearby quarries were mined, but "if you did extend the line east from Clyde, it might be a catalyst to put pressure on further rezoning for residential development".

The campaign has drawn the support by the local Liberal candidate for Bass, Aaron Brown, although he conceded "it's going to be a longer-term project", because of the high cost. The existing Labor state government said it has already started planning for such a link, with \$7 million being invested to "begin planning" for a rail link. **ABC NEWS**

WESTERN AUSTRALIA



Airport Link opening

The state government has announced that the new Forrestfield-Airport Link rail line will open to passenger services on Sunday 9 October. According to Metronet, driver training is now underway along the line, which has three new stations at Redcliffe, Airport Central and High Wycombe. The new network map provided on rear cover.

The state government is estimating that 20,000 passenger trips will be made along the line in the first twelve months, with that number to increase to 29,000 by 2032. **RAIL EXPRESS**

Midland line closedown

The closedown of the Midland line has been postponed. Initially due to occur from 23 September to 16 October with buses replacing trains between Perth and Midland, the state government has announced that it will instead take place early next year. Two plans are believed to be under consideration, either a two-week closedown in January, or a two shorter closedowns in the January and April school holidays.

Transwa services, which were to instead terminate at Midland, should now operate through to Perth, pending other disruptions to services. **TRANSPERTH, TRANSWA, WA GOVERNMENT**

NEW ZEALAND



Auckland: End of the diesel line

Auckland's old diesel train sets, bought off Perth's transport agency for scrap value in 1992, have had their last run on the network.

At the time, the diesel fleet of 20 sets was a godsend for the network, with patronage trebling due to improved service frequencies, and therefore an improved attractiveness for travel.

It wasn't until 2014 that the city finally joined the electrification trend, that those in Australia's capital cities probably take for granted, having had such trains operating for decades, particularly in Sydney and Melbourne.

On the weekend of 23-24 July, the diesel fleet was farewelled, operating their final passenger services between Papakura and Pukekohe.

Buses are now replacing trains for the next two years, as the line is upgraded with electrification.

Auckland Transport's Interface Communications Lead, John Nottage, said "we should be sad, it's a milestone - 30 years of these trains and a lot of Aucklanders grew up with them".

The diesel trains have been progressively withdrawn since 2014, with many of them now enjoying a rare third

lease of life, running on Mozambique's MetroBus railway in Maputo since 2017. STUFF.CO.NZ



A recent MetroBus promotional advertisement with one such diesel set, according to Google, the tagline translates to "leave the car at home saves time and expenses come from metrobus" (source: MetroBus).

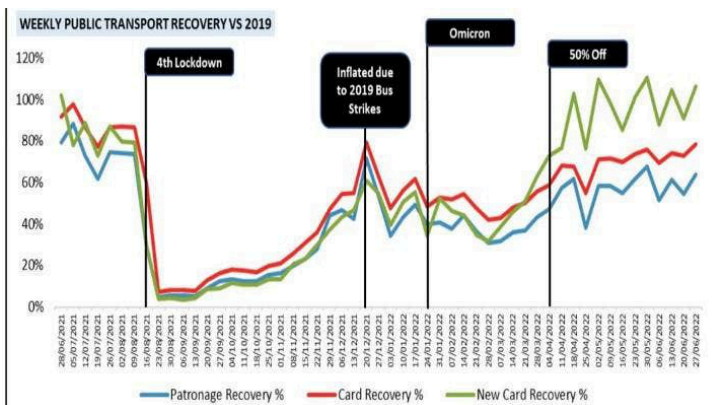
Auckland: How beneficial is halving PT fares?

Stuff Online reports that Auckland Transport (AT) has revealed it is unsure of the impact that half-price fares have had on public transport patronage across winter.

Whilst it has been in effect since April courtesy of a national government initiative to ease citizen's cost of living pressures, with patronage across all modes combined having since grown by 42 per cent, the transport agency does not know how much of that growth is a result of organic growth from the ongoing post-COVID recovery. However, it did say that in a recent survey, 15 per cent of respondents classed as "non-public transport users" had said they would be using public transport more due to the half-priced fares, which will be staying until at least February next year.

AT also said that in the first week of the half-price scheme, back in April, coincided with a 21 per cent jump in new Hop card sales.

Meanwhile, patronage on the Te Huia (Hamilton-Auckland) service has rebounded, with nearly double the patronage across July, compared to the previous month. STUFF.CO.NZ, NEW ZEALAND HERALD



Patronage and New Hop card growth compared to 2019 figures (source: Stuff Online/Auckland Transport).

INTERNATIONAL

England: Night Tube services back to normal

From Friday 1 July, Night Tube services recommenced operating on the Northern line, while from Friday 29 July, Night Tube services recommenced operating on the Piccadilly line. This completes the program of progressively returning Night Tube services to pre-pandemic regular service timetables, although services may operate to a reduced frequency in coming months due to ongoing industrial action by workers.

Meanwhile, in August, Transport for London announced the various sections of the Elizabeth line would be joined up operationally from 6 November, with trains operating from Reading and Heathrow to Abbey Wood, and from Sheffield to Paddington. Also from November, the Elizabeth line will also start operating in central London on Sundays.

Bond Street station will also open in the coming months. TRANSPORT FOR LONDON, BBC NEWS

EU proposes gauge standardisation

The European Commission has proposed that member countries should use a standardised 1,435 millimetre gauge for their railways. The Commission has said that the war in Ukraine had shone a light on the impacts of a lack of interoperability.

While the proposal would be mainly focused on new railways between member states, nine existing Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T) corridors would also need to be progressively upgraded, where a cost-benefit analysis provides a positive result. RAILFREIGHT.COM

Kenya: SGR line schedules

Linking with the Talking In-Depth article further within this edition of *Table Talk*, Kenya Railways operates three passenger services daily on its Standard Gauge Railway line between the capital, Nairobi, and Mombasa.

Dated October 2021, its latest timetable, for what Kenya Railways calls the Madaraka Express Passenger Trains, provides for three daily services in each direction between the two termini as follows:

- **The Inter-country Train** (making intermediate stops at Athi River, Emali, Kibwezi, Mtito Andei, Voi, Miasenyi and Mariakani).
- **Express Train.**
- **Night Train** (also an express service).

Interestingly, the timetable is relatively simple to remember, with services departing from either terminus at the same time. The Inter-country Train departs from the terminus at 08:00 to arrive at the destination at 14:00 (the service ex Mombasa instead has its arrival time scheduled for 14:10). The Express Train departs from the terminus at 15:00 to arrive at the destination at 20:08. The Night Train departs from the terminus at 22:00 to arrive at the destination at 03:35.

Services provide for both first class and economy travel, while Kenya Railways also provides a freight service on the line, with accommodation for both container and bulk cargo haulage. KENYA RAILWAYS

Ecuador: Transdev gains new contract

A consortium of Transdev and Metro Medellin has won a six-year operating contract for the 23-kilometre metro line running between Quitumbe and El Labrador in Quito, Ecuador. The line is due to open in December using 18 six-carriage trains built by Spanish builder CAF. *INT'L RAIL JOURNAL*

ENDS

BUS & COACH NEWS

QUEENSLAND



Further CDC/Kinetic acquisitions

Both CDC South East Queensland (CDC SEQ) and Kinetic have continued their acquisition sprees in an effort to bulk up their respective businesses.

CDC SEQ announced back in March that it would purchase selected assets from Rockhampton's Rothery's Coaches in a \$6.75 million transaction, which was completed in late June. The 16 buses are now part of CDC's Young's Bus Service, itself acquired by CDC in 2021. Eight school bus routes remain with Rothery's.

In May, Kinetic announced that Mackay Transit Coaches "would soon join its network", adding 62 buses, 11 town bus routes, and various school services to its growing regional business.

In early July, it was announced that Kinetic had acquired Bundaberg's Duffy's Buses, adding 10 town routes, various school services, 23 buses and 25 employees to its business. Duffy's had been a family-owned business for 68 years. The transaction was completed shortly after the passing of Paul Duffy, who had, with his wife, managed the business for over thirty years. **COMFORT DELGRO CORPORATION, KINETIC, PIPER ALDERMAN, DUFFY'S BUSES**

NEW SOUTH WALES



Greater Nowra service changes

Bus network changes have taken effect in the greater Nowra region, located south of Wollongong, from Monday 29 August 2022.

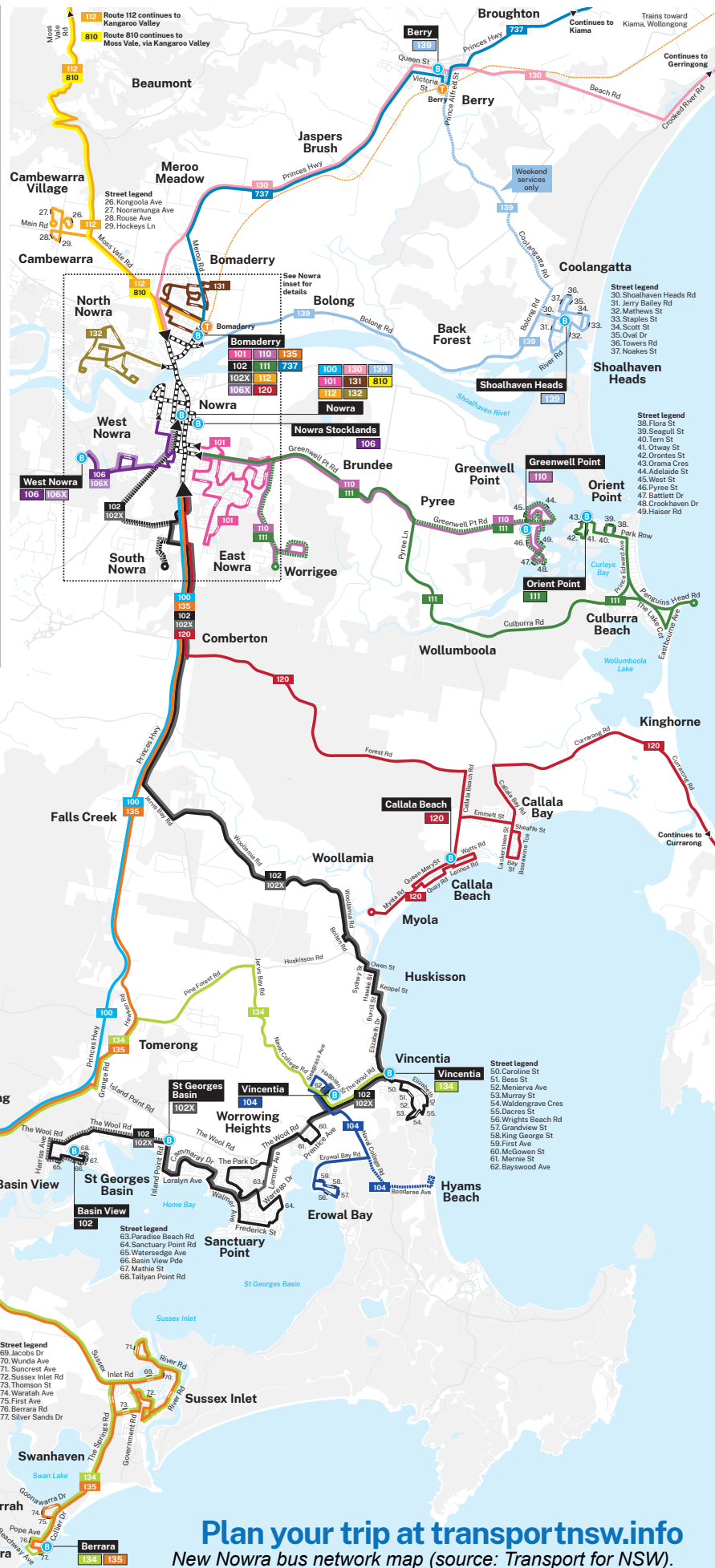
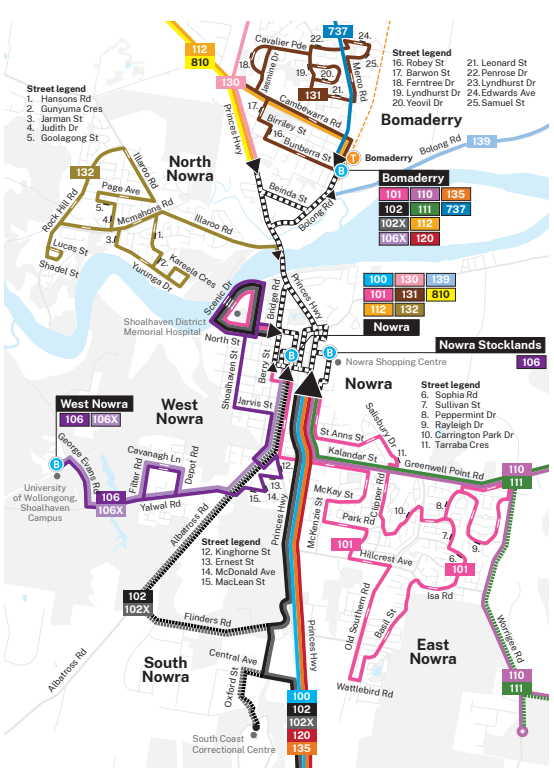
According to the state's transport agency, Transport for NSW, "more than 250 additional weekly bus services have been added", with more peak and weekend services, more direct routes, longer operating hours, and improved connections to Nowra CBD (routes 102X, 106X, 131, 132, 135), Bomaderry railway station (101, 102, 102X, 106X, 111, 120, 132, 135, 139) and Vincentia HomeCo and Shopping Village (102, 102X, 104).

- **101 (Bomaderry/Nowra to East Nowra & Worrigege)** - Route loop now curtailed to focus on improving service levels for East Nowra and Worrigege (West Nowra now instead served by new routes 106 and 106X). There are five additional Saturday trips, which doubles the service level to every 60 minutes, while services now also operate on Sundays and public holidays (PH) with three daytime trips.
- **102 (Bomaderry/Nowra to Basin View via Huskisson, Vincentia, Sanctuary Point & St Georges Basin)** - No longer a loop service, instead operating "simpler" (i.e.: in both directions). Also no longer services Tomerong. There are 44 additional weekly trips all up, including eight on Saturdays and six on Sundays/PH.
- **New route 102X (Bomaderry/Nowra to St Georges Basin via Huskisson, Vincentia & Sanctuary Point)** - Provides a more direct route with 82 new weekly services. For an unknown reason, one weekday trip per direction has been split into two columns at bus stop Central Ave before/after Princes Hwy in Nowra (see excerpts below).

Route 102X timetable excerpts A and B (TfNSW):

| Monday to Friday | | |
|---|-------|-------|
| Bomaderry Station | 10:24 | - |
| TAFE Illawarra, Beinda St, Bomaderry | 10:26 | - |
| Shoalhaven Hospital, Scenic Dr, Nowra | 10:32 | - |
| Nowra Mall, Kinghorne St, Nowra | 10:37 | - |
| Nowra Bus Terminal, Stewart Pl, Nowra | 10:38 | - |
| Nowra High School, Brereton St, Nowra | 10:41 | - |
| Stockland Nowra, Nowra | 10:44 | - |
| Albatross Rd opp Berry St, Nowra | - | - |
| Flinders Rd opp Cumberland Ave, South Nowra | - | - |
| Bellevue St at Jellicoe St, South Nowra | 10:53 | - |
| Central Ave before Princes Hwy, South Nowra | 10:54 | 10:54 |
| Princes Hwy after Falls Rd, Falls Creek | - | 11:00 |
| Woollamia Rd at Fall Rd, Falls Creek | - | 11:04 |
| Woollamia Rd opp Knoll Pde, Woollamia | - | 11:05 |
| Woollamia Rd at Willowford Rd, Woollamia | - | 11:08 |
| Woollamia Rd after Edendale St, Woollamia | - | 11:09 |
| Bolten Rd at Erina Rd, Huskisson | - | 11:11 |
| Huskisson Shops, Owen St, Huskisson | - | 11:15 |
| Hawke St before Nowra St, Huskisson | - | 11:16 |
| Elizabeth Dr at Albion St, Vincentia | - | 11:18 |
| Elizabeth Dr opp Beach St, Vincentia | - | 11:19 |
| Vincentia Shopping Village, The Wool Rd, Vincentia | - | 11:21 |
| HomeCo Vincentia, Vincentia | - | 11:27 |
| Sanctuary Point Public School, Paradise Beach Rd, Sanctuary Point | - | 13:54 |
| The Wool Rd before MacGibbon Pde, Old Erowal Bay | - | 13:57 |
| Prentice Ave at MacDonald St, Old Erowal Bay | - | - |
| HomeCo Vincentia, Vincentia | - | 14:01 |
| Vincentia High School, Vincentia | - | - |
| Vincentia Shopping Village, The Wool Rd, Vincentia | - | 14:07 |
| Elizabeth Dr opp Susan St, Vincentia | - | 14:09 |
| Elizabeth Dr at Albion St, Vincentia | - | 14:10 |
| Hawke St at Nowra St, Huskisson | - | 14:12 |
| Huskisson Shops, Owen St, Huskisson | - | 14:13 |
| Bolten Rd at Erina Rd, Huskisson | - | 14:17 |
| Woollamia Rd before Edendale St, Woollamia | - | 14:19 |
| Woollamia Rd after Willowford Rd, Woollamia | - | 14:20 |
| Woollamia Rd after Knoll Pde, Woollamia | - | 14:23 |
| Jervis Bay Rd at Gardner Rd, Falls Creek | - | 14:26 |
| Princes Hwy opp Falls Rd, Falls Creek | - | 14:28 |
| Central Ave after Princes Hwy, South Nowra | 14:34 | 14:34 |
| Bellevue St at Jellicoe St, South Nowra | 14:35 | - |
| Flinders Rd at Cumberland Ave, South Nowra | - | - |
| Albatross Rd after Berry St, Nowra | - | - |
| Nowra High School, Brereton St, Nowra | 14:45 | - |
| Stockland Nowra, Nowra | 14:48 | - |
| Nowra Bus Terminal, Stewart Pl, Nowra | 14:53 | - |
| School of Arts, Berry St, Nowra | 14:54 | - |
| Shoalhaven Hospital, Shoalhaven St, Nowra | 14:57 | - |
| Shoalhaven Hospital, Scenic Dr, Nowra | 14:59 | - |
| TAFE Illawarra, Beinda St, Bomaderry | 15:05 | - |
| Bomaderry Station | 15:08 | - |

Nowra Inset



Bus Route Index

Nowra Coaches Routes

- 100** Ulladulla to Bomaderry via Milton
- 101** East Nowra/Worrige
- 102** Bomaderry to Basin View
- 102X** Bomaderry to St Georges Basin
- 104** Erowal Bay to Vincentia HomeCo via Hyams Beach
- 106** Nowra to West Nowra
- 106X** UOW to Bomaderry Station

Kennedy's Bus & Coach Routes

- 110** Bomaderry Station to Greenwell Point via Worrige Rd and Nowra
- 111** Bomaderry Station to Orient Point via Culburra Beach and Nowra
- 112** Nowra to Kangaroo Valley via Cambewarra and Bomaderry
- 737** Kiama Station to Bomaderry Station via Gerringong Station and Berry Station

Stuart's Coaches Route

- 120** Bomaderry to Currarong and Callala via Myola

Shoal Bus Routes

- 130** Nowra to Gerringong via Nowra TAFE, Berry and Gerroa
- 131** Bomaderry to Nowra via Bomaderry Station (Loop Service)
- 132** North Nowra to Nowra (Loop Service)
- 134** Berrara to Vincentia via Sussex Inlet
- 135** Bomaderry Station to Berrara via Nowra, Tomerong and Sussex Inlet
- 139** Nowra to Shoalhaven Heads via Bomaderry Station

Berrima Buslines Route

- 810** Moss Vale to Nowra via Fitzroy Falls and Kangaroo Valley



- Legend**
- Bus route
 - Route number
 - Common bus route
 - Bus route start/finish
 - Train line & station

Plan your trip at transportnsw.info
New Nowra bus network map (source: Transport for NSW).

- New loop route **104 (Vincentia to Hyams Beach via Erowal Bay)** - 39 new services each week according to Transport, providing a greatly improved service frequency for locals, with services also on Saturdays (likely compared to former route 103). At HomeCo Vincentia, selected trips connect with 102/102X for travel through to Nowra/Bomaderry.
- New loop route **106 (Nowra to West Nowra)** - replaces part of route 101, with 33 new weekly services, including three trips on Saturdays.
- New route **106X (Bomaderry/Nowra to University of Wollongong Shoalhaven Campus)** - provides one AM trip to the campus, and one PM trip back to Bomaderry station on weekdays to directly connect from/to NSW TrainLink services.
- **111 (Bomaderry/Nowra to Orient Point via Greenwell Point & Culburra Beach)** - Two additional weekday services - one city-bound to connect with 06:43 Kiama train ex Bomaderry, and the other is a PM connection in opposite direction from the train arriving Bomaderry at 19:19.
- **120 (Bomaderry/Nowra to Callala & Currarong via Myola)** - Two additional weekday services - one to connect with 06:43 train to Kiama ex Bomaderry, and the other a PM connection from the train arriving Bomaderry at 17:10.
- **131 (Nowra to Bomaderry)** - One additional loop service on weekdays ex Nowra Bus Terminal 06:22 to connect with the route 737 bus departing Bomaderry 07:00 for Kiama.
- **132 (Nowra to North Nowra)** - One additional loop service on weekdays ex North Nowra to connect with the Kiama train departing Bomaderry 06:43. The 08:50 weekday trip ex Nowra Bus Terminal no longer has a "school days only" notation.
- New route **134 (Vincentia to Sussex Inlet & Berrara)** - According to Transport, operates weekdays with 24 new weekly services, providing improved links between Sussex Inlet and Berrara for shopping and other essential services.
- **135 (Bomaderry/Nowra to Sussex Inlet & Berrara)** - An additional early morning weekday trip operates, departing Berrara 05:22 to arrive Nowra Bus Terminal 06:22. On Saturdays, trips into Stockland Nowra only stop at Tomerong Public School (TPS) on demand - passengers wishing to board the bus at that stop are required to call Shoalbus at least one hour prior to departure time to arrange pick-up (oddly denoted as "2147"). Some weekday trips in this direction similarly stop "on demand" only from TPS and also the starting point of the trip at Berrara (denoted "D"), as shown on the below excerpt.
- **139 (Nowra/Bomaderry to Shoalhaven Heads)** - One additional weekday afternoon service ex Bomaderry departing after the arrival of the train arriving Bomaderry 17:10.

For routes 135 and 139, the Transport for NSW news announcement on 15 August advises that these routes benefit from an additional weekday service from Bomaderry, to connect from the train arrival at 17:10, however the new timetables, which became available in the week before commencement, do not show any such service operating.

Route **103** has been withdrawn, with Erowal Bay and Hyams Beach passengers now required to use the new 104 service, then change at Vincentia for another bus into Nowra.

135 Berrara to Bomaderry Station via Sussex Inlet, Tomerong & Nowra B

| Monday to Friday | | Δ | Δ | Δ | Δ | Δ |
|--|-------|-------|-------|--------|-------|-------|
| Myrning Gr after Collier Dr, Berrara | 05:22 | 06:50 | 08:15 | 09:40 | 11:05 | 13:30 |
| Cater Cres after Sussex Inlet Rd, Sussex Inlet | 05:32 | 07:00 | 07:00 | 09:05 | 13:40 | |
| Government Rd after Lakehaven Dr, Sussex Inlet | 05:37 | 07:02 | 07:02 | 09:10 | 13:45 | |
| Sussex Rd before Lyons Rd, Sussex Inlet | 05:38 | 07:05 | 07:05 | 09:15 | 13:50 | |
| River Rd at Jacobs Dr, Sussex Inlet | 05:42 | 07:10 | 07:10 | 09:20 | 13:55 | |
| Tradewinds Ave opp Shelly Gr, Sussex Inlet | 05:43 | 07:15 | 07:15 | 09:25 | 14:00 | |
| Sussex Inlet Rd | 05:47 | 07:18 | 07:18 | 09:28 | 14:03 | |
| Sussex Inlet Hwy Interchange, Tullarwalla | 05:57 | 07:25 | 07:25 | 09:35 | 14:10 | |
| Tomerong Public School, Hawken Rd, Tomerong | 06:07 | 07:35 | 07:35 | 09:45 | 14:20 | |
| Bomaderry Station | | | 08:15 | | | |
| Nowra Bus Terminal, Stewart Pl, Nowra | 06:22 | 07:50 | 08:20 | 10:05 | 15:00 | |
| Bomaderry Station | | 08:08 | | | 15:15 | |
| Stockland Nowra, Nowra | | 08:18 | 08:25 | 010:15 | 15:35 | |
| Saturday | | Δ | Δ | | | |
| Myrning Gr after Collier Dr, Berrara | 08:45 | - | - | - | - | - |
| Sussex Inlet Hwy Interchange, Tullarwalla | - | 13:30 | - | - | - | - |
| Cater Cres after Sussex Inlet Rd, Sussex Inlet | 08:55 | 13:40 | - | - | - | - |
| Government Rd after Lakehaven Dr, Sussex Inlet | 09:00 | 13:45 | - | - | - | - |
| Sussex Rd before Lyons Rd, Sussex Inlet | 09:05 | 13:50 | - | - | - | - |
| River Rd at Jacobs Dr, Sussex Inlet | 09:10 | 13:55 | - | - | - | - |
| Tradewinds Ave opp Shelly Gr, Sussex Inlet | 09:15 | 14:00 | - | - | - | - |
| Myrning Gr after Collier Dr, Berrara | - | 14:10 | - | - | - | - |
| Sussex Inlet Rd | 09:18 | 14:30 | - | - | - | - |
| Sussex Inlet Hwy Interchange, Tullarwalla | 09:25 | 14:36 | - | - | - | - |
| Tomerong Public School, Hawken Rd, Tomerong | 09:47 | 14:45 | - | - | - | - |
| Stockland Nowra, Nowra | 10:00 | 15:05 | - | - | - | - |

Excerpt from revised route 135 timetable (TfNSW)

Other local routes (**100, 110, 112, 130, and 737**) also have newly issued timetables online from the same date, but with no service changes (although 112 does have a small change in the order of stops).

The new network map is provided on page 7. *Report by HILAIRE FRASER with CHRIS PANDILOVSKI, source TRANSPORT FOR NSW*

VICTORIA



Various service improvements incoming

The state government announced that additional bus services would be added to timetables in various areas of Melbourne and Geelong as part of a \$109 million fund from the 2022/23 State Budget to improve services across the state.

Improvements are set for connections to **Merinda Park** railway station and local shopping centre & schools, and improve access to Casey Business Park in **Narre Warren** as well as for school students of **Cranbourne West** Secondary.

A "high-frequency" weekday shuttle bus service is set to operate between **Donnybrook** and **Craigieburn** railway stations, with an upgrade provided for Craigieburn Bus Interchange. Extra services are also set to benefit **Sunbury** and **Diggers Rest** locals.

Box Hill's route 903 is set to have its route adjusted, while extra services are to be added to routes 201, 733 and 767, with improvements set to increase services at the Deakin and Monash universities.

Service improvements are also set to be delivered for **Geelong, Armstrong Creek** and the **Surf Coast** areas.

No implementation dates have been set as these changes are currently in the planning stage.

Another change, with an implementation date of 30 October, sees a doubling of weekday trips on routes 235 and 237 to improve travel between Melbourne CBD and **Fishermans Bend**. **VICTORIAN GOVERNMENT, GEELONG TIMES, AUST'N BUS & COACH MAGAZINE**

Route 182 route change

Effective from Sunday 26 June, route 182 (Werribee-Tarneit via Tarneit West) services now operate over the new Hogans Road to Davis Road bridge. One bus stop has been relocated by around 130 metres on Davis Road. Services otherwise remained unchanged. *PTV*

Route 390 service changes

Route 390 (Mernda-Craigieburn) has had an increase in service levels, effective from Sunday 7 August, according to Public Transport Victoria (PTV). On weekday peak periods, service frequencies improve with a bus every 20-26 minutes, while the route also has extended operating hours in the evenings: On weekdays, additional trips depart Mernda at 21:15 and Craigieburn at 22:05. On Saturdays, morning services depart 20 minutes earlier, while evening services depart 30 minutes later, in order to accommodate one additional trip in each direction. On Sundays, evening trips depart 30 minutes later to accommodate an additional trip in each direction. *PTV*

Route 897 and 898 service changes

Cranbourne Transit's routes 897 and 898 have new timetables, effective from Sunday 28 August. The Cranbourne/Clyde North routes have had their coverage extended to incorporate growing residential developments.

- **897 (Clyde North-Lynbrook):** 2.2-kilometre extension into Clyde North. No change to frequencies or operating hours.
- **898 (Clyde North-Cranbourne):** 4.8-kilometre extension into Clyde North. Sunday service frequencies improved to every 40 minutes, but no changes to these on other days.

PTV

Wangaratta service changes

Effective from Sunday 28 August, some Wangaratta intertown bus services have timetable changes.

- **H46 (Glenrowan-Wangaratta):** For this Dyson's-operated service, trips into Wangaratta now terminate at Wangaratta Town Centre, rather than the railway station.
- **Unnumbered (Yarrowonga-Wangaratta):** According to PTV, trips into Wangaratta now terminate at Wangaratta Town Centre, rather than the railway station, although the new timetable still lists the railway station as the terminus. The previous 08:30 Tuesday/Thursday trip ex Wangaratta now departs 30 minutes later, while the return leg also departs Mulwala 30 minutes later (new time 09:55) to accommodate local school services. The 14:10 Tue/Thu trip ex Mulwala now serves an additional three bus stops, adding an additional five minutes to the total journey time.

PTV

Ballarat: Council calls for network review

The local council, City of Ballarat, has called for a review of bus services.

Mayor Daniel Moloney said "For most Ballarat residents, lengthy indirect routes to key Ballarat destinations, slow travel times and lack of frequency of services mean

despite its relative low cost, catching a bus is an unviable alternative to using a car. Our view is with a few changes to the network, we can have more cross-city routes and not every service going to the train station, and then more people would choose to catch a bus."

Council's recent Integrated Transport Action Plan includes actions such as reviewing the timetable to reduce journey times to better compete with other modes, introducing more cross-city routes, and staggering timetables to reduce the instances of multiple buses arriving at the same destination at the same time. *AUST'N BUS & COACH MAGAZINE*

SOUTH AUSTRALIA



Adelaide: Service reductions

The list of routes with selected service cancellations across Adelaide's bus network due to COVID-related staff shortages, as reported in recent editions of *Table Talk*, continues to drop.

In the **Hills** region, as at 25 July, routes 863F and T863 were still the only ones with pre-scheduled cancellations. As at 15 August, numerous routes in the **East-West, North-South, Outer North** and **Outer North East** regions continue to have one or more daily service cancellations, with a four-page list provided by Adelaide Metro. **Outer South** region services are not listed as being impacted by this disruption, with the full timetable returning to operation back in May. *ADELAIDE METRO*

Southlink drivers strike

Adelaide Hills passengers endured a 24-hour strike day on Tuesday 26 July, as Southlink bus drivers refused to operate buses as part of industrial action over their latest pay deal negotiations, with a meeting on the previous day failing to find common ground.

Before the strike, a Transport Workers Union spokesperson said "After over six months of protracted bargaining, these drivers have been left with no choice". The state government said that it had brought both parties to the table, and it continued to mediate the dispute. *WESTERN ADVOCATE*

WESTERN AUSTRALIA



Perth: Service changes

Effective from Sunday 11 September, numerous routes have timetable revisions with assorted changes, as follows:

- **206** - The 07:23 trip ex Livingston Marketplace is extended to now start at Murdoch station at 07:12.
- **208** - Good Samaritan Industries (GSI) deviations withdrawn from the 07:21 and 15:44 trips due to poor patronage, with deviations instead added onto the 05:58 and 06:42 trips ex Cannington. Transperth

said that this follows consultation with GSI.

- **232** - The 17:31 trip ex Gosnells station extends as a circular trip back to Gosnells. On weekdays, several new trips introduced to improve service frequencies, including a new trip 19:15 ex Gosnells.
- **233** - 15:05 trip ex Harrisdale Senior HS now departs five mins earlier. Sunday 08:02 trip ex Gosnells station withdrawn due to poor patronage.
- **243** - The 15:08 trip ex John Wollaston Anglican Community School instead replaced by the service departing Kelmscott station at 15:03, with the bus deviating to the school at approximately 15:10.
- **244** - On weekdays, additional trips depart Armadale station 16:59 and Kelmscott station 16:48 to reduce service gaps. 18:14 trip ex Armadale and 18:00 trip ex Kelmscott both withdrawn due to poor patronage.
- **245** - On Saturdays, the 17:40 ex Armadale station and 18:02 ex Kelmscott station withdrawn due to poor patronage, while an additional trip operates Sundays 08:39 ex Armadale to cut the two-hour service gap.
- **254** - An additional trip ex Armadale station 16:55 reduces "significant gap in service", while the 17:58 trip ex Armadale has been withdrawn due to poor patronage.
- **506** - Timing adjustments to AM peak trips to and PM trips from Bull Creek station for better consistency with service frequency.
- **507** - 15:08 trip ex Riverton Leisureplex commences five minutes earlier. 06:33 trip ex Riverton Leisureplex withdrawn due to poor patronage. New Sunday trip ex Cannington 07:02. Sunday 20:55 trip also withdrawn due to poor patronage.
- **516** - The 15:24 trip ex Southlands Shopping Centre (SC) now departs 20 mins earlier. PM peak trips ex Southlands SC have adjusted departure times for more consistent service frequency. The 18:48 trip ex Murdoch TAFE now instead starts from Murdoch station at 18:53.
- **523** - Minor AM and PM peak timing changes to better connect with route 527 buses at Cockburn Central station.

New Perth Airport Line services

Effective 9 October 2022, the following bus routes will operate around the new airport line in Perth:

Redcliffe station services will include: -

- 39 Perth via Belmont Forum
- 290 Midland via Guildford
- 291 Midland via South Guildford
- 292 Perth Airport T1/T2
- 293 High Wycombe via Belmont Forum
- 935 Kings Park via Perth
- 940 Perth via Great Eastern Highway

Airport Central Station service is: -

- 37 Oats St Station to Perth Airport T1/T2

High Wycombe station bus services will include: -

- 270 Perth via Forrestfield & Belmont Forum
- 271 Forrestfield
- 275 Walliston via Kalamunda
- 276 Kalamunda via Gooseberry Hill
- 277 Midland via Midland Rd
- 278 Midland via Abernethy Rd
- 280 Westfield via Forrestfield & Wattle Grove
- 293 Redcliffe via Belmont Forum

Report by HILAIRE FRASER, source TRANSPERTH

Esperance trial

A 12-month trial of three TransEsperance route services commenced operating on Monday 4 July in the southern coastline town of Esperance.

The routes are:

- **810** (Esperance-Nulsen)
- **811** (Esperance-Castletown)
- **812** (Esperance-West Beach)

Each route consists of three return services operating between 09:00 and 15:00 hours (map provided opposite page).

The trial is a collaboration between Public Transport Authority (PTA) and the Shire of Esperance, at a cost of around \$360,000. The PTA said in a statement that they would consider patronage and feedback for any adjustments, particularly at the six-month mark.

TransEsperance operates under the PTA's TransRegional division, facilitating the delivery of bus services across 15 regional WA towns. The trial services are only operating during the interpeak due to existing school service commitments during the morning and afternoon peak periods, with any peak-hour services presumably requiring the procurement of additional buses. **PUBLIC TRANSPORT AUTHORITY OF WA**

NEW ZEALAND












Whanganui: Trackable buses

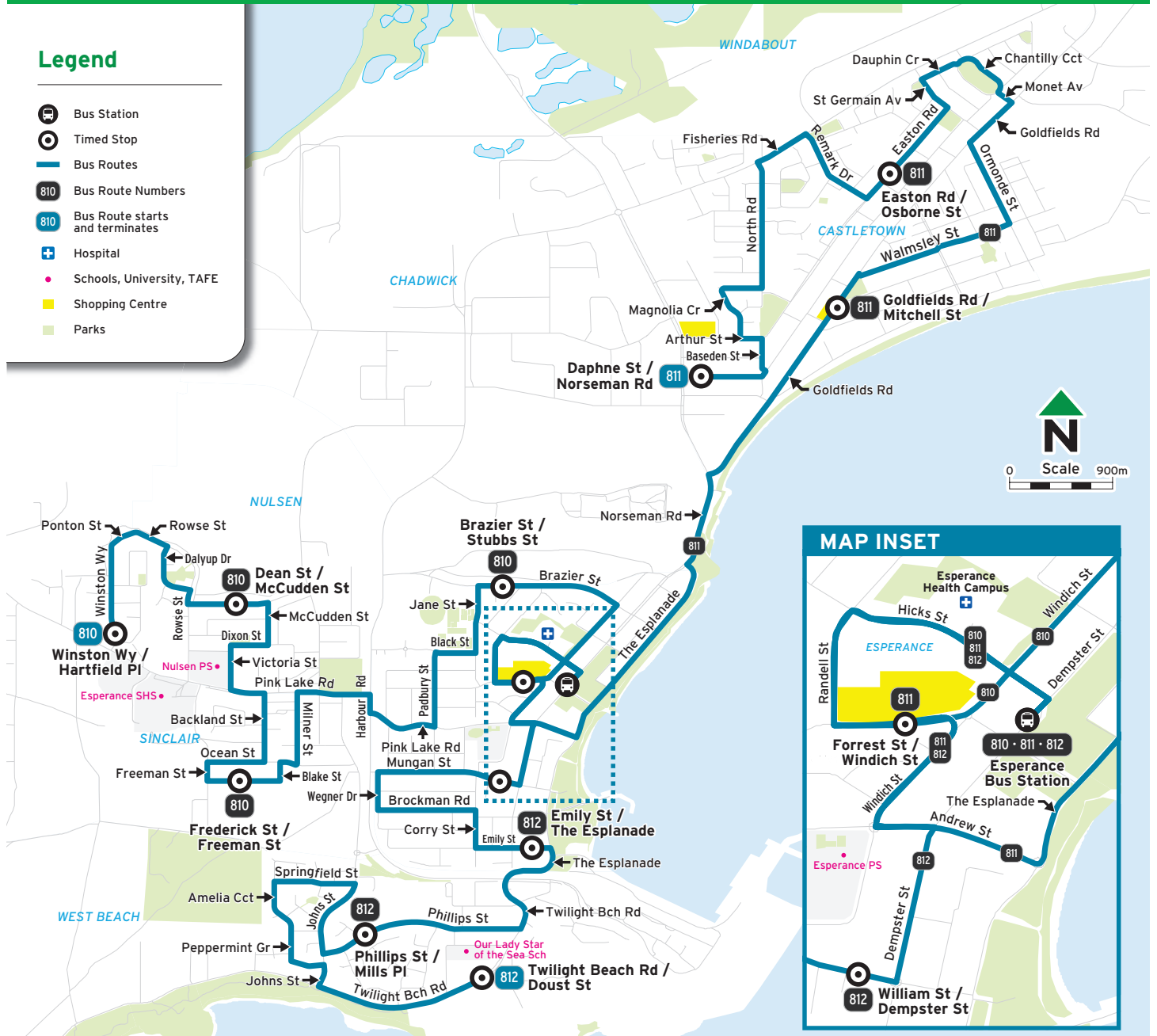
Whanganui turned on real-time data for its Transit bus network on Monday 22 August. A member of Horizons Regional Council's passenger transport committee said the best way to use the real-time tracking capability is with Google Maps - "It means people no longer have to look through a timetable and plan out routes." The buses are tracked by GPS. **NEW ZEALAND HERALD**

ENDS

TransEsperance Routes 810, 811 and 812

Legend

-  Bus Station
-  Timed Stop
-  Bus Routes
-  Bus Route Numbers
-  Bus Route starts and terminates
-  Hospital
-  Schools, University, TAFE
-  Shopping Centre
-  Parks



FERRY NEWS

NEW SOUTH WALES



Additional F1 services

The state government announced in August that it would add additional services to the F1 Manly ferry timetable in time for the Summer period. The additional services will be operated by the older Freshwater class vessels, which have been recently consigned to weekend working.

Transport for NSW's Chief Operations Officer, Howard Collins, confirmed that these six extra weekday services, as well as the existing weekend services, would be operated by either the MV Collaroy or MV Freshwater in the interim, with the MV Queenscliff to be refurbished for

reintroduction into service next year, then enabling both the Collaroy and Freshwater vessels to be withdrawn from passenger service.

The plan for this Summer will see passengers able to choose between using the Freshwater or newer Emerald class vessels to travel between Sydney CBD and Manly at selected times across each day of the week, rather than just on weekends.

No start date had been provided as at the time of writing.

Meanwhile, The Sydney Morning Herald reported in late July about a confidential report commissioned by Transdev Sydney Ferries. It confirmed fears that some newer Emerald-class vessels will require repairs for deformed plating and cracked welds. The report's authors also warned "If the damage is simply repaired without addressing the cause, any repairs are likely to be ineffective in the long term". In response to inquiries by the SMH, Transport for NSW said that it had bunged the operator for the fleet's poor reliability. **NSW GOVT, SYDNEY MORNING HERALD**

ENDS

TALKING IN-DEPTH

Kenya: Railway line could decide national election

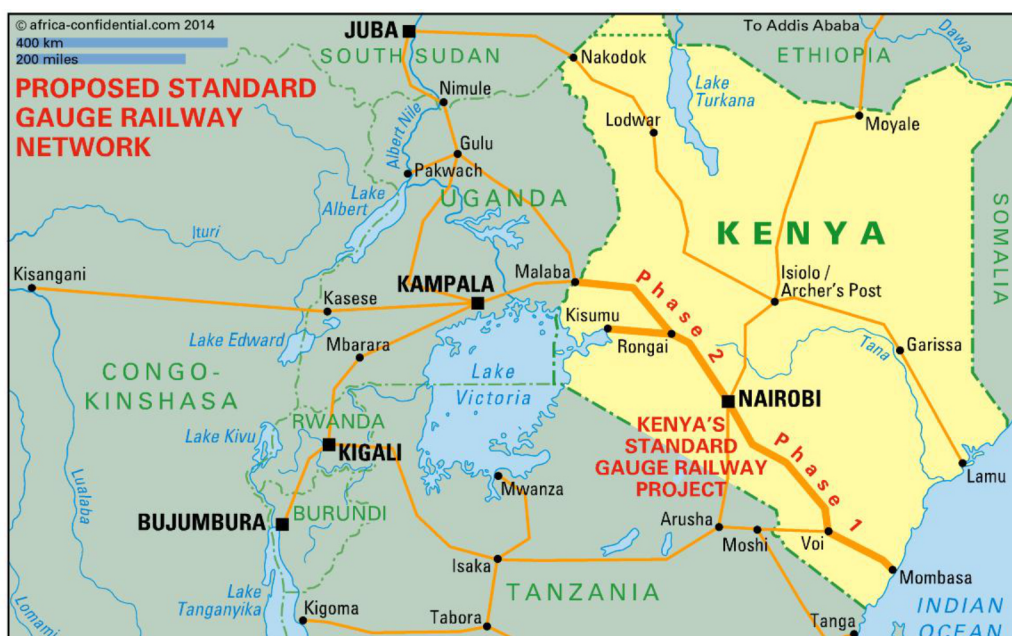
The following is an edited article from a *New York Times* journalist living in Kenya, published prior to the country's August national election, on an unfinished Kenyan railway line, majority-funded with Chinese money - dividing the country and its political parties. Amid corruption claims, the election could swing in favour of whoever proposes the best solution to the country's Chinese debt.

Fireworks popped and confetti rained down in the seaside city of Mombasa in 2017 when Kenya's president inaugurated stage one of the country's new railway, the Standard Gauge Railway (SGR) — designed, funded and built thanks to China. President Uhuru Kenyatta proclaimed that the new line, when fully completed, would connect the port in Mombasa to the neighbouring country of Uganda, creating jobs and helping to transform Kenya into an industrialized, middle-income nation. President Kenyatta, waving a giant Kenyan flag, told the gathering of Kenyan and Chinese officials, "This is a very historic moment. We should be proud." However, the railway has since turned into the target of lawsuits, criminal investigations over corruption and resentment by environmentalists and displaced workers in the trucking industry.

Now, it's a hot-button issue in the closely contested election on Tuesday 9 August, and part of a broader debate about China's expanded role in Kenya. The leading candidates have proposed everything from deporting Chinese workers doing local jobs to renegotiating the debt with China. But for many, it's the \$AU3.8 billion (KES 327 billion shillings) railway, built by China Road and Bridge Corporation, that has come to embody the corruption and greed among the country's political elite.

China initially financed the railway as part of its trillion-dollar *Belt and Road* Initiative, working to expand its economic and political clout by funding new ports, roads and railways globally. But China balked at financing the next stage of the Kenyan railway — the connection to Uganda — as some African countries struggled to repay their debts.

The line runs for over 600 kilometres from Mombasa through the capital, Nairobi — and ends abruptly in an empty field in the Rift Valley, more than 320 kilometres from Uganda.



The initial SGR project (wide line of two stages) and the planned wider SGR network (thin lines). (Source: Africa Confidential).

"The SGR is an economic, social and fiscal disrupter," said economist Tony Watima. "The disruption it has created in the Kenyan economy will be felt for years."

Both leading candidates in the campaign to pick Mr. Kenyatta's successor — William Ruto and Raila Odinga — have seized on the railway's troubles, promising to reassess its operations, while also trying to distance themselves from the project.

However, as vice president under Kenyatta, Mr. Ruto is part of the administration that opened the railway. In an interview, he acknowledged that Kenya's public debt — \$AU103 billion (\$US73 billion) as of March 2022 in a country with a gross domestic product of just over \$AU140 billion — was creating a "very precarious" situation, and that the railway had so far failed to expand the economy. "We are hurting from paying the Chinese debt," he said. Mr. Ruto has promised, if elected, to publish the project contract — a move people hope will allow the public to scrutinize it.

His opponent, Mr. Odinga, is a former prime minister who had long been critical of the project and accused Mr. Kenyatta's family of benefiting from it. But now that Mr. Kenyatta is backing him in his campaign for President, Mr. Odinga has softened his criticism, while promising to overhaul the railroad's operation. He told a crowd of supporters in Mombasa recently, "Once I am in office, we will fix it."

The railway represents the height of the borrowing and looting spree that has plagued Mr. Kenyatta's government since it took office in 2013, economists, analysts and government officials said in interviews. His administration, they said, has saddled the country with large-scale infrastructure projects that are not financially viable, largely benefit the wealthy and divert investments from education and health care. In the past nine years, Kenya's public debt has surged almost fivefold.

"The standard gauge railway is the jewel in the crown of corruption in Kenya," John Githongo, a former anti-corruption

czar, said. “That’s a sad legacy of the current regime.”

The railway’s majority financier, Exim Bank of China, has demanded reimbursements, even as creditors like France and Japan gave Kenya some respite from servicing their loans because of the pandemic. To repay the loan, the government introduced a raft of taxes and austerity measures that have angered the public, which is coping with rising food and fuel prices stemming from local drought as well as war in Ukraine.

For years, Kenya deliberated about whether to build a new railway or renovate its century-old line built by the British colonialists and famously known as the “Lunatic Express.” Independent reports, including from the World Bank, recommended upgrading the existing rail network as a cheaper option. But ultimately, the Kenyatta administration settled on building a new one: a standard-gauge railway on which freight trains could run at 50 miles per hour and passenger trains at 74 miles per hour. Kenya then turned to China, which at the time was prompting its state-owned firms to find investment opportunities outside its own borders.

Environmentalists questioned why the government routed the railway through Nairobi National Park, one of few wildlife parks anywhere adjacent to a capital city.

Project construction commenced in 2013, with no competitive bidding for the project — a move Mr. Kenyatta defended. The project’s only known feasibility study was done by the Chinese contractor — not the government — which presented a conflict of interest, said Okiya Omtatah, a prominent lawyer who challenged the project in court. He said he was invited to a Nairobi hotel to meet with several Kenyan senators and Chinese managers who asked him to withdraw the case in return for a \$300,000 payout. When he declined, one of the senators offered up to \$1 million, he said. He was told that if he refused, they could pay off a judge to decide the case in their favour. In 2020, the court of appeal ruled in Mr. Omtatah’s favour, declaring the railway’s contract illegal for flouting Kenya’s procurement laws. The government has appealed this to its Supreme Court.

Over the years, activists and opposition figures have accused senior politicians of inflating costs and profiting from the railway. Land acquisitions became a flashpoint too, with more than a dozen officials, including the former managing director of Kenya Railways and the former chairman of the agency that manages Kenya’s public land, charged in court in 2018, accused of facilitating more than \$2 million in payments to individuals and companies that falsely claimed to own land along the railway. While some cases have been dropped, trials of other defendants are ongoing. Parliament disclosed that millions more were disbursed in overpayments or payments made without clear documentation.

Road versus rail

A year after the train started operating, a parliamentary report showed it cost more than double the amount to transport goods on the train than by road.

To make the railway profitable, the authorities compelled importers to send cargo by railway instead of by road — a decision that set off protests and court cases. Officials in Mombasa said the railway cost their county tens of millions of dollars in annual revenues, with one report estimating that over 8,100 people employed in the trucking, fuel and freight businesses in the county would lose their jobs.

Lawmakers have recommended the government renegotiate the railway’s loan with China. But even if they can, said Mr. Watima, the railway will remain a “serious mess.” China is also reassessing its early lending spree on African infrastructure projects as it faces growing backlash for doling out loans to poor countries with shaky finances. However, China will remain the biggest financier of African infrastructure. Eric Olander, co-founder of the China Global South Project, said it was unlikely that risky megaprojects like the Kenyan railway would receive funding in the future - “the sand in the hourglass has run out.”

For now, the railway leaves Mombasa, cuts across Kenya’s iconic national parks and barrels past Nairobi before its tracks stop at a quiet hamlet near the town of Duka Moja, surrounded by dense bush and maize plants. At the Nairobi train station, passengers board carriages painted with the slogan, “Connecting Nations. Prospering People.”

The full article is available at <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/07/world/africa/kenya-election-train.html>. An article providing schedule detail of this line is available in the Rail News section. **THE NEW YORK TIMES**

About Table Talk

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Perth Train System Map

Effective 9 October 2022

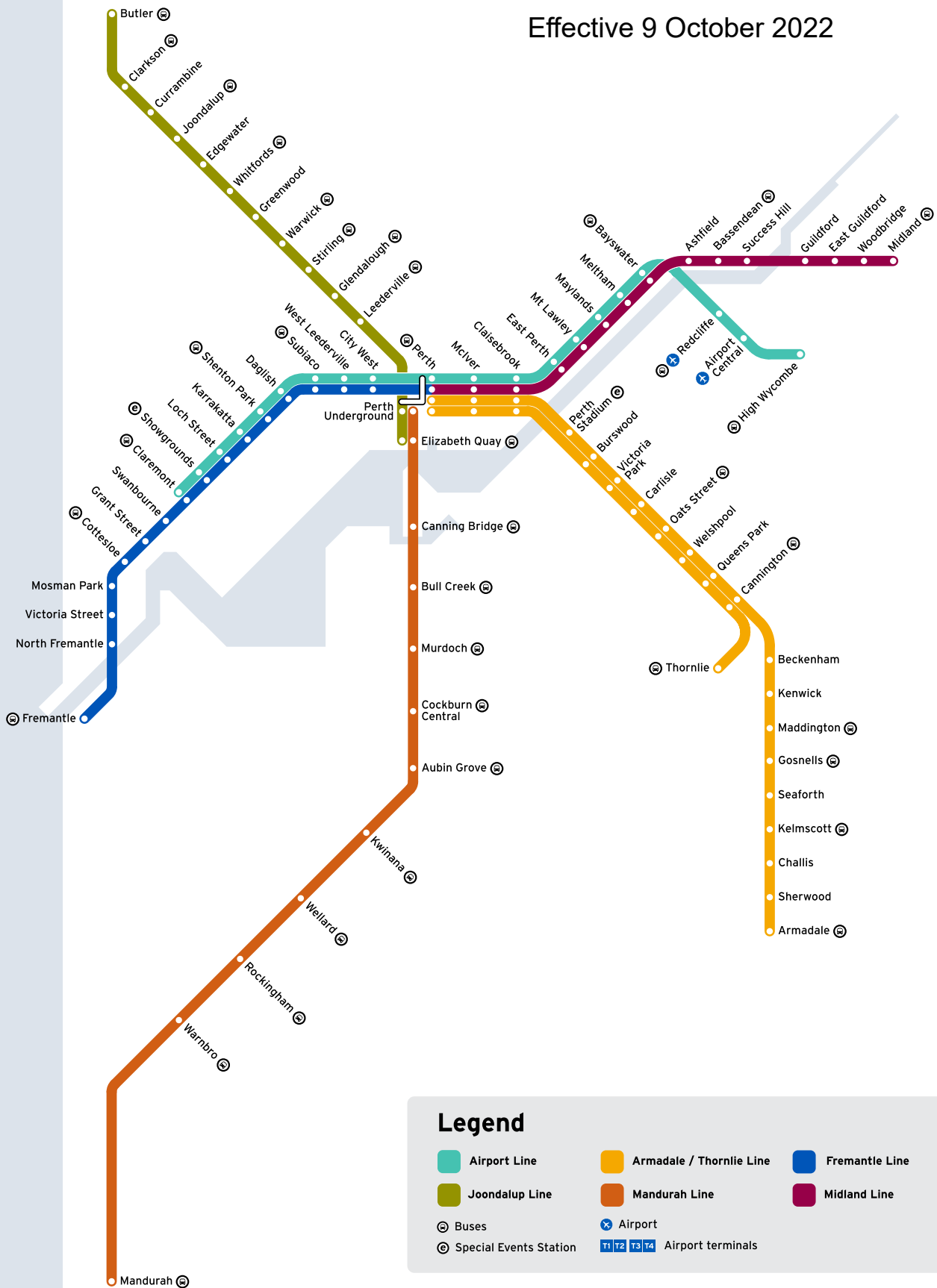


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