



TABLE TALK

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About *Table Talk*

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Editor, Rail and Tram, Air, Ferry: Victor Isaacs, 43 Lowanna St Braddon ACT 2612, (02) 6257 1742, abvi@webone.com.au

Editor, Bus: Geoff Mann, 19 Rix St Glen Iris Vic 3146, geoffwm@bigpond.com.au

Production: Geoff and Judy Lambert.

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TOP TABLE TALK

SUSTAINABLE, WE DON'T THINK

By David Haydock, *Today's Railways Europe*, no. 152, August 2008:

I wrote recently to SNCF [French Railways] to complain about the withdrawal of printed timetables. Having been paying for them (€76 per year at the last count) under subscription for around 20 years, I thought I deserved a decent apology. In the end I received an email telling me that the "*Indicateurs Horaires*" had been withdrawn because there was "very little demand" and – most interesting – withdrawal was in keeping with "SNCF's commitment to sustainable development" as there would be "a significant saving in paper".

Does anybody really believe this? First, if the timetables were really in "very little demand" there would not be a significant saving in paper!

Second, it is probable that the only people still buying the timetables before their demise (their existence was a well-kept secret and they were very poorly produced) were like me – despite the foregoing, interested in analysing service levels, searching for new service innovations and using them to plan journeys which were a little more complicated than Lille to Paris by TGV.

We have been told by SNCF that we can still use the internet to obtain timetables. In the case of TER regional stopping trains and Ile-de-France (greater Paris) suburban trains, up-to-date pdfs can be downloaded and printed out. If we users do dare to print them out, they will use more (coloured) ink and more paper than used in the *Indicateurs Horaires* which were on very thin paper, printed lightly in black ink. Did anyone at SNCF carry out research into **how** the *Indicateurs* were used?

As for long-distance services, pdfs for these are not available on the internet – we do not know why not. Instead, we are supposed to go down to the station to pick up leaflets – and hope the station has the ones we want! My station usually has plenty of documentation on Thalys in stock – a total waste of paper as Thalys does not serve Douai, nor the main station in my region, Lille – but leaflets for popular services are often out of stock. Even if it were possible to obtain **all** the leaflets for **all** the services I wished to use or study across the whole of France, keeping them in some semblance of order might be difficult!

SNCF's claims that it is reducing the use of paper for reasons of sustainable development might bear some scrutiny but having spent some time on its trains recently, I cannot say I am convinced the company is sincere. SNCF produces a free magazine for TGV passengers of which thousands are "distributed" each month,

hundreds going unread then thrown away. In the urban areas of France, SNCF allows companies to distribute millions of free newspapers every day. The result is paper lying untidily around on the floor of stations and trains all day. Surely, if SNCF takes its own arguments on “sustainable development” to its logical conclusion it should say that free newspapers and magazines should be banned on its trains – they are not necessary as passengers can use the internet to find more up-to-date information or listen to the (paperless) radio. In fact, we do not think that French Railways thought through its actions and is using what we know as “greenwash” to justify them.

NEWS

RAIL & TRAM

PACIFIC NATIONAL IN QUEENSLAND

National freight operator **Pacific National** has broken into the lucrative Queensland coal transport market. They have obtained contracts with Rio Tinto Coal and Xstrata Coal to haul coal from early 2010 for ten years, with the possibility of an extension. The contracts cover haulage of more than 14 million tonnes per annum over both the Goonyella and Blackwater systems. PN will invest \$380 million in new rolling stock and \$200 million “to provide additional capacity for future growth”. In NSW, PN has secured a five year contract with the Manildra milling company for haulage of grain from its facilities at Manildra, Gunnedah and Narrandera using eight train sets. This is expected to cover two million tonnes per annum.

AN UNDERGROUND FOR BRISBANE? OR TRAMS?

By Ursula Heger, from *mX*, Brisbane edition, 20 and 25 August

An underground rail system for Brisbane's CBD is now being considered by the State Government following a year-long feasibility study into the project. Transport Minister John Mickel's spokesman confirmed the subway option was a possibility.....

The Minister's spokesman said the Inner City Rail Capacity Study, which was set up to investigate a new rail network that would include a second inner-city crossing of the Brisbane River to ease congestion on the Citytrain system, was due out within months. The study is still in a draft form, but is examining options for boosting rail capacity in the city centre, including potential for an underground tunnel, the spokesman said. The study also looks at developing options to better connect the rail network north and south of the river.

Commuter group Rail Back on Track spokesman Robert Dow said the best option would be a line from Dutton Park to the Botanical Gardens, Central and the Exhibition. "It would be an idea to look at Woolloongabba as an underground junction station, and run a line to St Lucia feeding into the main western line to Indooroopilly," he said.

Trams may return to Brisbane's streets under a plan of Mr Mickel .He says he is prepared to reintroduce a tram-style light-rail system “if there was a huge call for it”.

MT ISA – DARWIN RAILWAY ADVOCATED

Everard Compton, Chairman, of Australian Transport Energy Corridor (ATEC), proponents of the Melbourne-Brisbane inland rail line, says that the Mt Isa region has the potential to be a powerhouse in Australia. He says recent growth makes a rail link from Mt Isa to Darwin feasible.

NSW WORKING TIMETABLES 7 SEPTEMBER 08

New NSW Working Timetables valid 7 September 2008 have been issued by RailCorp and ARTC for their respective networks.

The **RailCorp** freight WTT underwent many changes before it came into effect. Most sections were replaced, some twice replaced. And still there were errors, which will be corrected in a re-issue scheduled for 14 September.

The **ARTC** freight and country passenger WTTs are available for download from their website. Each book maintains ARTC's practice of a steam locomotive illustration on the front cover.

The Southern book makes no provision for altered train working as a result of the opening of the new lengthy passing lanes on the Southern mainline although they are in use. It shows four freight trains a week between Junee and Narrandera, but beyond Narrandera to Griffith the only train scheduled is Countrylink's once a week Xplorer. No trains are scheduled Stockingbingal-Griffith-Hillston.

In the Western book no trains are scheduled Kandos-Mudgee-Gulgong.

In the North/North West book there are daily freight trains scheduled north of Gulgong (via the Ulan line and to/from Cobar). This book also confirms that the only trains scheduled beyond West Tamworth to Armidale are the daily Countrylink Xplorers. There are no trains scheduled Nevertire-Warren, Dubbo-Eumungerie (former Coonamble line) or Narrabri West – Wee Waa.

The North Coast book makes no provision for altered working through the new Tamrookum or Namoonna Loops, nor at Greenbank. Working of Tamrookum has been delayed by a dispute with a neighbouring farmer about access across a level crossing.

COUNTRYLINK TIMETABLES 4 AUGUST 08

CountryLink public timetable brochures have been updated and reprinted. The updated versions are identified on the front cover as *'Effective 4 September 2005 – Updated 4 August 2008'*. Copies are available on the Countrylink website, www.countrylink.info/timetables Go to the bottom of this page.

SYDNEY CITYRAIL TIMETABLE 18 AUGUST 08

Minor alterations to Cityrail's timetable came into effect from 18 August:

- A new peak hour service departs Hornsby at 1721, stops all stations including Chatswood 1745, Central 1814, Redfern 1816, then express to Parramatta 1841, express to Blacktown 1852, then all stations to Penrith arrive at 1915;
- The 1704 Hornsby to Parramatta service departs one minute earlier and has extra carriages;
- The 1711 Hornsby to Parramatta service has extra carriages;
- The 1719 Lindfield to Strathfield service departs two minutes earlier;
- The 1727 Chatswood to Blacktown service, departing Central at 1755 runs one minute earlier and has extra carriages;
- The 1802 Central to Penrith service has extra carriages, and
- The 1724 Chatswood to Hornsby via the City service departing Central at 1752 runs two minutes earlier.

SYDNEY CITYRAIL TIMETABLE MAY 09

The next major Cityrail timetable is expected to be introduced in May 2009. Important features will be:

- The Epping-Chatswood line opening with four services an hour in each direction. Trains will commence from Epping, run to Chatswood, the City and then to Epping via Strathfield, and v.v.
- The “Y-link” returning to a full-time service Campbelltown-Blacktown, seven days a week,
- Increased services between the morning and afternoon peaks (in effect restoring the cuts made to the timetable a couple of years ago).

MOREE XPLOERER REPLACED

Because of sleeper replacement work, most trips of **Countrylink**'s Xplorer service between Werris Creek and Moree will be replaced by buses from 14 September to 14 November.

ARTC LOOPS

In late July, the **Australian Rail Track Corporation** commissioned extended crossing loops at:

- Bomen, southern NSW (11.8 km long at a cost of \$15.3 million),
- Ardglen, NW NSW, and
- Kyarran, North Coast NSW.

MELBOURNE TRAM SERVICES

Yarra Trams have issued a reprinted timetable for Routes 109 & 31 dated May 2008. Various changes to tram services commenced on 27 July 2008:

- Route 30: Inter-peak services no longer run along Docklands Drive, and instead terminate at Telstra Dome. Peak hour services are extended from Spencer Street to Telstra Dome. The route is now known as "St Vincent's Plaza – Telstra Dome Docklands",
- Route 55: An additional morning peak service from West Coburg to Domain Interchange,
- Route 86: All services extended from Telstra Dome to run along Docklands Drive. This route is now known as "Bundoora RMIT – Waterfront City Docklands". "In peak periods there will be a tram service every four minutes and during off-peak times and during the day on weekends every six minutes." The number of additional daily services to and from Docklands Drive is Monday to Thursday 175, Friday 184, Saturday 183, and Sunday 118.
- Route 96: Minor changes,
- Routes 109 & 31: Minor changes,
- Route 112: An additional eight weekday services during the AM peak from West Preston/Thornbury to the Collins Street West, an additional three services during the PM peak from the City to West Preston including an additional two services on Friday evenings.

New booklets for routes 24/30, 55, 86, 96 & 109/31 are expected, but are yet to be sighted.

A new route 48 timetable is due to commence on 7 September.

MELBOURNE TRAIN & TRAM CONCESSIONS

Three companies have been invited by the Victorian government to bid for the tender to operate Melbourne's **train** network. Metro Trains Melbourne (MTM), Veolia Transport and KeolisDownerEDI.

MTM is a consortium of Hong Kong's MTR Corporation, UGL Rail and John Holland. Veolia Transport is the parent company of Connex which currently operates the metropolitan train network.

Two companies have been invited to bid for the tender to operate Melbourne's **tram** network. KeolisDownerEDI and TransdevTSL, the owner of present operator Yarra Trams.

The tender process is due to be completed and the successful bidders operating by the end of 2009.

DANDENONG LINE TRIPLICATION

The Victorian government promise to build a third track from Caulfield to Dandenong appears to have been shelved. The plan was part of its 2006 \$10.5 billion transport plan Meeting Our Transport Challenges. Instead, the Government is now indicating that new "sections" of a third track will be built. The 2008-09 Victorian Budget included \$153 million for a third track and platform at Westall.

RAIL FAIL: NO PLANE TRAIN

Victorian Public Transport Minister Lynne Kosky has renewed the contract of SkyBus to operate between Melbourne Southern Cross station and Melbourne Airport for another five years. This removes any chance of a rail line to the Airport in the near future. In July Premier John Brumby said booming numbers of jet-setters had put an airport train line back on the drawing board, but Ms Kosky now says buses are meeting airport needs. (*More details of the Sky Bus contract are in the Bus news section*).

ADDITIONAL VLOCITIES

Nine new VLocity fast trains (28 carriages) will be added to **V Line's** fleet by 2012 under a \$236 million package. The three-carriage VLocity sets will increase capacity on fast rail routes by 50 per cent. They are in addition to 22 carriages under construction, which are due to be introduced from August. Public Transport Minister Lynne Kosky said a carriage a month would be added to the system, creating longer trains and the need to extend some platforms.

Three car VLocities have now entered service on Traralgon and flagship Bendigo trips.

WHAT IS A V LINE BUS?

Lachlan Richardson writes:

Hi Victor,

In your article on this subject in the June, 2008 edition of *Table Talk* [p. 14] you stated that the distinction doesn't matter to the travelling public, as long as the services run. I disagree as non V/Line services are not included in the V/Line area time table booklets so that travellers who do not live in the area do not know about the non V/Line services. Also Victorian Seniors free travel vouchers can only be used on V/Line off peak services.

I have believed that the new Warrnambool to Ararat bus service via the Grampians was not a V/Line service and this has been confirmed by an email to V/Line themselves, so I was very intrigued to see a promotion on the V/Line website for a July & August 2 for 1 promotion on the three V/Line bus services from Warrnambool to Apollo Bay, Ballarat & Ararat. [August *Table Talk*, p. 5] I have received no satisfaction from V/Line as to the reason the Warrnambool - Ararat service is quoted as a V/Line service in this promotion.

Regards,

Lachlan Richardson

Aireys Inlet, VIC

OVERLAND ON THE CHEAP

An agreement between the Victorian Government, V/Line and Great Southern Rail will enable a limited number of passengers to travel on Overland train services at V/Line fares, which are significantly cheaper than GSR's. The agreement provides for twelve seats on each Overland for Victorian passengers wanting to travel between Nhill, Horsham, Dimboola, Ararat, Geelong North Shore and Melbourne. The agreement will be trialled for six months.

TRANSRAPID: BELIEVE IT OR NOT!

From *Geelong Advertiser*, 30 July:

A German plan to build a multi-billion dollar monorail from Geelong to Frankston, via Melbourne, was ...backed by city leaders. Transport joint venture ThyssenKrupp Transrapid has unveiled an ambitious plan to build a high-speed, magnetic monorail line around the bay, linking two airports and three cities. If built, the monorail would ferry Geelong commuters to Melbourne in little more than 20 minutes. The German-based consortium recently submitted its proposal as an alternative to the \$8.5 billion east-west tunnel being considered by the State Government. ThyssenKrupp Transrapid general manager Peter Hatcher said the line would link Geelong, Avalon Airport, Melbourne Airport and Melbourne before heading east to Frankston at speeds of up to 275km/h. The consortium's submission said the monorail would:

- Hover above the track using magnetic levitation;
- Reach speeds of 500km/h in rural areas;
- Silently cruise at 250km/h in urban areas; and,
- Operate safer and cleaner than normal rail transport.

But the submission also revealed considerable cost - calculated to be about \$4 billion per 100km of double rail lines.

Mr Hatcher said the monorail was in response to Sir Rod Eddington's transport report, which did not look at above-ground transport solutions. "The benefit would clearly be rapid commuter transport into the city, but it would also provide a fast airline-like freight service in its freight carriages," he said. "One of the advantages over conventional rail is that it has very high acceleration. It decelerates quickly, stops briefly for passengers and quickly accelerates back up to speed, so its average speed for the trip stays very high."

Yesterday the plan won initial approval from Geelong's Mayor Bruce Harwood. Cr Harwood said the idea could be "fantastic", but stressed the importance of upgrading the West Gate Bridge and the train line in conjunction. "This will be of assistance, but it can't be the only solution. This may be cost-prohibitive today, but in the future it may not be the case." Jim Cousins, chairman of peak lobby group Committee for Geelong, also approved, citing commuter woes, including traffic headaches and rising petrol costs. "It would be a great idea if they can work out where they can route it, whether there's someone with the financial ability to do it and whether it's viable for the consumer," Mr Cousins said. "But I'd be the first passenger on it." Around the world companies have tried to win contracts to build monorails. The only commercial Transrapid monorail operated in China, as an eight-minute link from Shanghai to its airport at speeds of 430km/h.

VICTORIAN CONTAINER TRAINS

Following the withdrawal of Pacific National from most Victorian non-bulk intra-state freight operations, **QR** has entered the market. QR and P&O will combine to provide a container service between Melbourne and Horsham. They hope to move up to 20,000 containers during a trial 12-month period. QR will operate three services each week from Horsham to Melbourne for Victorian intermodal (containerised) freight

company Wimmera Container Line, with capacity to increase to six services a week if demand increases.

In June 2008, QR announced it would purchase 18 new locomotives and 488 wagons for its intermodal freight business for \$187 million and upgrade the terminals at Forrestfield in Perth and Dry Creek in Adelaide for \$11 million.

VICTORIAN GRAIN TRAINS

El Zorro has contracted with AWB to provide four grain train sets to transport grain on the broad gauge network in Victoria and southern NSW.

Grain Corp has informed grain growers in north west Victoria that it will operate trains this season as far as Warracknabeal on the Hopetoun line, but not beyond, and that it won't be running trains on the Yaapect line. The farmers have expressed concern, saying some will have to cart grain 70 km to the nearest rail served terminal.

GREAT SOUTHERN RAILWAY (1) TIMETABLE 1 APRIL

GSR has issued new public timetables valid 1 April 2008 to 31 March 2009.

GREAT SOUTHERN RAILWAY (2) WITHDRAWALS

Table Talk May 2008, p. 3, advised of the withdrawal of a number of Indian Pacific and other GSR services over the Christmas-New Year period 2008-09. GSR has now withdrawn additional I-P services, "due to maintenance requirements". These are:

- Adelaide – Sydney, : Tuesday, 2 December 2008
- Sydney – Perth, : Wednesday, 3 December 2008
- Perth – Sydney, : Sunday, 7 December 2008
- Sydney – Perth, : Wednesday, 10 December 2008
- Perth – Sydney, : Sunday, 14 December 2008
- Sydney – Adelaide, : Wednesday, 17 December 2008

GREAT SOUTHERN RAILWAY (3) ADELAIDE STATION

Following redevelopment, the Adelaide Keswick GSR station has been renamed Adelaide Parklands Rail Terminal. The South Australian Government provided a \$150,000 grant towards the \$3 million redevelopment which includes complete refurbishment of the interior, including a complete re-decoration and refurbishment of the waiting area and amenities.

ADELAIDE SHOW

For the Royal Adelaide Show trains will operate every 15 minutes from 845 until 2300 express Adelaide-Showgrounds (near Goodwood) and v.v. each day from 5 to 13 September.

WHO WILL OWN RAIL INFRASTRUCTURE?

On 5 August, a US company, Texas Pacific Group Capital and Global Infrastructure Partners, launched an unexpected and unsolicited takeover bid for Asciano, owner of **Pacific National**.

On the same day, Babcock and Brown, offered for sale its long-term lease on **WestNet**, the WA rail network.

TASMANIA

It is believed that **South Spur**, the niche rail operator based in Perth, has expressed interest in buying Pacific National's Tasmanian rail assets.

A Rail Management Unit has been established within the Tasmanian Department of Infrastructure, Energy and Resources to facilitate planning for new rail arrangements and ensure that the elements of the Deeds entered into with Pacific National (PN) are appropriately managed until more permanent arrangements can be made.

Specifically, the RMU will:

- Advise Government on the appropriate ownership and management structure for rail.
- Develop structures and management systems to ensure that the obligations of the Crown can be effectively and efficiently discharged and are sufficiently transferable to accommodate any of the ownership and management models to be considered by Government.
- Represent the Government in strategic Stakeholder issues.
- Provide practical rail input into Government transport policy considerations and the development of rail expertise within the transport bureaucracy.
- Manage the day to day obligations and responsibilities of the parties including:
 - Oversight of PN's maintenance activities, administration of funding and validation of works.
 - Delivery of the capital works program as provided for by the Commonwealth's \$78 million contribution on the AusLink Network.
 - Care and maintenance of currently unused sections of the rail network owned by the Crown.

WEST COAST WILDERNESS RAILWAY

The West Coast Wilderness Railway in Tasmania has reduced its services. In Winter (25 April to 30 September), there is only one train one way. On Mondays, Thursdays and Saturdays it travels from Queenstown (1100) to Strahan (1515), with a bus return. On Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Fridays and Sundays it travels from Strahan (1015) to Queenstown (1415), also with a bus return. On 1 October a "Shoulder service" will commence with trains both ways crossing at Dubbil Barril. From 26 December, the Summer service will commence, presumably with two trains a day each way.

A timetable card is available from the AATTC Distribution Service (August list).

WA TIMETABLE AMENDMENTS

TransPerth: Additional or altered Monday to Friday services were introduced on the Fremantle line from 18 August 2008:

- 756 Perth-Fremantle now departs at 752,
- An additional train Perth-Subiaco at 756,
- 805 Perth-Fremantle now departs at 803,
- Additional train Perth-Subiaco at 810,
- Additional train Perth-Fremantle at 1535, filling a 15 minute gap,
- Additional train Perth-Subiaco at 1637,
- Additional train Daglish-Perth at 815,
- Additional train Daglish-Perth at 825,
- Additional train Fremantle-Perth at 1605, filling a 10 minute gap (return working of the new 1535 Perth-Fremantle mentioned above), and
- Additional train Daglish-Perth at 1656.

This is possibly the first time that Perth trains have regularly terminated at Subiaco since 1897 (see pages 14 and 20 of the September 2008 *Times*).

Public Transport Authority spokesman David Hynes said, "The Perth-Fremantle line is different from other lines because it is busy in both directions in the morning and afternoon. It is getting packed out; this will help to relieve a little of the pressure".

A new edition of the pdf Fremantle line timetable is available on TransPerth's website.

Transwa: Because of track upgrading, mainly resleepering, the morning up and evening down Australind passenger trains will be replaced by buses from 8 September 2008 until June 2009. The morning up bus will leave Bunbury at 550, ten minutes earlier than the train. The day Perth-Bunbury and return services will remain as trains.

WA PROMISES

The Premier of WA, Mr Carpenter, promised during the state election campaign:

- To extend the Northern suburbs railway five km from Clarkson to Butler at a cost of \$147.5 million as the first step in a further expansion of the Perth rail network; and
- Free public transport for senior citizens every day. This will apply from 1000 to 1500 on Mondays to Fridays and all day on weekends. The new Leader of the Opposition, Mr Barnett, immediately matched this promise.

AUCKLAND

From 31 July, to cater for increased demand on weekdays, an additional train has departed Britomart (City) at 1605 for Otahuhu.

WELLINGTON

There are changes to Tranz Metro services in Wellington from 1 September.

Melling branch: All trains from Wellington to Melling between 907 and 1507 now depart 10 minutes later at xx:17, arriving at Melling at xx:36, and depart Melling at xx:39 arriving Wellington at xx:57. Stopping patterns have not changed.

Wairarapa line: In general, times at Wellington are the same, but inbound trains depart Masterton three to five minutes earlier and outbound trains arrive Masterton four to seven minutes later. The Friday evening inbound train departs Masterton twenty minutes later and the outbound departs Wellington half an hour later. Weekend inbound trains are ten to five minutes earlier throughout. Trains were running late with the former timetable because the newly refurbished ex-British carriages are heavier than the former carriages.

Weekdays Down:

Masterton 545 arrive Wellington 726
Masterton 625 arrive Wellington 808
Masterton 650 arrive Wellington 834
Masterton 1025 arrive Wellington 1200
Masterton 1540 arrive Wellington 1719
Friday only: Masterton 2020 arrive Wellington 2155

Weekdays Up:

Wellington 825 arrive Masterton 1000
Wellington 1255 arrive Masterton 1430
Wellington 1633 arrive Masterton 1815
Wellington 1733 arrive Masterton 1915
Wellington 1818 arrive Masterton 1955
Friday only: Wellington 2225 arrive Masterton 000

Weekend Down:

Masterton 750 arrive Wellington 0925
Masterton 1650 arrive Wellington 1825

Weekend Up:

Wellington 0955 arrive Masterton 1130
Wellington 1855 arrive Masterton 2030

These timetables are currently unavailable as PDFs but are available in the “View Timetable” section of www.metlink.org.nz New timetables are available as PDFs for the Paraparaumu and Johnsonville lines, but the only change is increased fares.

GERMAN TIMETABLES

From *Today's Railways Europe*, no. 152, August 2008:

DB has announced it will no longer produce paper timetables after this year. Sales of the complete “wine box” set have declined from 53,000 in 2003 to around 20,000 in 2007. The regional volumes sold on their own added up to barely 50,000 books sold last year. A special limited edition of the entire winter 2008-09 timetable will be available – bound in four volumes and selling for €99! Orders have to be placed by 31 August this year to secure a copy by sending an email to kursbuch@bahn.de From December, the DB electronic timetable will only be issued once a year but monthly updates will be available free of charge via the Internet. Regional volumes covering Baden-Württemberg and a combined volume covering Berlin, Brandenburg and Mecklenburg-Vorpommern should be available next year, part-funded by local transport authorities. This will also be available via the email address above.

ITALIAN HIGH-SPEED

NTV, New Passenger Transport, is likely to be the first privately operated high-speed passenger train operator in the world. It is progressing with plans to introduce services throughout Italy from 2011, in competition with the state railway Trenitalia. It is investing €900 million and has ordered 25 trains from Alstom. NTV plans to operate hourly between Milano and Roma - 14 trains a day, three of which will be non-stop. It plans extensions from Milano to Torino (four a day) and beyond Napoli to Salerno (five daily) as well as services from Roma to Bari (thrice daily) and Roma to Venezia (four daily).

INDIAN TIMETABLES

India is a timetable collector's paradise. There are separate timetable books issued by each of the sixteen zonal railways, each in English and Hindi, and usually in a variety of local languages as well. There are also nation-wide timetables: The attractive but summarised annual *Trains at a Glance* produced by the Central Railways Board, and a more complete but idiosyncratic *Newman's Indian Bradshaw* (see the *Times* April 2005, p.19 and June 2005, p.3). Now, the various railways in the Kolkata (Calcutta) area have produced a *Combined Suburban Time Table* containing the services of the Eastern Railway, South Eastern Railway and the Kolkata Metro. (In the interests of accuracy, we note the suburban train in our front cover illustration is from Mumbai (Bombay), not Kolkata).

Thanks to Tony Bailey, Ian Cooper, Craig Halsall, Geoff Lambert, Dennis McLean, Geoff Mann, Lachlan Richardson, Lourie Smit and Victor Isaacs for Rail & Tram News.

AIR

DOMESTIC

Tiger Airways will discontinue all of their Darwin services as from 26 October – from both Melbourne and Singapore, blaming the high cost of operations of both fuel and airport fees. Tiger will increase Melbourne-Adelaide services to 40 a week (up to six

a day) progressively from 15 December. Tiger will add a fourth weekly flight between Melbourne and Alice Springs from 15 December and increase its Melbourne to Sunshine Coast flights to a daily service. From 12 February it will add another Melbourne to Perth flight, taking services to 15 per week. It will establish its second Australian base in Adelaide from January 2009.

The pilot shortage has forced **Tasair** to reduce its Hobart-Burnie service from thrice to once weekly – on Wednesdays from Hobart at 700 and return at 1800.

Virgin Blue will add Mildura to its network with the launch of daily flights from 13 October 2008.

Qantas is to expand its WA operations. It has already added one weekly return service to Paraburdoo and from 26 October will add a further Paraburdoo to Perth flight, two weekly returns from Perth and Kalgoorlie, two return Perth to Newman services and one Perth to Newman service. Port Hedland will get additional capacity from February with larger aircraft

INTERNATIONAL

Virgin's **Pacific Blue** will operate daily services from Auckland to Melbourne from September.

V Australia will commence a three times weekly service between Brisbane and Los Angeles from 1 March 2009 on Wednesday, Friday and Sunday. V Australia will also fly from Sydney to Los Angeles (from 15 December). V Australia has been granted access to the Australia-South Africa route by the government, due to lack of competition and high fares currently in operation. It may start operation by October 2009.

Qantas will add an extra service between Sydney and Johannesburg from 16 December, increasing frequency to six flights a week. QF63 departs Sydney at 1030 and arrives in Johannesburg at 1530. The return, QF64 departs Johannesburg at 1750 and arrives in Sydney at 1435 plus one day. It will operate on Tuesdays until 27 January 2009 and then on Saturdays from 7 February 2009. Qantas intends to add a seventh weekly service in the future to operate daily.

Eithad has earmarked Melbourne as its newest destination, launching non-stop daily services to its Abu Dhabi base from March 2009. This will be the third Australian city on Eithad's route, following Sydney and Brisbane, and will be the first international airline to commence services to Melbourne in the last 2 years.

Air Mauritius will no longer serve Sydney following a review of its worldwide operations. The airline currently operates a weekly triangular Mauritius-Sydney-Melbourne route but from 1 September will axe the Sydney connection, except during the peak season between 15 December and 26 January.

Cathay Pacific has announced a further eight new flights to Australia each week as it redeploys capacity to higher yielding routes. Perth will get an extra two services from 26 October, taking it to a daily service. Brisbane will move from a daily service to 10 flights per week, while Sydney will move from 25 flights per week to 28

Jetstar has filed an application with the International Air Services Commission for a codeshare agreement with Japan Airlines on its new Osaka-Gold Coast-Sydney and Cairns-Tokyo services to replace the existing Osaka-Brisbane-Sydney service from 1 October.

AirAsia X will commence direct flights between Melbourne and Kuala Lumpur from 12 November starting with four flights a week, before moving to a daily service during the peak season of December to mid-January. Daily flights will commence full-time from March 2009.

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