



# TABLE TALK

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## THE ART OF TRAIN TIMETABLING

*Report by Malcolm Cluett of talks by Craig Sparrus & Anthony Giles, both from Transport for NSW, at the August meeting of the Railway Technical Society of Australasia, NSW Chapter. Reproduced by permission - and with thanks - from the RTSA, NSW Newsletter, September 2012.*

The two speakers spoke on slightly different topics – Craig concentrated on comparisons between Sydney's railways and those in other Australian cities. Anthony spoke on the technicalities of producing a railway timetable. Craig's background is from Melbourne.

Rail networks in Australia were developed 100 years ago. They would be different if they were developed now as part of a planned city. CityRail operates under two disadvantages compared with systems overseas – Sydney has lower overall population density than other cities and motor vehicle ownership is relatively high. However, the population density is higher in the inner suburbs. Two other characteristics of Sydney are that the stations are relatively close together, and there is a lot of trackage and associated infrastructure for the number of people carried. In Sydney and Melbourne, the average distance between stations is 1.7km, but on the Long Island RR the spacing is 4.2km. In Sydney, intercity trains do a lot of passenger carrying in the suburban areas.

Rail usage Melbourne is growing rapidly, driven by population growth in the outer suburbs and extensions to the electrified area. The state of the rail tracks in Victoria is inferior to that in the Sydney area, with mostly wooden sleepers. There has been a campaign in Sydney for many years to replace wooden sleepers with concrete, and this is nearing completion. Victoria still has loco-hauled trains on some regional services, which is undesirable from a timetabling point of view.

The Regional Rail Link project (new track from the Melbourne CBD to points west) will improve train running by separating Regional trains from suburban trains.

Over the past decade, patronage in Sydney has described a bathtub curve, with higher figures in 2000, falling to a low point in the mid decade, and rising to similar levels at the current time, where it appears to be plateauing. There is a very strong correlation between Sydney's CBD employment levels and passenger boardings on the system as a whole, demonstrating that Sydney's system is definitely a commuter railway. (A graph was shown to demonstrate this.) Rail has the dominant role in transporting people into the Sydney CBD. The Barrangaroo development near Wynyard will make this even more important.

Sydney has quite a high degree of express running, while metro-style operations overseas generally stop at all stations.

A customer survey was done in 2011, to determine attitudes on the following attributes of their railway service:

- Seat availability
- Service on time
- Travel time considering distance travelled
- Frequency of the service
- Overall satisfaction

Results were generally positive, with positive sentiment outweighing negative sentiment on all of the above. Diagrams and tables were used to demonstrate the above characteristics. A document is available on the TfNSW web site – concerning long term transport planning for Sydney. Craig Sparrus's current job is to do planning on a shorter time frame.

Two Ministers are jointly responsible for transport in NSW (Transport/Ports & Roads). The Transport Services Division sits within TfNSW, with Mr Fergus Gammie as Deputy Director General.

One thing that affects transport planning, and investment in urban public transport, is that the State Governments (excepting Western Australia) are somewhat cash-strapped at present.

### **Timetable Development – Tony Giles.**

Twenty years ago, timetable planning was largely an art, which depended on hunches and past experience. TfNSW Planners now want to convert the art to a science. Balancing passenger demand and available network capacity is the basis of timetabling. There is also the need to plan for the slowest-performing train on the network. Planners seek to have

logical patterns of train running, unless there are other constraints. Repeatability and understandability by the general public are important objectives. One trend that has been noticed is that the peaks are getting later, and of longer duration. The same has been noticed on Sydney's roads.

Sydney's railway is organised into sectors as follows:

- Sector 1 Illawarra, Eastern Suburbs and South Coast lines
- Sector 2 Cumberland line and Bankstown line and Inner West (includes East Hills/Airport Line & Southern Highlands)
- Sector 3 Western line through CBD to Chatswood and Northern Line (includes North Shore, Central Coast & Newcastle, & Blue Mountains).

Sector 2 and 3 are still tied together – in terms of trackage as well as rolling stock. Sector 1 is relatively independent.

Timetable changes are often scheduled to coincide with new infrastructure being commissioned. Recent examples are:

- 2009 (Major) - Epping to Chatswood Rail Link, deployment of additional Oscars
- 2010 (Major) – Cronulla branch line duplication, deployment of additional Oscars
- 2011 (Minor) – Quakers Hill to Schofields duplication; deployment of new Waratah trains and deployment of additional Oscars.

## **TIMETABLE PRODUCTION STAGES OVER TIME**

### **1 Timetable Review Plan & Timetable Specification**

- An examination of train plan options based on passenger demand and network capacity.
- The Timetable Review Plan outlines the proposed train plan.
- The Timetable Specification informs development of the timetable.

### **2 Timetable Development**

- The timetable is prepared based on outstanding Timetable Change Requests, the Timetable Review Plans and the Timetable Specification.
- Simulation analysis and risk assessments occur.
- Detailed operational working not included at this stage.

### **3 Public & Stakeholder Engagement**

- The draft timetable is published on the internet for customer feedback.
- The draft passenger timetable is simultaneously reviewed by other stakeholders, including RailCorp, the Airport Link Company, ARTC and bus operators.

### **4 Timetable Production (Refinement)**

- The timetable is refined based on stakeholder feedback.
- Operational working is developed, including fleet maintenance cycles.
- SWTT (Standard Working Timetable) is released to stakeholders for implementation planning.
- Preparation of train crew rosters, printing of timetable booklets, operational readiness activities including staff briefings, updating of relevant safety and operational documentation.

### **6 Timetable Introduction**

- Introduced on Sunday. Timetable Information Centre monitors operation for approximately one week.

### **7 Post Timetable Introduction Review**

Feedback from customers and stakeholders is reviewed. A "Warranty Team" of timetable planners is provided for a few months after implementation, in case problems need to be rectified.

The 2004 timetable delivered faster trains, but not workable in practice and was soon replaced.

The following objectives will help create a robust timetable structure:

- Minimise flat junction movements
- Simple operating patterns
- Minimise cross-sector working (sectorisation)
- Sufficient turnback allowance
- Apply appropriate recovery time
- Simulation and analysis
- Consultation with stakeholders

If the flat junction crossings on the Western line can't be avoided, the planners attempt to make them at Homebush where the traffic is sparser than East of Strathfield. Sydney residents would know that there are lots of flat junctions in the Sydney area.

Freight or mineral trains also have to be allowed for in the timetables. Not all trains run on the RailCorp network. (Southern Highlands and Hunter Valley beyond Broadmeadow are controlled by ARTC).

It can take up to 20 months to develop a new timetable for RailCorp. The Implementation Period (described above) is six months. This is a long period of time, but it defies efforts to reduce it.

Bondi Junction – this is an example of where special crewing arrangements are used to obtain faster turnbacks, though there are extra costs associated with this.

Simulation and analysis – can make predictions of On Time Running in a new timetable.

Software which is used for preparing timetables includes Rail Table, M Train and Rail Sys

Output screens of the above software were shown to the audience, with train speeds overlaid on the track layout and the gradient profile.

In October 2012, a Bathurst day train will be introduced. This will enable Bathurst residents to have a 9am – 6pm approx day in Sydney. (The daily Countrylink service operates in the opposite direction.)

Things which will affect timetabling in the near future:

- 2013 Kingsgrove to Revesby Quadruplication
- Lidcombe and Homebush turnbacks
- Southern Sydney Freight Line
- Modern rolling stock becoming more common

A major new timetable will be introduced in 2013 – amid high expectations.

- Crowding at Town Hall station – this is a safety issue as well as a timetable issue
- Speed restrictions post Waterfall accident – which reduced On Time Running
- Don't want to rule out future changes – NWRL and SWRL. (For example, the system coped with the necessary changes associated with the introduction of the Epping – Chatswood line)
- Links to bus companies and their timetables.

In recent times, the timetable development unit has been transferred from Railcorp to TfNSW.

### Questions & Answers

*Q: CBD Headway – can it be reduced ?*

A: There are two different things to consider here - theoretical and practical: Theoretical:

- On time running
- Deceleration, dwell time, acceleration
- Technical aspects of the different types of trains

Practical:

- Crush loading
- Margins added for dwell time
- Signal clearances and limitations

It is expensive to build rail infrastructure in the city. Twenty trains per hour is difficult to achieve reliably in peak hours (eg over the Harbour Bridge). 22tph is even more difficult to achieve reliably.

*Q How will the reorganisation of the Intercity train services affect timetabling ?*

A: The ramifications are still being worked out. Regional passengers & suburban passengers can have competing interests. Trains from Illawarra can be directed to either Sydney Terminal or Bondi Junction.

*Q Berlin has an optimised timetable. Why can't Sydney's be like this ?*

A: Planners are doing simulations, and trying to get the most benefit out of the existing infrastructure. Berlin Planners use the same software as Sydney (Rail Sys). The Train Location System (TLS) has generated a huge block of data which can be analysed for optimisation purposes.

***We hope to publish a version of the Paper presented at this meeting in the Times (our timetable analysis magazine) in the near future.***

## RAIL AND TRAM NEWS

### Queensland Rail: Major shutdowns

Kuranda Scenic Railway services will be cancelled on the following dates in 2013 for planned maintenance: Mon 22 and Tue 23 April, Thu 9 and Fri 10 May, Mon 21 and Tue 22 Oct, Mon 11 and Tue 12 Nov and Mon 2 and Tue 3 Dec. It will also be closed on Christmas Day.

From 2300 on Friday 24 August to the last train on Sunday 26 August, tracks were closed from Roma Street to Corinda, Yeerongpilly and Murarrie.

### Queensland & NSW: Things to look out for

- The first Budget of the new Queensland state government will be presented on 11 September. It is widely anticipated that the government will adopt a very stringent approach and introduce many cutbacks in government expenditure. In particular, there may be cutbacks to the three inland passenger trains, the Inlander, the Spirit of the Outback and the Westlander.
- Another Budget casualty might be the Petrie to Kippa-Ring railway, on which start of construction was thought to be imminent. There are reports of increased cost estimates for the project.
- The Queensland government won't rule out selling the state's passenger rail businesses, Queensland Rail, after the next election. In response to a Parliamentary motion on 20 August the government would not commit to keeping Queensland Rail Ltd in public hands, saying the state was \$65 billion in debt, but said the government would not proceed with any asset sales without a mandate. Queensland Rail has more than 7000 staff, more than \$6 billion in assets and more than 7000km of track.
- The current arrangement of the southbound Brisbane-Sydney XPT departing Brisbane at 0730 and occupying valuable paths that could be used by inbound peak hour commuter trains from the Gold Coast is unsustainable.

There is likely to be a radical alteration to NSW North Coast line passenger schedules. This might include swapping around the present arrangement so that the Sydney-Brisbane service runs in daylight and the southbound return as an overnight run. This, in effect, would be a swap of the present Brisbane and Casino trains. It would, however, make long-distance connections in Brisbane more difficult.

### **Queensland: Alpha coal mine and 495 km railway approved**

The federal government has approval for the Hancock Mining/GVK joint venture's multi-billion dollar Alpha coal mine and its associated rail line in central Queensland. The \$6.4 billion project in the Galilee Basin involves a mine 40km northwest of Alpha (between Emerald and Barcaldine) and a 495km railway to Abbot Point, north of Bowen. The project will be the first coal mine in the resource-rich Galilee Basin and is expected to export 30 million tonnes of coal annually, worth about \$3 billion.

### **Gold Coast Airport rail connection**

The Gold Coast City Council is reported to have alternative plans to the proposal to extend the Gold Coast railway to the Gold Coast Airport. The line would end at Elanora under its proposal, and instead the tramway currently under construction would be extended from Broadbeach to the airport. Council projections indicate a heavy rail link from Varsity Lakes to Coolangatta would only get 7000 passenger trips a day by 2031 but a light rail link going up the coastal strip would get closer to 50,000 trips. It is understood the proposed light rail route would run from the Gold Coast Airport, up the eastern side of the Gold Coast Highway to Tugun, before heading to the proposed Elanora rail station via Stewart Rd. Extending the light rail from Griffith University to Helensvale Station before the 2018 Commonwealth Games is also on the city's funding wish list.

### **ARTC takes over Sydney Metropolitan Freight network**

ARTC and Transport for NSW have signed an agreement that transfers management and operation of Sydney's Metropolitan Freight Network (MFN) to ARTC until 2064. The agreement, which is effective from midnight on 5 August, brings the remaining 19 km section between Enfield West and Port Botany under ARTC management. As signalling separation works are completed along the MFN, train control and maintenance will be progressively transferred to ARTC from RailCorp. ARTC's takeover of the MFN will be part of the 2004 NSW Lease agreement between the ARTC and the NSW government.

### **ARTC: Hunter Valley shutdown 7-11 August**

A shutdown of ARTC's Hunter Valley network was scheduled from 0600 on 7 August until 0600 on 11 August to commission new track, undertake major capacity upgrade works and carry out routine maintenance. More than 120 jobs were expected to be completed. Some of the major capacity works were:

- Maitland to Minimbah third track: The first stage completed in readiness for commissioning in November.
- Nundah Bank Third Track (between Singleton and Camberwell): Installation of turnouts in preparation for scheduled entry into service in November.
- Chilcotts Creek Loop: Re-conditioning of 480 metres of track and installation of culverts for construction of the loop in preparation for entry into service in December.
- Pages River Loop: Installation of a culvert to complete civil works.
- Bylong Loop Extension: Installation of a turnout in preparation for entry into service in March 2013.

In addition general track maintenance including rail grinding, tamping, track reconditioning and re-railing was carried out.

### **ARTC: Hexham coal yard**

Plans are progressing for major rail infrastructure at Hexham near Newcastle, with an application lodged with the State government. The ARTC says the \$90 million project includes five relief tracks, with a capacity to store a minimum of 90 wagons. There will also be new signal infrastructure and access tracks. It is designed to ease congestion by temporarily diverting coal trains off the dedicated coal lines. Hexham was chosen as the perfect operational setting, but it is a very difficult area to build as it is very low-lying and swampy.

### **ARTC: North-South line problems**

The Sydney-Melbourne North-South line continues to have problems. As mentioned in July *Table Talk* (page 4) the first section of the **South Sydney Freight Line** from Enfield to Leightonfield had its delayed opening on 24 June, but it is not yet being fully utilized. From Leightonfield to Macarthur significant progress is evident of construction of the Freight Line alongside the RailCorp line. Construction is being co-ordinated with construction of the large junction at Glenfield for the new South West suburban railway to Leppington. There will be no less than three flyovers at Glenfield. Two will ensure no conflict for every possible suburban train movement, and one flyover will be to get the Freight Line from one side of the RailCorp line to the other.

From Goulburn to Cootamundra, ARTC trackwork is underway, and as a result **Countrylink's** XPT's are currently losing significant time (July's *Table Talk*, page 4, reported that Countrylink is now advising passengers of delays on a semi-permanent basis).

On 1 August a coupling on an XPT set came apart and the train divided north of Seymour. This might be due to the problems of mudspots continuing here. Passengers were bussed from Seymour to Melbourne. The incident is being investigated by the Australian Transport Safety Bureau. On 28 to 30 July half of the **V/Line** trains between Albury and Melbourne and v.v. were replaced by buses. It is thought that this was due to damage to one carriage set. The damage is believed to have been minor but there are only two standard gauge carriage sets and no replacement carriages available.

On 8/9 August, the 2040 Sydney to Melbourne XPT ran 200 minutes late due to a signal failure at Sydenham and speed restrictions. It was terminated at Albury, with passengers bussed onwards.

## CityRail: Newcastle line future

The future of the railway into Newcastle remains under question. NSW State Planning Minister, Brad Hazzard, has indicated that he wants the railway removed. Meanwhile, patronage on Hunter public transport has declined over the past decade, with half a million fewer patrons each year, despite a 105 population increase. Annual ticket sales for stations between Broadmeadow and Gosford fell from 5.7million to 5.1million between 2001 and 2011. The only increases were on the lesser-travelled Hunter line that includes stations between Hamilton and Newcastle.

## CityRail: Working Timetable 21 October 2012

A new CityRail working timetable will come into effect from 21 October 2012. Some changes are:

Sector 2: Replacement of 6 car R sets (the last R set was broken up over the weekend of 4 August).

Western Line Weekdays:

- Additional stop at Werrington at 0748.
- W524 to stop at Penrith 0722.
- New up peak express from Springwood at 0708. It will stop at Valley Heights, Warrimoo, Blaxland, Glenbrook, Lapstone, Emu Plains, Penrith, Parramatta, Strathfield, Redfern and Sydney arrive 0832.
- The current Springwood to Central train will commence from Penrith at 0742.
- New down express to Springwood from Sydney at 1648. It stops Redfern, Strathfield, Parramatta, Penrith, Emu Plains, Lapstone, Glenbrook, Blaxland, Warrimoo, Valley Heights, and Springwood arriving 1801.
- Current Central to Springwood train will terminate at Penrith.
- Loss of service from Springwood at 1815 and Emu Plains at 1839 - train commences from Penrith at 1842.
- Commencement of Daily Bathurst-Sydney-Bathurst service.
- W534 will commence from Mount Victoria.

Illawarra Line Weekdays:

8H set to operate on Sector 1 to relieve crowding on late morning and evening peak trains. This will result in:

- Run 2-E 0751 up Cronulla train will not stop at Allawah, Carlton, Banksia, Arncliffe and Tempe.
- New 0824 Hurstville to Bondi Junction train, stops all stations to Sydenham, thence Redfern and all to Bondi Junction arriving 0906.
- New 0921 Bondi Junction to Hurstville, stops all to Redfern thence Sydenham and all to Hurstville arriving 1003.
- New 1701 Hurstville to Bondi Junction train, stopping Kogarah, Rockdale, Wolli Creek, Sydenham, Redfern, and all to Bondi Junction arriving 1738.
- Run 20-M 1732 Bondi Junction to Sutherland will terminate at Hurstville.
- New 1739 Bondi Junction to Sutherland train, stops all to Redfern thence Sydenham, Tempe, Wolli Creek, Rockdale, Kogarah, Hurstville, and all to Sutherland arriving at 1835.
- Run 1--M 1755 Bondi Junction to Waterfall train will terminate at Hurstville.

South Coast Weekends:

Some services to be built up to 8H consists between the City and Wollongong. Pending successful trials, these will divide (on the down) or attach (on the up) at either Wollongong or Dapto during the journey. (Similar to what takes place at Gosford on some services on the North.)

Northern Line Weekends:

13 services built up to 8 car consist, and 2 services reduced from 8 car to 4 car consist.

## Cityrail: Oak Flats – Nowra closedown

From Monday 3 to Friday 14 September buses will replace trains between Bomaderry (Nowra) and Oak Flats. 2.5 km of track between Bombo and Minnamurra will be relaid, replacing timber sleepers with concrete. Embankment and corridor presentation work will also be undertaken. A further weekday closedown on the South Coast line is scheduled for October/November this year.

## RailCorp: Freight Working Timetable 1 September 2012

A new RailCorp Freight Working Timetable will be introduced on 1 September (Weekends, Book 5) and 3 September (Weekdays, Book 4). Most mentions of RailCorp have been expunged and the RailCorp logo has disappeared.

## NSW Country Regional Network: Train Order working

Train Order working was introduced on the Joppa Junction (near Goulburn) to Canberra line from 30 July (a few days later than forecast in July *Table Talk*, pages 4-5) replacing archaic Train Staff and Electric Staff methods of control. This will save about nine minutes for each Countrylink train (three minutes at each station). However, there has been no amendment to the timetable. Recently, mainly as a result of ARTC trackwork north of Goulburn, trains have been regularly running late. The change will, at least, remove one constraint, making the timetable on this line more robust.

Introduction of Train Order working on the Junee-Griffith-Hillston line has also slipped a few weeks from the forecast introduction date of 6 August. After years of delay, we can tolerate a few weeks' delay.

## Countrylink and Elvis continue to love each other

The next in the annual series of Countrylink special trains to the Elvis Festival in Parkes will operate on 10 January 2013. Departure from Sydney will be at 0923, arriving in Parkes at 1614. Return will be on 14 January from Parkes at 0830 and arriving Sydney at 1552. Your ticket will include a concert at Sydney Central station before departure and a concert in each carriage. Countrylink is the major sponsor of the Elvis Festival.

## **Countrylink: future trains**

**From the *Sydney Morning Herald* 15 August 2012, by Jacob Saulwick:**

Thirty years after they were introduced, Countrylink's XPT trains have travelled more than three million kilometres more than they were designed to, and should be retired for "premium" trains offering faster travel times and better seating and entertainment options. A confidential analysis into Countrylink reveals the state's ageing long-distance train fleet is suffering "fatigue and corrosion issues" and replacement parts are becoming difficult to obtain. But the analysis, prepared for the director-general of Transport for NSW and obtained through a freedom of information request, points to a potentially bright future for regional rail if the state government was prepared to buy new and faster "premium" trains. These new trains could shave travel times between Sydney and Canberra by more than an hour and, according to the analysis, attract 60 per cent more patronage than the state's regional train services do now.

The report was prepared last year at the request of the head of Transport for NSW, Les Wielinga. It says planning for a new fleet is urgent because it could take up to seven years to receive a new train. "The existing XPT fleet requires either replacement or a significant upgrade by 2018 to ensure the continuation of reliable country rail services in NSW," the report says. It lays out three options for CountryLink and its XPT trains, the bulk of which entered service in 1982 with a design life of 27 years and 6.25 million kilometres. They have now travelled more than 9.5 million kilometres on average.

The first option is to rebuild the fleet. The second is to buy a new fleet of similar trains. These options could increase patronage by between 11 per cent and 19 per cent, the report says. But it warns: "The lack of services and limited appeal to full-fare paying passengers potentially leads to a lower cost recovery, hence a higher ongoing operational subsidy. This option has no potential to improve journey times on the existing network alignment." The third option would be more expensive, and requires the purchase of "tilt trains" similar to those purchased in Queensland, which can negotiate curves at higher speeds. These trains could include in-seat video screens, internet access, lounge cars and upgraded first-class carriages. "Although a more expensive capital investment, the train is more attractive to full fare-paying passengers, which could lead to a potentially higher cost recovery," the report says. This option could increase patronage by more than 60 per cent, it says, and cut travel between Central and Canberra from four hours and 19 minutes to three hours 15 minutes.

The costs of the options have been redacted from the report. The opposition's transport spokeswoman, Penny Sharpe, said: "We want the government to explain what its plans for regional public transport are, given that this report says the trains are going to be unworkable by around 2018." "People in NSW want to see an enhanced regional CountryLink service - this report points to a way forward." The Transport Minister, Gladys Berejiklian, said: "The Countrylink fleet will at some stage need to be replaced to maintain and improve services for regional and rural NSW, because Labor failed to buy, or plan to invest in new rolling stock."

## **Sydney: Competing transport plans**

The NSW Minister for Transport, Gladys Berejiklian, will release a draft 20 year transport plan this month, and a final version in November. Meanwhile Infrastructure NSW will release its plan in September. The *Sydney Morning Herald* of 4 August claimed that the Minister's plan will concentrate on public transport projects whereas Infrastructure NSW plan will concentrate on roads, with little common ground.

## **NSW: Maldon-Dombarton study**

The Federal government has released \$25.5 million to further plans for the long-awaited freight rail line to link Port Kembla to the Southern Highlands via 35 km of new track from Maldon to Dombarton. Transport NSW will spend the funds on planning and detailed design work to make the project 'shovel-ready' over the next two years.

## **Metro Trains Melbourne: Working Timetable 22 April 2012**

Metro Trains Melbourne's Working Timetable of 22 April 2012 has now been placed on their website. To find it, go to [www.metrotrains.com.au](http://www.metrotrains.com.au) then click on "Contact Us", then click on "Doing Business with Metro".

## **Metro Trains Melbourne: Strategy**

**From the *Age* 14 August 2012:**

Metro's ambitious five-year plan to provide Melbourne with a world-class train network has been revealed, but it relies on the Baillieu government honouring its 2010 election promise to purchase 40 new trains. Documents released under freedom of information reveal Metro's strategy to boost Melbourne's train service by 2017. The plan spells out the major constraints to achieving this, including railway congestion, overcrowded trains and inefficient work practices. It forecasts chronic overcrowding on some of the city's busiest lines if the changes are not made. The plan is based on expected passenger growth and the Department of Transport's long-term goals as contained in its 2010 Melbourne metro rail plan. Realising the plan would require a massive investment in public transport on the part of the state government and the federal government through Infrastructure Australia, its nation-building advisory body. The plan also suggests Metro will struggle to meet its performance targets if its proposed changes are not made, raising the spectre of a network once more bedevilled by late and unreliable trains. By 2017, significant changes will be required to provide a railway that not only carries a higher number of customers but also exceeds the performance targets established within the franchise agreement," the plan states. "This cannot be achieved under a 'business as usual' approach." Key changes required include:

- Doubling the duration of peak hour from one to two hours;
- Upgrading signalling to push an extra 10 trains an hour through the northern loop, which services the Sydenham, Craigieburn and Upfield lines;
- Recruiting and training more than 260 new train drivers;

- Phasing out ageing Comeng trains, or modifying them to fit more passengers. Comengs comprise almost half of Metro's fleet;
- Boosting electricity for powering trains in the city loop and on at least six suburban lines;
- Duplicating remaining sections of single track on the Hurstbridge line between Clifton Hill and Eltham, and;
- No longer using Flinders Street Station as a terminus for all lines, instead making it a "whistle-stop" station at which trains stop for 40 seconds. It is the station where train drivers change over, leading to regular stops of several minutes.

Worsened overcrowding is predicted for the Dandenong, Sydenham and Werribee lines if the plan is not followed. Metro was required to produce the five-year plan under its franchise agreement, although Public Transport Victoria (PTV) and the state government are not obligated to commit to any of the operator's initiatives. PTV chief executive Ian Dobbs said PTV was "considering many options to increase capacity and reliability as patronage continues to grow in the years ahead" and Metro's strategic plan was merely "one input into this process". A spokesman for Transport Minister Terry Mulder said the government had already committed \$225 million a year for rail maintenance.

### **V/Line & Metro: Sunbury electrification 18 November 2012**

Extension of Melbourne suburban electrification from Sydenham (Watergardens) to Sunbury will come into effect from 18 November. A new Metro trains timetable for the Western suburbs will be introduced, as will a new V/Line timetable, at least for the Bendigo line.

### **V/Line & Metro Trains Melbourne: Pakenham transfer?**

Metro Trains Melbourne proposed to Public Transport Victoria that V/Line Gippsland line trains should terminate at Pakenham and V/Line passengers transfer there to Metro services. The motive was to provide more paths for Metro trains. It is believed that the proposal was merely a "try-on" with no real expectation of approval. It would have made Gippsland passengers the only people in the state required to switch from V/Line to Metro to reach the city.

The Dandenong line is claimed to be the most congested in Melbourne. There are about 18 trains an hour. It is used by Metro Trains, V/Line and freight trains. It has some of the city's most troublesome level crossings. V/Line and Metro share about 60 km of track between Pakenham and the city. This makes the line V/Line's worst for train delays, with about 30% of services arriving more than six minutes behind schedule. V/Line says many of its trains are late because they get stuck behind Metro trains. A spokeswoman for PTV said the Dandenong line was "operating at its limits, therefore every option to improve performance and get extra capacity is being considered". But, in fact, V/Line trains only occupy two paths at the height of the peaks. As they follow suburban trains, their running time is similar; therefore their cancellation would only release the same number of paths. If the V/Line trains were to reverse at Pakenham, they would probably interfere with Metro trains at this cramped station anyway. V/Line spokeswoman Clare Steele said the regional rail operator would be guided by the government. But the government, reluctant to antagonise regional voters, said it had no plans to terminate V/Line trains at Pakenham. "Country residents living on the Gippsland line have as much right to expect their trains to operate to and from Melbourne's CBD and busy junctions such as Caulfield and Dandenong as do people on the Ballarat, Bendigo, Geelong and Seymour lines," said a spokesman for Public Transport Minister Terry Mulder. There were about 2 million passenger trips on V/Line's Gippsland services in 2011.

### **V/Line: Gippsland line problems**

Sections of the Gippsland line are experiencing problems after months of heavy rainfall, raising safety concerns. On 19 August a train travelling at 130 km/h hit a 20-metre section of sunken track near Morwell, jolting the train. Drainage channels had overflowed, washing away ballast and creating a 20-cm gap under the track. The line was later closed between Moe and Traralgon for inspection and repair. It reopened next day. It is the second time this winter that part of the line has been damaged by rain. In early July a sinkhole opened up at Darnum, forcing a temporary closure. It is likely that repair work will take at least four weeks.

### **Victoria: Infrastructure wish list**

Upgrades to the Dandenong rail line top the Victorian government's wish list for infrastructure projects submitted to Infrastructure Australia in the hope of receiving Commonwealth funding. A Dandenong Rail Capacity Program, including grade separations, signalling upgrades and platform lengthening is among the top six priorities. The submission says the Dandenong Rail Program will enable the south east rail corridor to function optimally for both passenger and freight services. If the project receives funding, the railway will be progressively improved over a 10-year period. The submission report said any improvements would support the running of higher capacity and more frequent regional and metropolitan trains through grade separations and platform lengthening. Also at the top of the list is planning and construction of the Port of Hastings. This would introduce a second container port into Victoria which would greatly improve freight connectivity and road access.

### **Melbourne: North-South railway**

Infrastructure Australia has rated the proposed Melbourne Metro tunnel from Footscray to South Yarra in Category 1, "Ready to Proceed" (July *Table Talk*, page 3). Nevertheless, the Victorian government is said to be pessimistic anticipating that it will not attract funding from the Federal government. Michael Hopkins, executive director of policy and communication at the Victorian Department of Transport said at a recent infrastructure conference that the chances of the Commonwealth coming through with the funding in the lead-up to a federal election was going to be a "really tough call." The Victorian government is seeking \$130 million through Infrastructure Australia for preliminary works to develop the 9 km rail tunnel across the Melbourne CBD. Hopkins said, however, that he could see the money that would go towards the project going elsewhere instead. "If I was the Commonwealth government...I would be spending money where I could buy the most seats," he said. Hopkins said Victoria had previously done very well in securing \$3.8 billion for the regional rail link. Victorian assistant treasurer Gordon Rich-Phillips already said at the Victorian Infrastructure Summit that federal

government funding through the GST had been slashed by more than \$6 billion and private investment for infrastructure projects in the non-mining sector had waned.

### **Victoria: New Wimmera freight terminal**

The Wimmera Intermodal Freight Terminal at Dooen, near Horsham, was opened on 9 August. Within five to six years it is expected it will be able to process up to 18,600 containers – more than twice the capacity of the former Horsham facility. Siting of the terminal at Dooen may facilitate a rail bypass of Horsham, which would shorten the interstate mainline.

### **Yarra Trams: Extra services**

Extra trams ran for the Manifest anime festival (a convention of the art of anime and manga, Japanese video games and East Asian culture) at Melbourne Showgrounds from Friday 17 to Sunday 19 August. The extras operated as Route 57a between Stop 1 Flinders and Elizabeth Streets and Stop 32 Sandown and Epsom Roads via Elizabeth Street, Flemington Road, Racecourse Road and Epsom Road.

### **Adelaide Metro: Adelaide station to be closed for a month**

Adelaide railway station will be closed to all train services for at least a month because of work to extend the Adelaide convention centre above, and for work for the electrification of the Tonsley line. This is expected to take place in January 2013. Passengers will be bussed to and from inner-suburban stations. The SA government has told the Rail, Tram and Bus Union that the work will begin in the first week of January. A government spokeswoman said a date "had not been confirmed", but said "January and February would be the best time", given the lower user numbers during the summer holidays, and Transport Minister Pat Conlon has written to station and arcade traders, saying "there will be a need to suspend train services to the Adelaide Railway Station for a period of approximately one month". The department told the union at a June meeting it planned to end northern line trains at North Adelaide (which will have to be improved from its current very run-down condition) and southern services at Goodwood, Mile End or Keswick. No terminal station had been decided on for the western services at the time of the June meeting. This will be one of the biggest rail closedowns in Australia.

It is believed that the Noarlunga line will be subject to months of electrification work from January, affecting the line from the city to Oaklands Park station. A Transport Department spokeswoman confirmed more work would be carried out on the line, but said no dates were available.

### **Great Southern Railway: Ghan trips curtailed**

Genessee & Wyoming carried out further repairs on the Edith River bridge damaged in a large derailment on 27 December. As a result two trips of the Ghan were cancelled between Katherine and Darwin and v.v., with passengers being bussed instead. This applied to arrivals at Katherine on 24 and 28 August and departures from Darwin on 25 and 29 August.

### **Genessee & Wyoming buys Alice Springs terminal**

Genessee & Wyoming Australia has bought the intermodal and freight terminal in Alice Springs from Asciano and sold to Asciano assets in Cook on the Trans Australia Railway, including the train fuel-sales business.

### **TransPerth: Perth station closed 17-19 August**

From 1030 on Friday 17 August until last service on Sunday 19 August Perth Station was closed to facilitate works for the Perth City Link project. There were disruptions on most lines. All trains were cancelled between West Leederville-Perth-Claisebrook. Trains operated between Fremantle and West Leederville, Midland and Claisebrook, and Armadale and Claisebrook. The Joondalup and Mandurah lines operated normally through the underground platforms. During the disruption Thornlie line trains were cancelled completely and Armadale trains stopped all stations. Transperth operated a CAT style bus service from Claisebrook to West Leederville via Perth Station. This had increased capacity for the Friday night peak and for the AFL game on Saturday 18 August. From 2000 on Sunday night there was a full network closure and no trains operated, including the Joondalup and Mandurah lines. On these days Transwa's Australind to/from Bunbury only operated to/from Armadale.

Then from 20 until 23 August and 26-27 August evening services between Perth and Whitfords were replaced by buses.

### **TransPerth: New timetables 20 August**

When Perth Station reopened on Monday 20 August there were significant layout changes affecting the Fremantle, Midland and Armadale lines. There are new timetables for these lines as well as the Joondalup line. Changes are:

- Fremantle trains now depart from platform 5. They no longer continue to Midland, but now go to Armadale.
- Midland trains now depart from platform 7. They no longer continue to Fremantle.
- Armadale trains now depart from platform 6. They now continue to Fremantle.
- Joondalup line trains have minor time changes.

### **TransPerth: New station**

A new station, Aubin Grove, will be built 3 km south of Cockburn Central on the Mandurah line.

### **WA: Karara line opens; Wheatbelt lines to close**

A new railway in WA from Tilley, 3 km north of Morawa, to the new iron ore mine at Karara came into operation from 15 August. It is 85 km long, cost \$113.5 million, and includes some significant earthworks.

The WA Minister for Transport, Troy Buswell, has rejected a Parliamentary committee recommendation that the government retain tier three (lowest category) wheatbelt lines, saying the Government will instead spend \$118 million upgrading roads, before closing the lines in 2013.

## Recommended reading

The British **Railway Magazine**, July 2012, pages 32-37, includes an article on the common, but contentious, practice of inserting recovery time into timetables. This issue is particularly good value, as it also comes with a reprint of the July 1897 issue. It is \$8.95 in Australian newsagents.

The **Thomas Cook European Timetable**, Summer 2012 edition includes all six of the Beyond Europe worldwide timetable summaries. It is £17 plus £5 postage from <http://www.thomascookpublishing.com/RailGuides>

**The Journal of Rail Transport Planning and Management** is a new scholarly journal published by Elsevier. It analyses railway operating problems and aims to stimulate service quality for passengers and freight customers by improving knowledge on effectiveness and efficiency of capacity. It covers the whole range of light rail, metro, heavy and high-speed railway systems. The journal will analyse passenger and freight railway transport, estimation of traffic demand and capacity, design of timetables, scheduling of trains and crews, dispatching, signalling, train control, automatic train operation, optimal use of rolling stock and energy in order to increase the efficiency and competitiveness of passenger and freight transport. The first issue is available free online at [www.elsevier.com/locate/jrtpm](http://www.elsevier.com/locate/jrtpm)

## Denmark: Freight timetables online

For internal Danish Freight timetables on the web see <http://john-nissen.dk/banesiden/Koereplaner/koereplaner.asp>

## CFL Luxembourg: An interesting and elegant Public Timetable solution

CFL Luxembourg Railways seems to have solved the problem of how to present both individual line timetables and a complete system timetable. The problem is that most passengers only need or want timetables for their own line, and also that sometimes timetables are amended for only one line. But some people need or want a complete system timetable. CFL issues twelve individual pocket/purse size pamphlet timetables for each line, plus two more little pocket/purse pamphlets – one with a system map, and one with fare and general information. They are available as a package, neatly placed together in a little box. This is the size of, and even looks like a cigarette packet, even to the flip top box. This is the second year that CFL has published its timetables in this form and it seems it is popular in Luxembourg. The box is sold at Euro 2.00, the price of the former timetable book. This has eliminated the free distribution of the single sheets, which were previously available free in addition to the timetable book. This way CFL has reduced the expense of publishing a timetable book and even gets income for the line-by-line timetable sheets. This is a good solution and it complies with the European Union law that timetables should be accessible to every one.

Many European Railways now break the law by no longer publishing printed timetables. EU law is that every public transport operator has to produce an accessible timetable. Since not every user has Internet access, paper timetables should still be available. But this is not the case.

(Of course CFL Luxembourg Railways is not a large national system – indeed the country is only slightly bigger than the ACT).

Thanks to our Swiss member, Samuel Rachdi, for providing this interesting item. Samuel obtains and retails timetables from all around the world at the Fahrplancenter, see [www.fahrplancenter.com](http://www.fahrplancenter.com)

## UK: West Coast franchise

In the latest in what sometimes seems like a continuous round of franchise re-allocation in the UK, what is perhaps the most important rail franchise is to change. The incumbent for the West Coast Inter City franchise, Virgin Trains, has lost this prestigious route which it has held since privatization in 1997. First Group has gained the franchise from December for the next 13 years. To do this, they made a series of promises relating to fares, rolling stock and timetables. The latter include cutting London-Glasgow schedules by 15 minutes and additional services from London Euston to Blackpool in 2013 and London to Telford, Shrewsbury and Bolton from 2016.

**Thanks** to Tony Bailey, Geoffrey Clifton, Scott Ferris, Victor Isaacs, Geoff Lambert, Dennis McLean, Samuel Rachdi, Len Regan, Roger Wheaton, *Age*, (Melbourne), *Advertiser* (Adelaide), *Newcastle Herald*, *Sydney Morning Herald*, ABC News, [www.vicsig.net.au](http://www.vicsig.net.au) and [www.railpage.com.au](http://www.railpage.com.au) for Railway news.

# BUS NEWS

## New South Wales - Sydney

### Shorelink – Transdev Routes 562, 572 & 575

The proposed Shorelink-Transdev route and timetable changes mentioned in the August issue were due to commence on Monday 27 August. The changes are: (a) Route 575 (Hornsby-Macquarie) to bypass South Turramurra and run via Ryde Rd instead; (b) weekend frequencies improved from hourly to half hourly and later trips; (c) new Route 572 (Turramurra-Macquarie) to provide a service for South Turramurra; (b) new shopper hopper Route 562 (Gordon-Macquarie) to provide a service to West Gordon, which had been without any buses since the regional review effective 23 March 2009.

### Fairfield City Council

Fairfield City Council commenced operation of two express peak hour commuter bus services and two hail and ride community buses from 25 July 2012. The services are free and are generically known as "City Connect". The express commuter buses run on a park-and-ride basis on weekdays, while the community buses run between about 9.00 and 5.00pm on Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays. Each of the commuter services has five return trips per peak hour. The two community services run hourly. The publicity brochure depicts a Fuso Rosa minibus.

**Veolia: Changes to Bus Timetables** Commencing Monday 3 September 2012:  
452 Rockdale to Beverley Hills via Bexley and Hurstville

453 Rockdale to Percival St  
455 Kingsgrove to Kogarah via Hurstville and St George Hospital, also shows services to Rockdale Plaza  
947 Hurstville to Kogarah Bay via Ramsgate and Dolls Point  
958 Hurstville to Kogarah and Rockdale Plaza via Carss Park and Kogarah Bay  
970 Miranda to Hurstville via Sylvania Heights  
971 Cronulla to Hurstville via Buraneer Bay Road, Miranda and Port Hacking Road  
987 Cronulla to Kurnell  
972 Miranda to Southgate via Sylvania Waters  
991 Heathcote to Sutherland via Engadine, Yarrowarra and Loftus

**NightRide Timetable Booklet:** Dated February 2012:

The booklet contains all the NightRide bus timetables including the three "weekend-only" ones, N61 Carlingford (hourly), N71 Richmond (hourly), and N100 Bondi Jct (half-hourly). Previously Nightride timetables were only contained in the relevant CityRail train timetable booklets.

## **New South Wales - Rural and Regional**

### **Rover Coaches - Routes 162, 165, 167, 168, 171 - Cessnock area**

There is a new timetable which commenced on 1 August 2012. Only three minor differences have been noted from the previous version - all on weekdays.

### **Sawtell Coaches**

This timetable is being reissued dated 2 September 2012. Instead of a single timetable booklet, seven separate timetables are being issued under the same date for the following routes: 362, 363, 364, 362W, University Timetable, Hospital Timetable and combined routes 362/363/364.

### **Northern Rivers Buslines, Lismore and surrounding area**

This operator is conducting a review of its regular passenger route/town services and timetables. It does not include school services. Passengers were invited to make a comment or suggestion on the route/town bus services or timetable by 31 August 2012. The review presumably includes town services in Lismore and Ballina and inter-town routes to Mullumbimby, Byron Bay, Evans Head, Tenterfield, Kyogle/ Geneva and Grafton.

### **Deanes Transit Group - Queanbeyan**

Due to changes in demand and in order to facilitate a better bus service Deane's Transit Group requested feedback in relation to proposed changes to the 834 Queanbeyan – Airport Loop service. They propose:

- The 834 service no longer stop at Brindabella Business Park or the Airport due to lack of demand.
- The 834 now service bus stops on Gladstone St, Townsville St and Mildura St, Fyshwick to encompass Australia Post, and Fyshwick Fresh Food Markets.

Deane's has been bought by Cabcharge and ComfortDelGro for \$53 million. The sale includes the Transborder Express Canberra-Yass service.

## **Queensland – South East and Gold Coast**

A 28 page double DL brochure titled **Your Guide to public transport on the Gold Coast** has been prepared by Transitgraphics. It is dated July 2012 – Issue 1. More information on <http://www.busaustralia.com/forum/viewtopic.php?f=14&t=68888>

### **Your Bus (Helensvale)**

From 9 July 2012, the Your Bus service, which operates through the Pacific Pines area, has been changed from a dial a ride to a hail and ride over a fixed route. Services depart Helensvale Station half hourly between 5.00am and 6.00pm weekdays and between 8.00am and 6.00pm weekends and holidays, taking 45 minutes for the round trip. From Helensvale the service follows a clockwise directional loop via Pacific Pines North, Park Lake, Wannaburra Circuit and Pacific Pines Shopping Centre back to the station then to Westfield, Helensvale, before returning to the station. The timetable notes that drivers may deviate from the route to assist persons with mobility problems. The new version of the service is on a six month trial.

### **Review of southeast Queensland bus routes after 10 worst performers cost \$5m a year.**

Bus services that duplicate train routes or carry fewer than five people a trip are likely to be axed as part of a major review to be announced by Transport Minister Scott Emerson. TransLink will undertake the review over the next six months in an effort to make public transport more efficient and affordable. Mr Emerson said latest data showed patronage had declined on 13 of the 16 bus providers in southeast Queensland as a result of annual fare hikes. Some of those services identified as not performing or doubling up on train services include the 461, 557 and 674. In the case of route 674, a third of the 26 services a day carry fewer than three people and most of the 557 services are close to empty. "The ten worst performing routes cost more than \$5 million a year with less than five per cent of the cost paid for through fares," said Mr Emerson. "In Brisbane there are roads with more than 25 different bus routes yet all stop at different locations within the CBD." He said on the Gold Coast there were routes that had not been reviewed since the 1990s. TransLink has been instructed to eliminate service duplication, redirect resources to routes where there is overcrowding and manage the infrastructure capacity to address bottlenecks at the Cultural Centre, as part of the review. It will report to the Minister early next year.

## South Australia – Adelaide

Adelaide's largest bus operator, Transfield Services, has been fined after the Transport Department's bus performance review found its north-south route buses ran late 48% of the time. The review ran from April to June. Adelaide's other contractors were not fined, even though their buses were punctual only 71 -73% of the time - a figure Transport Services Minister Chloe Fox considered acceptable. Ms Fox said some roadworks issues offered by contractors as reasons for late-running buses had been accepted by the department. She said she expected bus services to improve in the next review period, due to extensive changes to timetables and the introduction of city bus lanes. "The new timetables have worked exceptionally well. We have seen a significant drop (in complaints)". The 52.2% of buses running on time on the north-south route was up on the previous survey's 51.6% - a figure which landed the company with a \$121,345 fine. Transfield's on-time figures for the outer north route was 71.3% - up from 66.9%. The review comes a week after figures revealed in the *Advertiser* show that patronage on public transport had fallen by 2.44 million boardings in the past year, from 65.9 million in 2011 to 63.5 million this financial year. This equates to 6600 fewer boardings each day. The Transport Department's target for 2011-12 was 70 million boardings.

More dedicated bus lanes and reliable services are needed to lure commuters back to public transport, an expert in urban planning says. UniSA senior lecturer in transport urban and regional planning Dr Andrew Allan said the Government should look at speeding up buses as they get closer to the city. "There was an idea originally to extend the O-Bahn into the city so maybe dedicated bus corridors are the next step forward so they don't get caught up in the traffic as they approach the city," Dr Allan said. He said the change in bus contracts last year saw a "lot of teething problems with bus timetables, and once you lose customers they may not come back". "You have got to have reliability with your public transport, making sure it runs according to timetables and you have to make sure you have enough capacity in the system to cope with demand; it is a tough call because three-quarters of the time they are running at below capacity," Dr Allan said. RAA senior manager mobility and automotive policy Mark Borlace said the Grenfell and Currie street bus lane was an attempt by the department to get more buses through the city faster. "If that (bus lanes) doesn't result in more people getting on those buses then they would need to re-think things," Mr Borlace said. "I know that they have been looking at how they can better use clear lanes with longer park periods. Travel times are getting longer and there is a legacy of congestion especially as you get closer to the city." He said 20% of transport still came in on the western side of the city and went out on the eastern side. People for Public Transport spokeswoman Margaret Dingle said there had been problems with crowding and unreliability of services on top of lengthy disruptions to rail services. "The effect of the late and unreliable buses is carrying on into the present," she said. "Sometimes they change the routes and it doesn't suit people, because they haven't got enough interconnecting services."

## South Australia - Regional

A new timetable has been issued by LinkSA for the **Angaston Service** effective from 6 August 2012. All buses now operate as feeder buses to the train at Gawler RS instead of operating through to the City. Route Numbers are now shown on the timetable as follows:

- 810 Normal route Angaston – Gawler and in the case of 2.19pm M-F ex Angaston to Evanston.
- 811 Operates via Williamstown with a different location for the stop in Lyndoch.
- 812 School days only Angaston – Evanston.

On school days, buses also serve the Redeemer Lutheran School at Nurioopta and the Evanston campus of Trinity College. There are now 6 services on 810 in both directions Mon to Fri, 4 on Sat and 2 on Sun and PH. On 811, 2 on M-F and 1 on 812. On the previous timetable, to Angaston on M-F there were 2 from Adelaide and 3 local trips schooldays only, 2 on Sat and PH and 1 on Sunday. Williamstown was served school days only although the am run from Evanston operated all days. Both timetables are currently displayed on the LinkSA website.

## Tasmania - Hobart

The following **new Hobart timetables** became effective from 30 July 2012:

- 56, 61, 62, 63, 67, 68 Kingston to Hobart City via Channel Hwy
- 65 to 98 Channel to Hobart City
- 72, 74, 75, 82 to 86 Kingston to Hobart City via Southern Outlet

The 5 Metrotas **network guides** (web only) are Hobart North, Hobart South, Hobart East, Launceston & Burnie. (All dated July 2012).

## Victoria - Melbourne

### Hope St Closure?

Public Transport Victoria has ordered the Hope Street Bus Line (Route 509 Brunswick to Brunswick West) to cease operating from 30 September 2012. The two km route is Melbourne's shortest. It has been operating for nearly 60 years but has been judged "unsustainable" as it has been carrying less than one passenger per trip (one bus maintains a 20 minute daytime frequency).

### New timetable issues:

- Routes 436/437/446 (Westrans Werribee) - 22 April 2012
- Route 503 Essendon to East Brunswick (Moonee Valley) - 22 April 2012
- Route 552 (N E Reservoir to Northcote) – 22 April 2012
- Routes 906 (City to Warrandyte) - 31 May 2012 and 907 (City to Mitcham) – 23 May 2012

## Western Australia - Regional

### Route re-numbering:

Bunbury from 13 May 2012:

- 101 103 to 827 845
- 201 202 to 828 829
- 201 301 501 to 830/1/2
- 401 to 843
- 601 701 to 841 844

Busselton from 17 May 2012: 901/2/3

**Thanks** to Tony Bailey, Geoff Foster, Hilaire Fraser, Robert Henderson, Victor Isaacs, Duncan MacAuslan, Paul Nicholson, Lourie Smit, Roger Wheaton and the *Courier-Mail* (Brisbane), for Bus news.

## AIR NEWS

### Domestic

**Qantas** will return to the Gold Coast after a four-year hiatus. A thrice daily service from Sydney will start from late October.

**Jetstar** will reintroduce three weekly services between Melbourne and Honolulu from 15 December. The flights were dropped in 2008. It will also increase Sydney to Phuket services from three to four per week with flights to Bali from Sydney and Melbourne rising to daily.

A new company is reportedly planning to establish an airline to compete with Rex (Regional Express), starting with Griffith-Melbourne, then Mildura-Melbourne, and Sydney to Griffith, Orange, Dubbo, Broken Hill and Albury. Rex has responded, saying two carriers could not survive on any of the routes being considered. Rex introduced flights linking Mildura to Sydney, Adelaide and Broken Hill on July 9. The identity of the company, a group of investors from Mildura, Sydney and Melbourne, is currently unknown and won't be revealed until its launch in coming weeks. Rex says competition was good only if it was sustainable. "Where the market is too small for competition, then competition will only lead to losses for all competitors and has no long-term benefit for the community. In extreme cases, both carriers are mortally wounded by the competition and both may collapse." The spokesperson said studies and a decade of experience had shown only routes with more than 100,000 annual passengers could viably sustain competition with aircraft type of around 30 seats.

**Virgin Australia** is increasing its Brisbane-Perth route to thrice daily.

### International

Taiwanese carrier **China Airlines** will launch a four times weekly service between Sydney and Auckland on 20 October. It will depart Sydney at 1230 and arrive in Auckland at 1740, departing Auckland at 1850 and arriving Sydney at 2030.

**Etihad Airways** will increase flights between Brisbane and Abu Dhabi from thrice weekly to daily from 1 February. This will bring the total number of flights to/from Australia to 28.

**Thanks** to Tony Bailey, Tris Tottenham and *Sunraysia Daily* (Mildura) for Air news.

## FERRY NEWS

**Sydney Ferries** Timetables for Cockatoo Island were reprinted dated June 2012 and Darling Harbour/Balmain East July 2012. **Thanks** to Lourie Smit for Ferry news.

## About Table Talk

**Table Talk** is published monthly by the Australian Association of Timetable Collectors Inc. (Registration No. A0043673H) as a journal of record covering recent timetable news items. The AATTC also publishes the **Times** covering timetable history and analysis. Contributions are very welcome and should be sent to the appropriate Editor. ABN 74248483468.

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