



TABLE TALK

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RAIL AND TRAM NEWS

Queensland Traveltrain: Inland routes questionable future

Queensland Transport Minister Scott Emerson said there was an average of just 30 passengers on the Westlander train between Brisbane and Charleville and the Inlander between Townsville and Mt Isa. He said he believed most people would be shocked to learn the routes were subsidised more than \$2000 per journey and was increasing each year. "I'm very keen to have a conversation with local mayors, local communities and local MPs to discuss if that's the best use of tax payer dollars," he said. "At the moment we have subsidies for coach and some subsidies on air as well as regulated air services. Obviously the coach, air and rail are doing the same journeys to the same destinations. But the coaches are far less subsidised and in some cases the air isn't subsidised at all. People are choosing not to go by rail, but people are choosing to go by air. That's understandable where a journey may take 20 hours by rail but just over two hours by air." Mr Emerson said no decisions had been made but discussions would begin soon. He had heard the Richmond mayor speaking on radio about a possible boutique tourist service which was another option for the routes.

Mr Emerson said the coastal route was not under review.

Queensland & NSW Floods

The heavy rain which fell as a result of **former Cyclone Oswald** had severe impacts on railway services in Queensland.

QR Citytrain: On **28 and 29 January** travellers were urged to avoid travel if possible or use alternative modes. They were told to expect delays. At a number of stations, lifts and ticketing equipment failed due to flooding or power loss. A reduced number of services ran including in the morning and afternoon peaks due to the limited capacity of the network. Trains did not run between Roma St and Bowen Hills due to fallen debris, with the exception of a six-car train shuttle service that operated throughout the day between Roma St and Central. A bus shuttle operated between Central, Fortitude Valley, Bowen Hills, Albion and Eagle Junction. An Airport train shuttle operated from Roma St via the Exhibition Loop. Buses ran from Varsity Lakes to Beenleigh. Trains ran between Mitchelton and Ferny Grove only. A bus shuttle operated between Mitchelton and City stations. A train shuttled between Richlands and Corinda, where passengers changed trains. Ipswich trains ran all stations to Roma St and then via the Exhibition loop to Albion then all stations to Caboolture. Shorncliffe services were replaced by buses between Shorncliffe and Northgate. Trains were replaced by

buses from Wellington Point to Cleveland. Trains from Wellington Point to the City terminated at Roma St. There were no trains between Gympie North and Nambour and no alternative buses due to road conditions. Trains to Doomben were replaced by buses. By **30 January** the network was operating fairly normally, except it was still closed north of Nambour and only two of the four tracks through the City tunnels were operational.

QR Traveltrain: The Rockhampton Tilt Train, Cairns Tilt Train, Sunlander, Westlander and Spirit of the Outback were all cancelled with no bus replacements possible in the weather conditions. On the mainline to Toowoomba the wet weather caused a land slip on the range section, washing away about 9,000 cubic metres of soil. The line was not fully restored until about 19 February.

Aurizon and Pacific National: Coal and general freight trains in Queensland were disrupted. The Blackwater and Moura coal networks were closed by flood damage.

Countrylink: Bus services in northern NSW were cancelled, disrupted and/or delayed for a few days. In addition, a major landslide closed the highway between Glen Innes and Grafton, necessitating diversion of the Countrylink bus via Tenterfield and Casino for a number of weeks.

On **22 to 24 February** wild weather returned to the NSW North Coast. The mainline was blocked by landslides and fallen trees. On 22 February the overnight Sydney-Brisbane XPT was trapped between Coffs Harbour and Glenreagh by floodwaters ahead and a landslide behind. Passengers spent the night in the stationary train. On 23 and 24 February all Countrylink services north of Taree, both train and bus were unable to operate. No substitute services were possible, other than a bus Brisbane-Sydney and v.v. via the inland highway.

NSW Countrylink: NW line disrupted

Due to ARTC trackwork there will be extensive disruption to Countrylink Moree services. From 12 February until 31 March services will be slowed. Then on most days from 15 April until 20 June, the Xplorer DMU service will either be replaced by buses between Moree and Gunnedah, or between Moree and Werris Creek, or for the entire journey.

NSW RailCorp & NSW Country Regional Network: Working Timetables 4 February

A new RailCorp Freight WTT is effective from 4 February for Weekdays (Book 4) and 2 February for Weekends (Book 5).

John Holland Rail Country Regional Network has re-issued WTTs for its lines effective 4 February 2013. As usual they are available on their website at www.jhrcrn.com.au, click on "Network Operations and Access" then on "Standard Working Timetable". On the Canberra line, despite the introduction of Train Order working, each train is still shown as having three or four minutes at intermediate stations.

Geoff Lambert comments: WTT compilers took ages to recognise the existence of the twin track on the Victorian NE Standard Gauge line. For at least a year, they still showed the old single-line loops with trains crossing at them. For instance, ARTC showed an Aurizon train paused at Longwood or Violet Town Loop for about 3 hours, even though these loops didn't exist. The reason for the pause was never clear, but I think it was to hold the train back until the Sydney curfew was over.

The tabular WTT often disagrees with the graphical WTT. The tabular WTT used to be made available to Access Seekers as an Excel spreadsheet. Later it was converted to PDFs. These were done as a favour to Access Seekers. Then, when NSW leased their network to ARTC, the lease included the timetable staff, who had the option of moving to Adelaide or staying behind with CityRail. In approving the Access Agreement, NSW Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal insisted that the WTT become a public document. The staff who went to ARTC brought the software with them and this was used to make the publicly-available WTT. At first this was only for NSW, but after a year or two, ARTC did it for all lines.

The graphical WTT is done by a completely different department and how it gets transformed into the tabular WTT seems to be rather haphazard- it does not seem to be done by an electronic transformation. There would be, in some sense, a tabular WTT behind the graphical version. Both ARTC and RailCorp have a "Daily Train Plan"- that is to say a new WTT every day. ARTC prints a brand new graphical WTT every morning - at least at the Broadmeadow control centre.

Country Regional Network's practices are unknown, but I suspect they have to follow the same IPART rules. ARTC did the WTTs for the Rail infrastructure Corporation when it owned the CRN. I suspect nothing much happened to WTT production when John Holland took over. John Holland certainly set up their own control room in Newcastle and snaffled some ARTC staff.

PN strike

On 8 and 9 February about 800 drivers and other employees in Pacific National's coal division struck in a wages dispute.

NSW CityRail: App released

On 16 February, Transport for NSW released the first stage of an App to provide real-time location of Sydney's trains. In the first stage, the data will cover the Sydney suburban area, excluding Waterfall and the Carlingford line. In future stages, coverage will be expanded to outer metropolitan areas and with additional data.

NSW CityRail: Closedowns

Recent major closedowns on CityRail for upgrading works, with bus substitutions, have been:

- Kiama-Nowra 4-17 February
- The City Circle 9 & 10 February
- Mt Victoria-Lithgow 18 February- 1 March.

NSW CityRail: Flinders station

Construction of Flinders station on the NSW South Coast line is to resume at a cost of \$39 million. The station, about 400 metres north of Dunmore (Shellharbour), will replace that station. Flinders is expected to open in 2014.

Sydney: Western Freight line

Western Sydney interests have called for work to start immediately on designing and building an outer Western Sydney dedicated freight rail line between Glenfield, Eastern Creek and Newcastle. 'SydneyFreightWest' is a proposal to privately fund and operate a container terminal at Newcastle; a dedicated freight rail line to Eastern Creek; and an intermodal terminal at Eastern Creek with a connection to Glenfield and the main rail line south. Proponents claim that the \$4 billion cost of a Northern Freight line could be saved and that SydneyFreightWest can be completed and operating before 2028, when the Sydney metropolitan rail system will reach capacity for freight train movements.

ARTC Victoria: Easter closedown

During Easter, 29 March-1 April, the Victorian North East line will again be closed for works by the ARTC. V/Line and Countrylink passenger trains will be replaced by buses.

V/Line: Albury trains disrupted

In early February about half of all Albury line passenger trains were replaced by buses because of repairs to faults with the carriage sets, including removal of graffiti.

A freight train derailed north of Avenel on 12 February. The train, a Qube Logistics regular intermodal service between Melbourne and Southern NSW, derailed on the west line at about 1630. The cause of the derailment is believed to be a buckled track at the location. Following the derailment, freight and passenger trains were routed onto the east line north of Seymour. However on the following three days, Countrylink and V/Line passenger trains, except the morning up from Albury and evening down, were replaced by buses to facilitate repairs.

Train running on 15 and 16 February was also significantly worse than normal, with delays to XPTs of up to two hours. The delays were attributed to storms causing signaling problems.

V/Line long distance trains reduced

V/Line long distance trains have generally been reduced from five to four carriages. This is because 22 of its older Z class carriages have been removed from service for testing and repairs after a safety audit revealed fatigue cracks in the bogies. Buses will be used to supplement train services where necessary while this is carried out. Public Transport Victoria chief executive Ian Dobbs said it could take months to return the carriages to service. He said Shepparton, Warrnambool, Swan Hill, Bairnsdale and a small number of Geelong and Traralgon trains would have fewer seats during the repair work.

V/Line: Stratford bridge woes

The speed limit over the Avon River bridge at Stratford has been reduced from 15 km/h to 10 km/h, double-headed trains are banned, and freight trains may pass over the bridge only with special authorisation.

Yarra Trams: Timetables

Timetables dated October 2012 have been issued for routes 57, 59, 70, 75, 78/79, 82 and 86/95. A DL pamphlet was issued in December for route 35, the City Circle tram.

GSR Ghan reduced frequency

Great Southern Railway's Ghan, Adelaide-Darwin and v.v., which usually operates once a week (except June to August when it is twice weekly) will be reduced to just once a fortnight in December 2013 and January 2014.

Adelaide Metro: Outer Harbor & Grange timetable 4 February 2013

Adelaide station re-opened as scheduled on Monday 4 February after work to prepare for electrification. From this date a new timetable was introduced for the Outer Harbor and Grange lines. The service appears to be similar to previously, except:

- There are few express trains except in the peaks as mentioned below. A 30 minute service, except late evenings to Outer Harbor, including weekends, and also 30 minute service to Grange. All are through trains - no change at Woodville. This results in a 15 minute all stations service to Woodville. Even the first early morning down and the last night up services are now all stations. The late night service is hourly to/from each terminus.
- In both morning and evening peaks there are four additional trains at 30 minute intervals - spaced between the Outer Harbor and Grange services which continue to run at the usual 30 minute intervals - which run express between Woodville and Adelaide. However, unlike the past, these do not run to Glanville or Outer Harbour but to Osborne, first station on the single track past Midlunga.
- On weekends there is a 30 minute service during the day on the Outer Harbor line, but only hourly on the Grange line. Both lines are hourly on weekend evenings.

The new timetables are now in left to right format, no longer reading down the page.

Bus and tram timetables on the Adelaide Metro internet site are also now in this across the page format. Presumably the next large timetable reprint and changes will see all Adelaide Metro timetables like this. The resultant effect is that the train timetables are one massive sheet of paper, rather than a booklet which opens nicely.

Adelaide Metro: Belair line

Patronage has declined and travel times doubled since the temporary closure of the Belair railway on 2 January. Transport Department figures show about 900 passengers used the Belair substitute bus service during peak times each day in January, compared with 1468 people on the train service a year earlier. The department said journey times were about 60 minutes on the substitute bus service compared with the 30-35 minute journey on the train.

Adelaide: Fringe Festival closure

The opening parade of the annual Fringe Festival was held on Friday evening, 15 February. Consequently King William St was closed from about 1600 until after midnight. Hence the Glenelg Tram ran in two separated sections:

- Between 1740 and 0010 hours from Glenelg to Victoria Square every 10 minutes.
- Between 1820 and 0050 from the Railway Station for the Entertainment Centre every 10 minutes.

WA: Train to the plane

In the current WA election campaign, the governing Liberal party has promised to build a 10.5 km airport rail link. This matches the promise by the opposition Labor party (January *Table Talk*, page 7). Premier Colin Barnett says as well as offering public transport to travellers, the railway will offer more options to residents in the eastern suburbs wanting to travel into the city, as well as businesses at the proposed airport business and industrial park. Under the Liberal model, trains would run at least every 10 minutes at peak times and airport trains would integrate with services on the existing Midland line, meaning increased train frequencies between Bayswater and Perth. Transport Minister Troy Buswell said the project would have three stations and 3000 car bays and would be built by 2018.

WA: But no train to Ellenbrook

A railway won't be built to Ellenbrook in the WA Liberal party's second term if it wins the 9 March poll, Premier Colin Barnett said. The line was initially promised during 2008 election campaign but instead, \$60 million was spent on planning and development. Ellenbrook on Perth's north-eastern fringes has exploded in population in recent years and is poorly serviced by buses. Ellenbrook features on Labor's ambitious Metronet rail plan.

Fortescue Mining & Rio Tinto

Fortescue have lost their battle to access Rio Tinto's iron rail network in the Pilbara. It had been fighting for access to Rio's Hammersley and Robe River lines. However the Australian Competition Tribunal has ruled that Rio's Hammersley and Robe rail lines should not be opened up to other users. In 2010 the long running battle came to a head when the Tribunal rejected Fortescue's push for access to Rio's rail networks, and allowed the major user to retain full access to their own Pilbara rail lines, finding that access to Rio's Hammersley line "would be contrary to the public interest." Fortescue continued in its fight to gain full access to the Pilbara network, and was granted a High Court appeal late in 2011. The Tribunal has yet to release any documentation surrounding their latest ruling; however, Rio Tinto Iron Ore acting chief executive Paul Shannon welcomed the decision.

Tasmanian West Coast Railway to close

Tasmanian tourism operator, the Federal Group, has announced the West Coast Wilderness Railway from Strahan to Queenstown will stop running at the end of April. The railway, originally built to transport ore, was opened in 1896. It included a rack section. The railway was closed in 1963 and dismantled. With Federal and State government grants of \$35 million, it was rebuilt and re-opened for tourists in 2002. Federal Group spokesman Daniel Hanna says the business is no longer viable. Five years ago the railway carried 45,000 passengers but in the past year the figure had dropped to just over 30,000. Forty-eight workers will lose their jobs. Mr Hanna says damage from a severe thunderstorm and a landslide in the past two years had added to escalating maintenance costs.

The Tasmanian government has indicated it will provide some public money to help save the Railway. The Infrastructure Minister, David O'Byrne, told a meeting in Queenstown on 8 February some taxpayers' funds would be spent to prevent the closure. But he said the Government will need help from the Federal government.

At the time of closing, it had two trains a day scheduled in the summer season, but in winter just one train in one direction only on alternate days.

Thomas Cook European Timetable 140th anniversary

The March issue of the Thomas Cook European timetable is a special issue to commemorate its 140th anniversary. It includes a special cover, a 16 page anniversary section, a new Route of the Month section and extracts from older timetables.

Malaysia-Singapore High Speed Rail

Malaysia and Singapore have agreed to build a new high speed rail link between Kuala Lumpur and Singapore. Expected to open in 2020, it is planned to cut travel time between the two capitals to only 90 minutes. Singaporean and Malaysian Prime Ministers have described the rail link as a "game changer" and expect it to stimulate travel between the two cities as well as enhance business.

Thanks to Tony Bailey, Peter Hobbs, Victor Isaacs, Geoff Lambert, Roger Wheaton, ABC News Radio, *Rail Express*, the *Australian* and the *Mitcham and Hills Messenger* for Railway news.

BUS NEWS

Australia Capital Territory

Centenary Bus Service

ACTION is operating a half-hourly tourist loop between 0900 and 1630 during Canberra's Centenary Celebrations. The service, numbered Route 100 will operate from 4 February 2013 until 31 December 2013 and is operated by buses in a special livery. A full loop takes 40 mins.

New South Wales

Veolia Transdev – renegotiated contracts

Veolia Transdev has successfully renegotiated their regions 10 and 13 contracts covering Sydney's southern, south-western and western suburbs for a further seven years. Depots will be located at Taren Point, Menai, Revesby, Bankstown & South Granville (replacing Villawood and Leightonfield). Maianbar Bundeena Bus Service, a local operator, will be a subcontractor for Region 10 services on the southern shore of Port Hacking, away from other routes run by Veolia Transdev.

When the contracts were awarded to Veolia Transdev in 2005, they committed to provide access to assets including buses and depots at the end of the contract term, reducing the burden on taxpayers to provide them. In return, Veolia Transdev was given the option to renegotiate the contracts, rather than them being competitively tendered like Sydney metropolitan bus contracts for other regions.

The new contract arrangements commenced on 1 January 2013 for region 10 and will commence on 1 May 2013 for region 13. They include the following enhancements:

- initiatives to improve punctuality and reliability including the introduction of pre-pay at key stops and additional 'hot' spare buses in the peak period;
- improvements to timetable information and notification about delays to services;
- inclusion of increased cleaning and bus presentation initiatives

Hillsbus February timetable changes

Timetable changes introduced on 18 February 2013 included:

- Routes 620, 620X, 642, 642X, 650, 650X and 652X were altered to enter the CBD via the Cahill Expressway during morning peak periods instead of York St to relieve CBD congestion. Customers travelling towards Railway Square are able to transfer to Sydney Buses 422, 423, 426 and 428 services at no extra cost. Services arriving after 10am and all outbound services were unchanged.
- Minor weekday timetable changes for some Dural

services, improving service reliability.

- Weekend route 651 (Castle Hill - City) services now depart Castle Hill 10 mins earlier on weekend to allow customers to transfer to the direct train service to the City at Beecroft and Macquarie Park
- Route 637 (Glenorie - Castle Hill) now leaves Glenorie 10 mins earlier on Sundays to connect with other bus services at Castle Hill Interchange.

Further timetable changes commenced on 25 February benefiting those travelling to Lane Cove, St Leonards and North Sydney:

- Route 602 (Rouse Hill - North Sydney) received three additional services in each peak, increasing frequency to every 15 – 20 minutes with revised running times on existing trips
- Route 612 (Kellyville to Milsons Point) received five additional trips in the AM peak and four additional trips in the PM peak, with revised running times on existing trips.

Various other Hillsbus timetables have been reissued on its website only during 2012, including 608, 609, 611/630, 626 & 632/633.

Sydney Buses – update on 249 change

The morning Route 249 terminus change at Beauty Point, as reported in last month's *Table Talk*, was cancelled after just one day following passenger feedback. Buses now conduct the turn from Moss Lane with supervision of a traffic controller until a more permanent alternative can be found to serve all stops.

Busabout updates

Updated website timetables, mostly dated 3 September 2012 are available for routes 851/852, 853/854, 855/856/857, 864/867, 865/866 & S9.

Punchbowl Bus Co

Reissued as a PDF dated on 22 December 2012: Routes 940, 946 and S14.

Fairfield Council's City Connect

Fairfield Council's free community bus service, which commenced with an initial six-month trial last year underwent some changes on 29 January 2013, with new and additional routes to enable more residents to get around.

There is one non-stop peak-hour Park and Ride Commuter Express from Fairfield Showground to Fairfield Railway Station operating every 35 – 40 minutes, and four Hail and Ride Community Bus routes, which consist of:

- An hourly Wednesday service between Fairfield, Wakeley, and Cabramatta West.
- An hourly Thursday and Friday service between Fairfield, Fairfield Heights, Villawood and Carramar.
- A Saturday service between Fairfield, Canley

Heights, Wakeley, Fairfield Showground, Fairfield Hospital, Prairiewood, Carramar and Villawood running approximately every 2 hours

- An hourly Sunday run connecting Fairfield, Smithfield, Fairfield Hospital, Fairfield Showground, Wakeley, Canley Heights, and Fairfield West.

Timetables and a map are displayed on Fairfield Council's website.

Sapphire Coast Buslines

Deane's Buslines South Coast is now known as Sapphire Coast Buslines and is operated by Jamie and Anton Klemm, who appear to be part of the Deane family. The new name also coincided with the couple's purchase of Tathra Bus Services in January. The new company operates:

- Routes 705, 790, 791, 792, previously run by Deane's Buslines South Coast.
- Routes 780, 785, 786, previously run by Tathra Bus Service.

No new timetables have been reported as yet.

Tamworth updates

The following timetables were reissued 15 September 2012:

- City routes for both operators – routes 430-1, 433, 435 Tamworth local (North, East & South) run by Tamworth Buslines, plus route 437 (Tamworth – Westdale, Coledale) run by Hannafords.
- Inter-town routes – 428 (Tamworth-Quirindi & Quirindi local service), 443 (Tamworth-Manilla), 444 (Tamworth-Moonbi-Bendemeer), run by Tamworth Buslines.

Busways North Coast – Grafton

Timetables reissued in paper form on 28 November 2012 include: Routes 373, 374, 375A, 375C, 376, 377, 378, 379, 380 and 386. Routes 380 and 386 were previously in a separate timetable. Route 386 is now Grafton - Yamba via Maclean.

Greens Northern Coaches

A new timetable for route 2 (Stanwell Park - Wollongong) commenced on 29 January 2013.

Blue Mountains Bus Company

New timetable booklets for the usual three areas, Lower Mountains, Mid Mountains and Upper Mountains have been issued in paper form dated 30 January 2013. Changes include:

- Route 685H (Springwood - North Hazelbrook) was previously present in both the Upper and Mid Mountains timetables, although it is purely a Mid Mountains route. It has been deleted from the former, although it is still listed on the cover.
- Route 698 trips between Katoomba & Mt Victoria are now shown as Route 698V.

Queensland

Maroon CityGlider commences

A new Maroon CityGlider service was introduced on 18 February 2013 linking Ashgrove & Langlands Park via Red Hill, Paddington, Roma St, Brisbane City, Woolloongabba and Stones Corner. Buses operate every 10 mins during peak, 15 minutes off-peak and half-hourly after midnight on Friday and Saturday nights.

Routes 330, P331, P341 via Airport Link

From 29 January, Routes 330 (Bracken Ridge - City), P331 (Bracken Ridge - City) and P341 (Carseldine - City) now travel via Airport Link, speeding outbound trips by up to eight minutes. Inbound timetables are unchanged.

South Australia

Clipsal 500 shuttle

In addition to normal services, free shuttle buses (sponsored by RAA Insurance) were provided between the City & Clipsal 500 V8 racetrack (on the eastern CBD fringe) on the following days and times:

- 07:30 – 22:45 Thursday 28 February
- 07:30 – 23:15 Friday 1 March
- 07:30 – 22:30 Saturday 2 March
- 07:30 – 23:15 Sunday 3 March

A maximum wait of 25 minutes was advised but no detailed timetable was available.

Tasmania

Metro Shop now open Saturdays

As of 12 February 2013, the Metro Shop in Hobart's Bus Mall is now open on Saturdays between 0930 and 1400. The shop provides timetables, tickets and service information to passengers.

Tassielink changes

The Huon Valley timetable (Routes 711, 712, 713, 714, 715 & 716) was updated on 29 January 2013.

Victoria

Kew School Routes 153 and 156

Among various changes to National Bus Company school bus services at the start of 2013, Route 156 (Warrandyte – Kew Schools via Eastern Freeway) was discontinued due to low patronage, while the Route 153 from The Pines no longer has a morning service extending to Xavier College's Burke Hall junior campus (an afternoon service still departs the school). Although the Kew Schools network now operates for students only, the 11 routes have an interesting history - during the 1990s & early 2000s they operated as standard routes, with selected trips also operating over school holidays & across peak periods, suiting employees in Kew (including Vicroads head office, Royal Talbot Hospital & the former Kew Cottages) as well as after school activities. The routes were previously included in relevant timetables for main routes, on network maps and shown in the Melway street directory up until Edition 38 (2011), although full timetables & maps have not been available online or printed format since about 2006.

SmartBus timetable reprints

Reprinted full route timetables have surfaced for Grenda's SmartBus Routes 901 (Frankston – Melbourne Airport dated 26 September 2010 & 902 (Chelsea – Airport West) dated 5 April 2010 in the PTV format, both carrying a print date of 11/12 on the rear cover. Updated timetables for the individual sections (e.g. '902 Section A' Chelsea – Glen Waverley) have not been sighted yet. The 901 timetable features an updated map showing South Morang Station, but the route descriptions & timetable pages still refer to serving the adjoining Plenty Valley Shopping Centre. Services were relocated to the station interchange on 22 April 2012 with the opening of the rail extension. It's also worth noting that both routes now operated by Ventura, but PTV passenger information (including online) still refers to Grenda's as the operator.

Festival alternations

The St Kilda Festival on Sunday 10 February 2013 saw the now standard alternations to bus routes in St Kilda:

- National Route 246 (Clifton Hill – Elsternwick) south of Alma Rd operated as a connecting shuttle during the afternoon and early evening to avoid traffic

congestion around the festival impacting on-time running north of St Kilda Junction.

- Melbourne Bus Link Routes 600, 922 and 923 (St Kilda – Southland) operated to a Saturday timetable & services were truncated at Barkly St.
- Westrans Route 606 (Port Melbourne – Elsternwick) was truncated on the north side of St Kilda at Park St & Mary St. Any passengers travelling to Elwood or Elsternwick were advised find their own way through the festival to connect to 246.
- Driver Route 623 (St Kilda – Glen Waverley) operated additional trips ex St Kilda at 21:45, 22:45, 23:45 and 24:45.

For a second year, route 734 (Glen Waverley – Glen Iris) was alerted to run to Holmesglen in lieu of Glen Iris on Sunday 24 February 2013 during the annual Ashburton festival, which closed High St. Connecting Glen Waverley train line passengers had to travel a further three stations, whilst any passengers travelling to/from Ashburton (Alamein line) faced a 10 - 15 minute walk to the nearest stop at Warrigal Rd and High Street Rd. To add further confusion, a news item was only available on the Ventura website and not the PTV website.

Dysons replace Organs in Kyneton

Dyson's Kyneton depot now operate the Wednesday – Friday town services in Kyneton, previously operated by Organs Coaches. This change apparently took place in November, but as of late February the PTV website still shows Organs as the operator and no mention is made on the Dysons website! Organs have however removed the town bus timetable from their website.

Western Australia

March 3 timetable changes

Timetable changes from 3 March 2013 include:

- Routes 30 (Perth – Curtin Uni) and 31 (Perth – Salter Point): timing changes
- Routes 34 (Perth – Cannington) and 35 (Perth – South Perth): timing changes
- Route 37 (Perth Domestic Airport – Kings Park): Weekday inter-peak frequency boosted from 15 to 10 minutes between Kings Park and Belmont, and from 30 to 20 minutes to Perth Domestic airport; two additional early services to and from Perth Domestic Airport, two additional early morning services from Belmont to Perth and the 15 minute service ex Perth to Belmont extended to 8pm weeknights.
- Route 885 (Wellington St - ECU Mt Lawley Campus): minor changes

Domestic

Virgin has altered their code for Australian services to VA.

The ACCC will not oppose **Virgin Australia** taking over Perth-based **Skywest**.

In April **Qantas** will discontinue flights from Canberra to Darwin (at present thrice weekly) and from Sydney to Ayers Rock, but instead, Jetstar will fly four times a week (Tue, Wed, Thur, Sat) from 4 June. Qantas said the Sydney-Ayers Rock route had not been profitable in years, and flights regularly left with up to 40% of seats empty.

The three **most expensive airline routes** in Australia are serviced solely by Qantas, according to new

- Route 886 (Wellington St – Alexander Heights): 3 additional AM peak services, 2 additional PM peak services and two additional weeknight services
- Route 888 (Wellington St – Mirrabooka): additional AM peak service, two additional PM peak services, two additional weeknight services
- Route 889 (Wellington St – Ballajura): 3 additional AM peak services, two additional PM peak services and two additional evening services.

Long Distance

Greyhound drops two corridors

Greyhound withdrew their Melbourne – Toowoomba and Perth – Broome services beyond 8 March 2013, as they are no longer commercially viable. In both cases the company cites the recent history of progressive service decreases to meet low demand in order to try to make the routes profitable again. New competition on the Perth to Geraldton, Exmouth and Port Hedland routes has also meant a further decline in already poor patronage.

Brisbane - Toowoomba corridor changes

From 11 March a new timetable will commence between Toowoomba and Brisbane, including the following changes:

- A new daily express service departs Brisbane at 0830 and returns at 1000
- 0630 ex Brisbane (to Melbourne) all stops Wed – Fri service has been replaced with an express bus at 0615 five days a week
- 0730 ex Brisbane has revised run times
- 1300 ex Brisbane now serves all stops
- 0720 ex Toowoomba and 1500 ex Brisbane now skip Ipswich

This follows the removal of the on-request stops at DFO, Blacksoil, Grantham, Helidon & Helidon Spa as of 19 November 2012.

Sydney – Canberra boost

Murrays added a new daily 0500 departure between Canberra and Sydney on 7 January 2013, followed by new 2100 and 2200 departures ex Sydney on Sunday evenings commencing on 3 February 2013, however it appears the 2200 service was short-lived as it is no longer advertised.

Thanks to Tony Bailey, Ian Cooper, Hilarie Fraser, Geoff Foster, Robert Henderson, Victor Isaacs, Geoff Mann, Lourie Smit, Roger Wheaton & various contributors on *Australian Transport Discussion Board* for Bus news.

AIR NEWS

research figures and reports by the Bureau of Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Economics. In December the most expensive route was Bundaberg to Brisbane, based on cost per distance travelled. Fares on this route averaged \$517 for the 286km journey or \$1.81 per km. The **cheapest** was the Jetstar and Virgin Australia-serviced Darwin to Melbourne route, where passengers travelled a distance of more than 3000km but only paid an average \$420 or \$0.13 per km.

Despite these huge differentials, aviation experts said many determining factors affect pricing. "Costs go down as the distance goes up because you have a lot of costs that don't vary on distance such as airport charges, which can be \$10 to \$30 per passenger, on-board meals, merchant service fees, and depreciation and leasing of the aircraft," Webber Quantitative Consulting

managing director Tony Webber said. Regional routes are generally more expensive because the aircraft that operate them are smaller, contain fewer seats and are often serviced by a single carrier.

Most expensive Australian routes (average price per km):

Bundaberg-Brisbane average price per km \$1.81 Qantas

Devonport-Melbourne \$1.27 Qantas

Armidale-Sydney \$1.09 Qantas

Dubbo-Sydney \$1.05 Qantas and Rex

Geraldton-Perth \$1.04 Qantas and Skywest

Cheapest Australian routes:

Darwin-Melbourne average price per km 13c Jetstar, Virgin

Brisbane-Darwin 18c Qantas, Jetstar and Virgin

Darwin-Sydney 18c Qantas, Jetstar and Virgin

Cairns-Gold Coast 18c Jetstar

Brisbane-Perth 18c Qantas, Jetstar, Virgin.

Perth Airport's new \$120 million domestic terminal will open on 2 March. The new terminal two is next to terminal one, the international terminal, making it easier for people in regional WA to connect to international services. Initially, it will be home to Skywest and Alliance Airlines, while Tiger Airways will move to the new facility in May 2013.

International

Qantas will radically restructure its network to Asia as part of its new alliance with Emirates. It will add destinations including Beijing, Seoul, Mumbai, Delhi and Tokyo-Haneda. Qantas also plans to provide more frequent flights to Singapore and Hong Kong, as well as change the time of those flights and increase capacity on those routes. It says it hopes to expand its network within Asia by working with local partners such as Japan Airlines, China Eastern, Jet Airways, Cathay Pacific and Malaysia Airlines. However, Qantas will axe its Adelaide-Singapore route (from 14 April) and Perth-Hong Kong (from 31 March). From 15 April it will reduce its Perth-Singapore service to once daily, while increasing its Brisbane-Hong Kong service from four times weekly to five from 6 May, further upping it to daily from 24 June. It will also add four new Sydney-Singapore flights from 31 March, rising to daily from 24 June. As a result of the changes, Hong Kong capacity on the Qantas network will increase by 10%, while that to Singapore will grow 40%. Flights into both hubs and Bangkok will be brought forward with the earlier arrival times to increase the number of onward connections.

Sichuan Airlines commenced thrice weekly flights between Chengdu and Melbourne on 28 February.

Garuda Indonesia will reinstate daily direct flights between Jakarta and Perth from 28 June.

Thanks to Tony Bailey, Tris Tottenham and the *Canberra Times* for Air news.

FERRY NEWS

Brisbane Ferries

Following the wild weather of late January in Brisbane (see item in Rail News above) Brisbane River ferry services were suspended on 28 January. From 2 February City Cats ran a limited service downstream of Riverside from 1230, and two small ferries, Koopa and Lucinda worked the cross river runs at Eagle St.

Newcastle-Sydney-Wollongong ferry mooted

A fast ferry between Newcastle and Sydney could begin operating in May. Australian Hovercraft Services managing director Ian Brookfield plans to purchase a \$4.5million 333-seat dual-deck Singaporean ferry to put on the Newcastle-to-Sydney run. A weekly return ticket is expected to cost about \$360, while a single return ticket will cost about \$90. The ferry will depart Queens Wharf, Newcastle at 0600 and arrive at Circular Quay about 0815. The plan is that it would then proceed to Wollongong before heading back to Sydney on the return trip. "Subject to sea trials, we are trying to organise two return trips to Sydney a day," Mr Brookfield said. The ambitious venture has emerged despite numerous studies over the past 20 years that have cast doubt on the commercial viability of such a service. But Mr Brookfield, who is also launching a Gladstone-to-Bundaberg tourist ferry service within the next month,

said he was satisfied that the Newcastle-to-Sydney route was viable. "These types of services take many months and sometimes years to get up and running, however, after all the hurdles that get thrown in the way, this service is now very close to becoming a reality. People have been complaining for long enough about the need for better transport between Newcastle and Sydney. Here's an opportunity to support it." Mr Brookfield said the company would shortly apply to the state government to operate the service between Queens Wharf and Circular Quay.

SA Murray River Ferries

SA Councils are apprehensive about the future of the five 24-hour ferry services which operate at 11 locations along the River Murray. It is estimated that the ferries will need to be replaced at an estimated cost of \$15 million in the next five years. Currently the State government spends about \$5.28 million annually operating the ferry service and a further \$2.9 million maintaining the fleet. The five timber-hulled ferries earmarked for replacement have been in service between 60 and 80 years and include vessels at Mannum, Tailem Bend, Cadell, Lyrup and Morgan.

Thanks to Tony Bailey and Rod Milne for Ferry news.

ODD SPOT

How to close down a railway system method no. 3

This magazine has reported recently on unusual reasons why portions of the Victorian rail network were closed down. There was a fire in a Telstra exchange shutting down communications in SW Victoria, (December *Table Talk*, p.3), then there was a balloon in overhead wires in the inner city (January *Table Talk*, p. 6). Now it is a wayward bat. There were many train cancellations and delays on Tuesday 5 February as a result of signal faults caused by the bat at Camberwell station. Belgrave and Lilydale trains were delayed up to 45 minutes. Express trains were cancelled. Trains stopped all stations and ran at a reduced speed. All Alamein trains ran as a shuttle to/from Camberwell. The bat short circuited a significant section of the line and blew out a large number of signals and switches. Metro subsequently advised that the "the bat is no longer with us".

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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Table Talk Newswire is an advance monthly email of Rail news. To obtain this, ask the Rail Editor at abvi@iinet.net.au