



TABLE TALK

AUSTRALASIAN TIMETABLE NEWS

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TOP TABLE TALK – WEB RESOURCES

by Victor Isaacs

A huge amount of information about **railway operations** and **network characteristics** is now readily and publicly available. This is a combination of being easily placed on the web, and of the prevailing Track Access regimes. Some network controllers take the view that if they have to make detailed track information available to prospective train operators, they may as well put it on their websites. This applies to Track Access in Queensland, rural Western Australia, and, in particular, to Victoria and the Australian Rail Track Corporation. In addition, some authorities extend this provision of public information to Working Timetables – to our delight. This applies to the Australian Rail Track Corporation, NSW Country Regional Network, V/Line and Metro Trains Melbourne. Metropolitan networks, other than Metro Trains Melbourne, tend to be more reserved about the provision of information.

In addition, Public Transport Victoria, as a matter of policy, makes as much information as possible relating to **performance** available on its website. Yet more useful information is found in **Fares Manuals**. The complete Victorian and New South Welsh Fare Manuals are on the web and Victoria's, in particular, is very comprehensive. As Victoria leads the way in the provision of comprehensive information, it shall lead this article.

VICTORIA

1. PUBLIC TRANSPORT VICTORIA:

Track Record, see <http://ptv.vic.gov.au/about-ptv/ptv-data-and-reports/track-record-2/> This provides information on such things as percentage of services delivered, on-time running for Metro Trains Melbourne, V/Line and Yarra Trams, each arranged by line over a 12 month period. So, for example, this provides details of how the Albury line is vastly below the standard of all other lines in both percentage of trains run and in on-time running.

Quarterly Performance Bulletin, see <http://ptv.vic.gov.au/assets/PTV/PTV%20docs/Track%20Record/Track-Record-55-updated.pdf> providing analysis of train operations, customer satisfaction, incentive payments to operators, patronage figures by mode, provision of information to customers, and fare evasion.

Franchise Agreements with Metro trains, V/Line and ARTC are at <http://ptv.vic.gov.au/about-ptv/victoria-s-pt-network/public-transport-partnership-agreements/>

Each weekday, the previous day's **reliability and punctuality** is summarised at <http://ptv.vic.gov.au/about-ptv/ptv-data-and-reports/daily-operational-performance-reports/>

At <http://ptv.vic.gov.au/about-ptv/ptv-data-and-reports/research-and-statistics/#bulletins> you will find:

- A spreadsheet providing very detailed **statistics of patronage for each Melbourne station**
- Details of **fare evasion** across all Victorian PT operators
- Quarterly PT **performance reports**
- **Long run PT patronage data** for Melbourne, not divided by line, but going back as far as 1946.

A summary of transport statistics is at <http://ptv.vic.gov.au/about-ptv/victoria-s-pt-network/network-statistics/>

Victorian Fares and Ticket Manual see <http://ptv.vic.gov.au/assets/PDFs/Vic-Fares-and-Ticketing-Manual/myki-manual-sept-2013-update-.PDF>

2. V/LINE:

<http://www.vline.com.au/about/networkaccess/infopack.html> contains:

Addenda to the Network Operating Plan. This a detailed listing of vehicles authorised to operate on the V/Line network

Network Service Plan. This sets general operating requirements across the V/Line network.

Train Operating Data. This sets out the physical characteristics of each line in the V/Line network in detail.

Track Access Operating Handbook. This sets out the requirements for operators seeking access to the V/Line network. For example, Section 7 sets out how V/Line's Master Train Timetable and Daily Operating Plan are produced.

Freight Working Timetables. These set out, line by line, Freight trains operated on the V/Line network (V/Line does not itself operate freight trains).

Passenger Working Timetables All V/Line's passenger train WTTs are provided, line by line, including for the North East Standard Gauge line which is managed by ARTC.

Passenger Network Temporary Speed Restrictions.

Average Maximum Operating Speed on freight lines.

3. METRO TRAINS MELBOURNE:

Go to <http://www.metrotrains.com.au/doing-business-with-metro/> for:

Access Agreements and **Costing** information

Track Speed map and **Signalling** map

Metro Working Timetable. Warning: This is a very big document! However, it is divided into sections to facilitate downloading.

QUEENSLAND

Details of the past five days **reliability and on-time running** during peak periods on the QR CityTrain network are at <http://www.queenslandrail.com.au/RailServices/City/Pages/PeakOn-TimeResults.aspx>

For a survey of QR Citytrain **patronage** by line and by station for the past five years see http://www.queenslandrail.com.au/RailServices/City/Documents/queensland-rail_passenger-load-survey-2012-Q1.pdf

Information Packs about each line in the Queensland Rail system are at <http://www.queenslandrail.com.au/NetworkServices/DownloadsandRailSystemMaps/Pages/DownloadsandRailSystemMaps.aspx> (left side of the page). These provide detailed track diagrams and descriptions of physical characteristics.

Similar **Information Packs** about each line in the Aurizon system are also available. Go to Aurizon's main page www.aurizon.com.au and click on "Network Systems". These provide detailed track diagrams and descriptions of physical characteristics.

NEW SOUTH WALES

A very great deal of **operational information** about the railway network under the auspices of **Transport NSW** is available. This includes details of requirements across the whole network, and in detail for each line and Special Train Notices. However this is maintained on a "dark site" which cannot be linked to any other site, including this magazine. If you want details, write an email to the Editor (contact details at the end of this magazine).

John Holland Rail Country Regional Network provides information at www.jhrcrn.com.au under "Network Operations and Access". This includes:

Local Appendices providing details of the physical characteristics of each line

Country Train Notices, ie schedules of special and altered trains

Working Timetables on a line by line basis.

The **Sydney Trains and NSW Trains Fares and Ticketing Customer Handbook** dated 1 July 2013 published by Transport NSW is available at <http://www.131500.com.au/tickets/upload/docs/customer-handbook.pdf> CityTrain's Fare Manual used to be publicly available, but Countrylink's was not. However, this new publication now covers both of the new organisations. There are links to it from both Sydney Trains' website and from NSW Trains' website.

AUSTRALIAN RAIL TRACK CORPORATION

ARTC's website under "Operations" at <http://www.artc.com.au/Content.aspx?p=43> provides details of

Trains Operations Conditions Manual providing operational requirements across the network

Local Appendices providing detailed operational requirements line by line

Master Train Plans (ie, **Working Timetables**). These are on a line by line and day by day basis, resulting in many being very large documents.

Train Alteration Advices, ie, special and altered trains

Safe Notices, ie, safeworking changes.

Graphical Working Timetables are at <http://www.artc.com.au/Content.aspx?p=180>

ARTC's website under "Route Standards" at <http://www.artc.com.au/Content.aspx?p=38> provides **detailed track diagrams** and other physical characteristics for each line.

Performance Indicators are at <http://www.artc.com.au/Content.aspx?p=194>

RURAL WESTERN AUSTRALIA

The WA rural railway system is maintained by Brookfield Rail.

For the latest Brookfield Rail Weekly Notice see <http://www.brookfieldrail.com/docs/weeklynotice.pdf>

For details of the specifications of WA rural lines see <http://www.brookfieldrail.com/about-us/our-network/network-specifications/> Maps give information about traffic density, axle loads, sleeper type, and communications systems.

For specific information, on a line by line basis, see <http://www.brookfieldrail.com/about-us/our-network/network-specifications/network-data.html>

PERTH & ADELAIDE

Performance statistics for TransPerth trains for the preceding week are at <http://www.transperth.wa.gov.au/AboutUs/Surveysandstatistics.aspx>

Performance statistics for Adelaide Metro services for the preceding quarter are at <http://www.adelaidemetro.com.au/AboutUs/Performance>

UNOFFICIAL SOURCES

Unofficial, but high quality and authoritative **diagrams of track and signalling** are also available:

Railway Track and Signalling (Graeme Vincent). On the website, www.sa-trackandsignal.net are detailed diagrams of all ARTC lines (plus Brisbane area SG), NSW Country Regional Network, Adelaide, and country SA/NT. There is also a hard copy book for Tasmania.

Rail Graphics (Michael Nicholson), P O Box 439 LBC Liverpool NSW 2170, publishes hard copy books of the Greater Sydney network.

RAIL AND TRAM NEWS

Melbourne-Brisbane Inland Freight Railway

In a speech on 8 October to the Shipping and Export Leaders' Summit in Sydney, the new Minister for Infrastructure and Regional Development and Deputy Prime Minister, Warren Truss, reiterated the new Federal government's commitment to the inland freight railway. He said: "The Coalition Government has made a commitment to investigate a new 24/7 dedicated freight connection from the Acacia Ridge Intermodal Terminal to the Port of Brisbane as part of the Melbourne to Brisbane Inland Railway project to which we are committed."

Rail usage

On 2 October the Australian Rail Industry Report was released by the Australasian Railway Association. It shows that passenger journeys increased by 15.4 million last year, taking the total figure up to 784.2 million journeys. Since 2008, there has been an increase of 84 million rail journeys. The report also showed light rail journeys for the year grew by 7.3 million in 2011/12 to reach 166.5 million.

Freight increased by 8% to 929.6 million tonnes with ore constituting 53%, followed by coal at 33%.

Infrastructure investment

Infrastructure Partnerships Australia, a national industry group, estimates that there has been a 35% decline in national infrastructure investment between 2011/12 and 2012/13, but that rail investment declined at a slightly slower rate than road investment.

Australian Rail Track Corporation: Future

There is speculation about the possible privatisation of government-owned assets by the new Federal Coalition government. Among assets mentioned is the Australian Rail Track Corporation. It is suggested that sale of the ARTC would net between \$4.4 and \$5.1 billion.

Former NSW premier Nick Greiner has supported the privatisation of ARTC, saying that its ownership of coal lines would be much sought after. He said he would be surprised if the Commission of Audit of the Federal government's finances commissioned by the Treasurer, Joe Hockey, did not look at the ARTC. "It's not primarily to aid Joe's financial problem, even though it would do that," he said. He said private ownership would enable it to be much more responsive to the coal industry's needs rather than having to go through the demands of a government agency, however well meaning. "There's no reason in principle why taxpayers have to put money into rail track when the private sector is willing and able to do it."

ARTC: NSW North Coast line speeds

As the program to ease curves on the NSW North Coast line proceeds, ARTC issued new advice of curvature speeds – Route Access Condition Notice 13-00030 of 4 October 2013.

ARTC: Working Timetable

ARTC TAA (Train Alteration Advice) 1025-2013 contains minor alterations to ARTC's Working Timetable (aka Master Train Plan) of 20 October for the NSW South line. It is rare for amendments to ARTC's WTT to appear on their website.

ARTC: Hexham Relief Roads

Construction of the Hexham Relief Roads will commence in November. The project will facilitate train operation of coal traffic in the lower Hunter Valley. Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Infrastructure and Regional Development, Warren Truss, announced the construction of five tracks allowing trains to be temporarily diverted off mainlines while

waiting to enter loading facilities at Newcastle port. Each track will be about two kms in length and able to hold two or three locomotives and up to 90 wagons. Hexham is 15 km northwest of Newcastle. The \$163 million project is scheduled to take 15 months.

Queensland Rail TravelTrain: Timetable 2 September

For a complete Public timetable of QR TravelTrain from 2 September 2013 see

http://www.queenslandrail.com.au/TradeToolbox/Travellnformation/Documents/queensland-rail-travel_timetable_2Sept13.pdf

Queensland Rail CityTrain: 6 May 2013

New timetables dated 6 May have been issued for the Cleveland, Gold Coast to Airport, and Shorncliffe lines.

Queensland Rail CityTrain: Springfield line opens

The railway from Richlands to Springfield, 9.5 km, will open on Monday 2 December 2013, ahead of schedule. There will be services every 6 to 12 minutes in the morning peak, every 12 minutes in the afternoon peak and 30 minutes weekday off-peak and weekends (except early morning Sundays which will be hourly). The running time from Richlands to Springfield will be six minutes, then three minutes to Springfield Central. Ellen Grove station between Richlands and Springfield may be built later.

Queensland Rail CityTrain: 20 January 2014 timetable

New timetables will be introduced by QR CityTrain from Monday 20 January 2014 - just before schools resume for the new school year. The new timetables will provide more frequent and consistent services, including:

- 15-minute or better all day frequency between the CBD and Northgate, Cannon Hill, Coopers Plains and Ferny Grove from approximately 0600 to 2000, Monday to Friday. Park Road, South Bank and South Brisbane stations will have services every 2-8 minutes in peaks, and up to 15 minutes off peak - up from every 23 minutes currently.
- more services and more seating
- simplified stopping patterns with consistent departure and journey times
- in general, earlier start times, and some later finish times.

Details are:

- **Airport** line: 7 additional services each weekday. Services every 15 minutes during the peaks and 30 minutes off-peak. Replacement of express services by a more consistent timetable with all services stopping all stations and more consistent clock face departures.
- **Beenleigh** line: reduction of the number of stopping patterns from 5 to 3. Most trains will continue through the CBD to the Ferny Grove line, stopping all stations. Services will start or finish from Beenleigh, Kuraby or Coopers Plains. Between the weekday peaks every second train will terminate/start at Coopers Plains.
- **Caboolture** line: Two new afternoon express services departing Central at 1555 and arriving at Caboolture at 1650 and departing Central at 1610 and arriving at Caboolture at 1705. These services run express from Northgate to Petrie, then all

stations to Caboolture. The current 1607 to Caboolture service will terminate at Petrie.

- **Cleveland** line: 266 additional services on the Cleveland line each week, mainly as far as Cannon Hill. Reduction of stopping patterns from 6 to 3. Most trains will continue to Northgate or Shorncliffe. During the peaks, express services will stop all stations between Cleveland and Manly, run express Manly to Morningside, and then stop all stations to and from the CBD. The four additional express stops (at Morningside, Park Road, Coorparoo, and Buranda) will meet growing customer demand at these stations and add up to four minutes to existing express travel times (outbound only, no increase for inbound trains). Every express will be met at Manly station by an all stops service (with two minute connections): Between the weekday peaks every second trains will terminate/start at Cannon Hill.
- **Doomben** line. Even this orphan line will have improved services, from the present Monday-Friday 60 minute frequency (including in the peak) to 30 minute frequency and on Saturdays from the present irregular service to every 60 minutes. (Still no services on Sunday.) There will be 116 additional services each week.
- **Ferny Grove** line: 110 additional services each week, including 8 additional weekday peak trains. Services every 7-15 minutes in the peaks, and at least every 15 minutes all day on weekdays. Removal of inconsistent express services (two in the morning and two in the afternoon).
- **Gold Coast** line: 93 additional services on the Gold Coast line each week. Services every 7-15 minutes in the peaks. Reduction of number of express train stopping patterns from 4 to 1. All trains will stop all stations from Varsity Lakes to Beenleigh, then run express to Park Road stopping only at Loganlea and Altandi. The new express stop at Altandi station will provide better connections to buses.
- **Gympie North** line: The morning outbound service will depart Central 4 minutes earlier at 0933 arriving at Caboolture at 1017 and Gympie North at the existing time of 1239. The afternoon peak outbound service will depart Central at 1751 (2 minutes later than now) arriving at Nambour at 1944 and Gympie North at 2048 (8 minutes later).
- **Shorncliffe** line: 146 additional services on the Shorncliffe line each week, including 7 additional weekday peak trains. Trains at least every 15 minutes in the peaks. Removal of inconsistent express services - all trains will stop at all stations.

The Queensland government states that the new timetables will cost \$25 million per annum and set the stage for more services in the future, as new trains become available. There are now only 5 unused paths through the CBD between 0730 and 0830 and these will be used when new trains are delivered. It says this is the biggest rewrite of QR's timetable with an extra 200 services a day, with all 207 trains in the fleet being used most of the time. This is the second stage of the QR timetable project. The first stage in 2011 overhauled the Ipswich, Rosewood, Richlands, Caboolture and Sunshine Coast lines.

Timetables were posted on www.translink.com.au on 21 October – commendably early, but the PDFs have very small print size.

Gold Coast Tram

The first tram ran in Southport, on a test run, during the small hours of 30 September. The tramway will commence public operation in late 2014.

Transport for NSW: 20 October Working Timetables

Working Timetables for the timetable change of 20 October 2013 have been published – Book 1 Weekdays, Book 2 Weekends and Book 3 Instruction Pages (this volume dated 26 August). These complement the already published Freight Working Timetables, Book 4 Weekdays and Book 5 Weekends.

Books 1 and 2 bear the imprint of three organisations: Transport for NSW (who produce the WTTs – see the article in the October edition of the *Times*), Sydney Trains and NSW Trains. Books 1 and 2, the passenger volumes, extend to Dungog, Scone, Bathurst and Goulburn. Books 4 and 5, the freight volumes, extend only to Broadmeadow, Lithgow and Macarthur.

Comparison of the Public and Working Timetables reveals some differences, of which these are the more notable:

- The midday train to Canberra leaves Sydney at 1208 according to the Public TT but on weekdays at 1212 in the Working TT.
- Campbelltown departure times of down Canberra trains in the Public TT are two or three minutes earlier than times in the Working TT.
- The Indian Pacific actually departs Sydney at 1503, eight minutes later than its advertised departure time.

Introduction of the new timetable – the biggest change for many years – appeared to go smoothly. On the first weekday peak period, 99% of services ran to time. On the third weekday, 23 October, the morning peak period was disrupted by overhead wiring coming down near St Marys about 0630.

Sydney Trains: South West line

The South West railway, Glenfield to Leppington, 11.4 km, will be completed one year early in 2015, and \$100 million under budget at \$2.1 billion, according to the NSW Transport Minister, Gladys Berejiklian.

Sydney Trains: Cumberland line timetable

A paper timetable for the Cumberland line has now been sighted, meaning that hard copy timetables for all SydneyTrain services for the timetable change of 20 October 2013 have now been seen, as well as on their website.

Sydney Trains: Significant substitutions

From Monday 23 September until Friday 4 October buses replaced trains between Lithgow and Mount Victoria.

From Monday 7 until Friday 11 October trains between Schofields and Richmond were replaced by buses while upgrading was carried out.

There were no other significant closedowns on the NSW Labour Day long weekend of 5 to 7 October - the weekend of the huge Royal Australian Naval centenary fleet review in Sydney Harbour plus the Rugby Grand Final on Sunday evening. 533 additional services operated on Saturday 5 October for the Naval review. On this long weekend there were 2.3 million passengers on Sydney public transport, of which 1.2 million were on the rail system,

On Saturday 12 and Sunday 13 October buses replaced trains on the City Circle, Inner West and Airport lines for maintenance and upgrading work.

The miracle is that SydneyTrains celebrated the weekend of our Association's AGM in Sydney (19 October) by having no

closedowns. There may have been no scheduled closedowns that weekend because of complications arising from the introduction of Sydney Train's new timetable. (Does this now make up for our notorious 2000 AGM held at Moss Vale station on a weekend that the Southern line was closed?)

Olympic Park branch trains were replaced by buses from 29 to 31 October.

The big Christmas season closedown proposed for this year is Strathfield-Epping, Strathfield-Parramatta/Merrylands, Lidcombe-Bankstown, Lidcombe-Olympic Park, and Clyde-Carlingford, but only for a few days from 26 to 30 December.

The duration and frequency of proposed future major closedowns on the Sydney network does seem to be easing slightly.

Sydney Light Rail: Bustitution

Following two derailments in quick succession on Monday 7 October the Sydney tram service was replaced by buses. After about a week tram service was restored from Star City Casino to Lilyfield, but not on the busy section between Star City and Central Station. The cause of the problem has not been announced, but it is believed that many tram wheels needed to be replaced, and the damage to these wheels was in turn caused by poor track maintenance. A re-opening date has not been announced.

NSW Train Link: Bustitutions

On the weekend of 23 and 24 November all North Coast and North West trains will be replaced by buses.

Sydney area bushfires October

Bushfires around Sydney on the afternoon of Thursday 17 October caused the replacement of train services between Mt Victoria and Lithgow by buses. The up Dubbo XPT was terminated at Bathurst, with buses to Sydney. This line remained closed the next day, when the highway also was closed – alternative transport therefore not being possible. The rail closure remained for at least the next week. Signalling equipment was extensively damaged.

Both the infrastructure and rolling stock of the Zig Zag enthusiast railway were extensively damaged. Among items destroyed were 10 passenger carriages, accommodation carriages, a near-new shower block and meals room, spare parts centre and workshop, and more than 1000 new sleepers. After other recent operational and infrastructure problems, there are fears that this may be the final straw for this iconic railway.

On 17 October Southern line services were replaced by buses between Campbelltown and Picton. There was no substitution beyond, as the Highway was also closed by bushfires. The overnight Sydney-Melbourne XPT was diverted via Wollongong. The Southern line reopened next day (with delays) but was closed later in the day. Melbourne XPTs were again diverted via Wollongong.

On Sunday 20 October the XPT trapped on the down side of the bushfire ran from Bathurst to Dubbo and return with bus connections between Sydney and Bathurst. On Monday 21 October the XPT ran from Bathurst to Broken Hill instead of the usual Xplorer DMU. Next day, Tuesday, the XPT returned from Broken Hill to Bathurst. This might be the first time a XPT has run to Broken Hill.

NSW: New coal railway

A contract has been let to Leighton for construction of 16 km of railway to service Whitehaven Coal's new coal mine at Maules Creek near Boggabri, NW NSW.

Canberra Trams

The website for Capital Metro, the organisation established by the ACT government to build the Canberra Light Rail line,

is <http://www.capitalmetro.act.gov.au/> An unofficial site is <http://www.actlightrail.info/>

V/Line & ARTC: Victorian North East line

Victorian Transport Minister Terry Mulder has suggested that during closedowns for Regional Rail Link works V/Line should consider running Albury line trains to and from Broadmeadows where passengers would catch Metro suburban trains to complete their trips. On 14 October he said while it was pleasing the RRL was running "on time and on budget", it would require more track closures. "My suggestion is one in which V/Line might be able to reduce the number of coaches they are using. As far as possible, I'd like to see passengers be able to use trains rather than replacement road coaches. "In the end, however, V/Line has to make sure that any timetable changes are feasible and that other authorities such as the Australian Rail Track Corporation agree."

In a letter sent to local media, Mr Mulder acknowledged the plan was "not without its challenges". Trains would have to travel to the McIntyre loop at Sunshine where the locomotive would switch ends. Toilets would be cleaned and catering needs met at Broadmeadows, instead of at the South Dynon depot. V/Line might also require Broadmeadows staff to help passengers who have difficulty negotiating the station's ramps.

A spokesman for Mr Mulder said the proposed changes would reflect passengers' desire to avoid coaches where possible. "The community overwhelmingly tells us it prefers trains to coaches," he said. "Ultimately it's up to V/Line but it's certainly a possibility."

V/Line responded, "V/Line continues to work in collaboration with Regional Rail Link, Metro, Public Transport Victoria, the ARTC and the office of the Minister for Public Transport to minimise the impact of track works on our customers".

V/Line: Toolamba-Echuca line re-opening

The 67 km Toolamba-Echuca line was re-opened on 2 October. This follows expenditure of \$7.1 million on replacing 30,000 sleepers. This will enable grain trains to avoid the heavily used (by passenger trains) Bendigo line.

V/Line: Traralgon-Bairnsdale line re-opening

Operation of V/Line passenger trains between Traralgon and Sale resumed from Monday 21 October. This follows a lengthy program to repair non-operating level crossings, including the import of a \$13 million rail milling machine, from Austria. Special trains operated on most days from 7 to 20 October between Traralgon and Sale to check that level crossings were operating correctly. From 21 to 26 October, operation of special test trains transferred to the Sale to Bairnsdale section. Services are expected to resume on this section in late October.

V/Line: Warrnambool line bustitution

Warrnambool trains will be replaced by buses between Geelong and Warrnambool from Saturday 9 to Tuesday 12 November while bridge work takes place.

Victoria: Latrobe Valley freight

Qube Logistics is proposing to develop a freight terminal in the vicinity of the Maryvale paper mill near Morwell in the Latrobe Valley. Businesses will be able to truck goods to the proposed terminal where it would be transferred into 40 foot shipping containers for rail freight to the Port of Melbourne and beyond. Australian Paper is currently the only Gippsland-based company to freight product to Melbourne via rail, transporting less than half of its 600,000 tonne per annum output via seven weekly services. Qube Logistics is currently constructing its own train consist due to be rolled out on the Gippsland line in October, through which AP

plans to increase rail freight by up to 40%, or an additional 100,000 tonnes per annum.

Metro Trains Melbourne and V/Line: Reduced timetables

Metro Trains introduced a modified timetable from Monday 23 September until Friday 18 October. Metro said that this was caused by a shortage of trains caused by extra services to the Royal Melbourne Show and driver training commitments caused by the Regional Rail Link. As the works on the Regional Rail Link progress, they need drivers to become familiar with new sections of track, necessitating training. To avoid confusion, the same services were cancelled each day and spread across the network.

These trains were cancelled: 0534, 0707 and 1610 to Lilydale, 0734 to Blackburn, 0647, 0816 and 1709 ex Lilydale, 0827 ex Blackburn, 1453 to Alamein, 1641 ex Alamein, 1518 and 1751 to Glen Waverley, 0650 ex Glen Waverley, 0649 to Pakenham, 1642 to Cranbourne, 1722 and 1859 to Dandenong, 0808 ex Pakenham, 1805 ex Cranbourne, 0532 to Frankston, 0802 to Moorabbin, 1631, 1706 and 1831 to Mordialloc, 0645 ex Frankston, 0841 ex Mordialloc, 1519 to Broadmeadows, 1639 to Craigieburn, 1655 to Greensborough, 1750 ex Greensborough.

Sunbury line services were suspended for Regional Rail Link works from Thursday 3 until Saturday 13 October - completely on the first weekend, otherwise partially suspended between Albion and Melbourne. On weekdays, the now standard frequent service of trains operated from the City to Flemington Racecourse with frequent connecting buses. If you haven't yet taken the opportunity to travel on this hard-to-cover line, there will still be a few more closedowns until early next year, especially 28 December to 19 January.

On **V/Line** from 3 to 12 October a major closedown resulted in a bonanza for bus companies, but less so for the passengers. Buses replaced trains from Melbourne to Ballarat (on weekends all the way to Ararat and Maryborough), Sunbury (but some all the way to Bendigo) and the midday trains to and from Albury (which are notorious for their frequent cancellation), but on the first weekend all Albury trains (including NSW TrainLink) were cancelled.

Metro Trains Melbourne: Future timetables

It is believed that the Metro Trains Melbourne timetable to be introduced on 1 December will not include major changes. The following timetable change in 2014 will include more frequent services on the Dandenong line.

Metro Trains Melbourne: Signal failures

Signal failures are occurring on average five times a day on Metro Trains Melbourne's network, causing delays. There were more than 1900 signal failures on in the 12 months to August. The most frequent problems are at Flinders St, Southern Cross, North Melbourne, Camberwell and Dandenong. Reasons for faults include blown globes, arson, lightning strikes and copper theft.

New signalling has recently been installed at Dandenong and Camberwell, but both locations continue to experience failures. Re-signalling in the next 12 months will take place on the Sandringham line, from Mordialloc to Frankston, and Richmond to Burnley.

Melbourne planning

On 9 October the Victorian government released a major planning document entitled *Plan Melbourne*. Among the proposed initiatives are

- Increase the volume of freight carried on rail by investigating a south-east rail link to provide a

dedicated rail line between Dandenong and Dynon for freight and V/Line trains as part of planning for a rail connection to the Port of Hastings. Plan for the Western Interstate Freight Terminal and the proposed Donnybrook/Beveridge Interstate Freight Terminal.

- Establish intermodal terminals linking ports to major distribution centres.
- Ensure sufficient airport capacity with efficient landside access for passengers and freight including completion of planning for a rail link to Melbourne Airport. Investigate potential sites for a new airport to serve the long-term needs of south-east Melbourne.

For more information on Plan Melbourne see www.planmelbourne.vic.gov.au/Plan-Melbourne/melbournes-future

TransAdelaide: Tonsley line

The Adelaide to Tonsley line is expected to re-open in December, following major infrastructure works, in particular related to electrification. In the meantime, additional bus services have been introduced to compensate passengers, and travel is free.

Adelaide: Transport plan

On 21 October, the Premier of South Australia, Jay Weatherill, released a major transport plan, envisaging the expenditure of \$36 million over the next 30 years. The plan includes:

- A tramway system covering Adelaide suburbs extending to Port Adelaide, Henley Beach, the Airport, Norwood, Magill, Blair Athol and Mitcham.
- Trams replacing the existing railways to Outer Harbor and Grange, with an extension to West Lakes,
- A city centre tram loop,
- Underground city centre railway,
- Expedited electrification of the railway from Dry Creek to Gawler Central,
- Return of interstate passenger trains to the City station,
- Underground city centre busway, and
- Increased rail services.

Mr Weatherill said he expected electrification to Gawler Central to commence by the end of this year. However, the next day the new Federal Minister for Infrastructure, Warren Truss, wrote to his State counterpart, making it explicitly clear that the Federal government had withdrawn the offer made by the former Federal Labor government of \$76.2 to assist with this project. The immediate future of this project is now unclear.

Tasmania: Abt railway

The Tasmanian West Coast Wilderness Railway is likely to re-open for the summer season on 6 January 2014 and may be operated by the Abt Railway Ministerial Corporation. On 15 October, when introducing legislation to allow the Corporation to operate the Railway, the Tasmanian Minister for Infrastructure, David O'Byrne, said that while work on the Railway was progressing well, landslips on the Queenstown side of Rinadeena Station have caused difficulties and limited access. "We are putting all our efforts into getting this work done and opening the railway for the summer tourist season because we know how important it is for the local community.

He said the government is also continuing to progress future alternative operational arrangements with private operators.

"Expressions of interest were received from potential new operators and shortlisted to two parties. These were both solid submissions and we will continue discussions as both proposals have positive aspects to offer the railway."

The Corporation owns the majority of land, infrastructure, locomotives and carriages used for the Railway and currently employs the railway staff.

South Australia: Port Bonython railway

An Environmental Impact Statement for the Port Bonython Bulk Commodities Export port in the Spencer Gulf was released on 4 October. The proposed project includes a new 17.5 km railway from the existing Whyalla to Port Augusta line and a 6.1 km rail loop at the terminal.

TransWA: Avonlink replacement

The Avonlink DMU train Northam-Midland and v.v. will cease from 30 December (as reported in September *Table Talk*, p. 6). Following community consultation, TransWA has now determined the replacement bus timetable, to operate twice daily, as follows:

Northam	0630	1530
Toodyay	0700	1600
Midland	0800	1700
Midland	0845	1750
Toodyay	0950	1855
Northam	1015	1920

The bus service is timetabled to take ten minutes longer than the train. The thrice weekly service Perth-Merredin and v.v. will be covered by additional stops on the Prospector train to Kalgoorlie.

TransPerth: Track closings

TransPerth's website now includes a trackwork closure calendar. See <http://www.transperth.wa.gov.au/ServiceUpdates/Trackupgradeprogram.aspx>

WA: Grain lines closed

Brookfield Rail (lessee of rural lines in WA) is closing the York to Quairading and Merredin to Trayning lines from 31 October. The Shire of Quairading estimates 215,000 tonnes of grain will be harvested in the district this season and predicts there will be an extra 8500 road train movements to clear the bulk receipt facilities on the closed lines.

Auckland: 29 October timetable

A new timetable in Auckland from Tuesday 29 October will increase services, especially on weekends on the Western

line. Auckland Transport's Group Manager Public Transport, Mark Lambert, says "Public demand for enhanced Western Line schedules has been evident for several years, and now that electrification work is nearly complete it's a suitable time to improve weekend schedules."

The Western Line will get half hourly weekend services between Britomart (central Auckland) and Swanson westbound from 0800 to 1800 and eastbound from 0920 to 1920. Formerly there was an hourly service on the weekend and only as far as Henderson on a Sunday.

Other changes include:

- Earlier services from Papakura on weekends at 0615 and 0645 (formerly the first service was at 0710)
- Onehunga services are re-timed.
- An extra night service to Onehunga on weekends departing Britomart Saturday at 2341 and Sunday at 2211
- An extra service to and from Onehunga mid-morning Monday to Friday
- An extra service from Manukau departing at 0908 Monday to Friday.

As well as the timetable changes, buses will replace trains on some weekends and evenings to enable KiwiRail to continue electrification work. The system closure this holiday season for these works will be from 25 December until 5 January 2014.

Wellington disruption

On Monday 7 October Wellington's entire fleet of 48 new Matangi trains – the backbone of the network – were withdrawn from service, after the manufacturer recommended inspection of the couplers. Buses replaced trains on the Johnsonville and Melling lines. The main lines, to Waikanae and Upper Hutt, ran with reduced services and reduced capacity. The supplier, the Faiveley company, said a pin on the locking nut on the coupling, which holds carriages together, could break if it was placed under continual pressure and stress due to misalignment. By next day most trains were returned to service, but eight trains were considered to require more detailed inspections.

Thanks to Tony Bailey, Scott Ferris, Peter Hobbs, Victor Isaacs, Geoff Lambert, John Morphet, Len Regan, Lourie Smit, www.railpage.com.au, *Rail Express*, *Railway Digest*, *Age* (Melbourne), *Australian Advertiser* (Adelaide), *Border Mail* (Albury-Wodonga), *Latrobe Valley Express*, *Sun-Herald* (Sydney), ABC news, SBS TV news for Railway news.

BUS NEWS

Australia Capital Territory

EBA Stop work meeting

The transport workers union undertook a stop work meeting on 30 October in relation to the new ACTION enterprise agreement. As a result, bus services across the capital were suspended between 09:30 & 14:00. Private operator QCity Transit continued to provide normal services to/from Queanbeyan.

Buses for Cotterfest, SPIN & Oktoberfest

To mark the completion of the expansion of Cotter Dam, a special festival, Cotterfest, was held for ACT residents on 12 October. ACTION provided car park shuttles from Stromlo Forest Park, Casuarina Sands Reserve & Settlement Road between 08:30 and 16:30. Unfortunately, no public transport options were available for those without cars, with the nearest bus route several kilometres away.

On 19 October, the TAMS depot in Fyshwick played host to SPIN, a festival celebrating motoring & dance culture. Patrons attending the daytime program could catch Route 980 or half-hourly free shuttle buses from City Bus Station between 12:00 and 18:00.

Oktoberfest patrons travelling to EPIC on 1 and 2 November could catch a free hourly shuttle from City Bus Station between 18:00 and 23:30 in addition to various regular ACTION services past the venue.

New South Wales

Transit Systems takes the reins

Transit Systems commenced operation of region 3 services throughout Liverpool, Fairfield and Holroyd on 13 October, taking over from operators Busabout, Hopkinsons, Metro-Link, Hopkinsons, Westbus (CDC) and the government's Western Sydney Buses operation which had provided T80 services along the Liverpool – Parramatta T-way.

Timetables remained unchanged during the first week of operation, but various revisions were made on most routes on 20 October in conjunction with timetable changes across the metropolitan area. Minor timing revisions were also made to school buses from this date.

October timetable overhaul

As reported last month, over 200 new bus timetables were introduced across Greater Sydney on 20 October, providing an extra 1700 weekly bus services. Highlights included:

- 210 (City – East Lindfield prepaid express) PM peak trips incorporated into Route 206
- 225 (Cremorne Wharf – Cremorne Junction): Cremorne Rd deviation removed
- 357 (Sydenham – Bondi Junction) amalgamated with 418 (Burwood – Tempe) to form a new 418 service between Burwood & Bondi Junction, with the former 425 (Dulwich Hill – Tempe) returning as Marrickville – Tempe via Sydenham & Princes Hwy
- 726 (Blacktown – Doonside): Extended to Bungarribee on weekdays
- 752 (Blacktown – Rouse Hill) extended to Rouse Hill Town Centre, while new T72 introduced between Blacktown & Quakers Hill (see proposal in August *Table Talk*). This change also saw the discontinuation of Route 751.
- New 783 service between Penrith & Jordan Springs (introduced 6 October)
- New 800 service from Fairfield to Blacktown via Praiewood & Pemulwuy. As a result, off-peak services on 812 have been discontinued. Combined with 817

services along Polding St, a turn up and go service will be available into Fairfield.

- Hunter Valley's 138 (Lemon Tree – Newcastle) service now offers two weekday off-peak return services to Bayway Village.
- Hunter Valley's 275 (Toronto to Wangi) extended to Morisset with 3 extra return trips.

Metropolitan routes with increased trips include:

- 225 (Cremorne Junction – Cremorne Wharf): additional peak trips to connect with ferries
- 230 (Milsons Point – Mosman Wharf): additional peak trips to connect with ferries
- 265 (McMahons Point – North Sydney): additional peak trips to connect with ferries
- 308 (City – Marrickville Metro): Major increase to span & frequency across the week. Buses now run hourly in the evening Monday to Saturday, weekday and Saturday daytime services have dramatically improved from 80 mins to 30 mins, and Sunday services boosted from 90 mins to 40 mins
- 370 (Leichardt – Coogee): Summer timetable now runs all year, providing additional services in winter and later evening services
- 466 (Ashfield – Cabarita): increased evening span to meet late night ferries
- 526 (Burwood – Homebush): increased evening span to meet late night ferries
- 538 (Gladesville – Woolwich) – Sunday services now operate entire route
- 723 (Blacktown – Mt Druitt): Additional peak trips for Eastern Creek Business Park
- 810X (North Pemulwuy – Parramatta) now operates additional peak trips providing a 10 min service along Old Prospect Rd in conjunction with 811X
- 813 (Fairfield – Smithfield): Off peak frequency doubled from 60 to 30 mins to replace 812 trips, including improved off-peak service for residents in Bossley Park
- 893 (Camden – Narellan): Extra 6 trips a day
- 896 (Oran Park – Campbellfield): Extra 2 trips a day
- The Illawarra region also benefited with Route 15 (Helensburgh – Stanwell Tops) providing 3 additional return weekday trips.

Further to the long list of updated timetables published in last month, other new timetables issued include:

Blue Mountain Bus Company:

- "Lower Mountains": 688 (Penrith – Emu Heights), 689 (Penrith – Leonay), 690P (Springwood – Penrith), 691 (Penrith – Mount Riverview) and 1688 (Penrith – Leonay and Emu Heights)
- "Mid Mountains" – 685H (Springwood – North Hazlebrook), 690C (Springwood – Falconbridge), 690K (Springwood – Katoomba), 690P (Springwood – Penrith), 691 (Penrith – Mount Riverview), 692B (Springwood – Buckland), 692H (Springwood – Hawkesbury Heights), 692W (Springwood – Winmalee), 692Y (Springwood – Yellow Rock), 693 (Springwood – Burns Rd) and 694 (Springwood – Bee Farm Rd)
- "Upper Mountains" – 685 (Katoomba – North Wentworth Falls), 686 (Katoomba – Scenic World), 686G (Katoomba – Katoomba Golf Club), 690H (Katoomba – Katoomba Hospital), 690K (Katoomba – Springwood), 695 (Katoomba – South Leura), 696 (Katoomba – South Katoomba), 697 (Katoomba – North Katoomba), 698 (Katoomba – Blackheath) & 698V (Katoomba – Mount Victoria).

Nowra Coaches:

- 724 (East Nowra and West Nowra)
- 732 & 733 (Nowra to Bay and Basin)

Both timetables are still issued in the Nowra Coaches format.

Rover Coaches:

- 160 (Cessnock – Newcastle), 163 and 164 (Cessnock – Maitland)
- 162 (Cessnock – Kearsley), 165 (East and West Cessnock (East West City Hoppa)), 167 (Nulkaba and South Cessnock (North South City Hoppa)), 168 (Cessnock – Millfield), 171 (Kurri Kurri Hoppa).

M52 printed timetable (sort of)

A contentious issue among the travelling public relating to the Metrobus services introduced in recent years has been the lack of a printed and stop timetables for the Metrobus routes operated by Sydney Buses (M10, M20, M30, M40, M41, M50, M52 and M54), especially given private operators Veolia and Hillbus have chosen to produce a printed timetables for their services. Although the state government touts the routes as “turn up and go” services that passengers don’t need to refer to a timetable, few would argue that 15 or 20 minute headways that finish in the early evening satisfies this criteria compared with equivalent services operating in other cities. Full timetables can be viewed using the clumsy 131500.com.au website and various smartphone apps, but the Sydney Buses website fails to include this information, with only presenting vague summary information and maps. Such a policy to restrict timetable information is even bizarre when they continue to make available full printed timetables for other high frequency routes, such as the 333/380/381 services between Circular Quay and North Bondi.

The October 2013 timetable for Victoria Road corridor services 500/510/520/M52/X00 has gone some way to rectify this situation. Previously, a timetable showing only all stops 520 (Parramatta – City via Victoria Road) services in the early morning & late evening was produced, incorporating a complex summary table trying to explain travel times, stopping patterns, frequencies and span of the M52 along Victoria Road during the day. The latest timetable now includes M52 trips on the same timetable panels as 520, showing early and late M52 services in full, along with selected daytime services where frequencies change. This new approach makes it much easier for passengers to work when the first bus and last bus will be (including early morning short workings), expected travel times, provides a rough guide to clock face departures during the day and demonstrates clearly to new passengers how the route integrates with the all-stops after hours 520 service.

Rolling out similar timetables for the other Metrobus corridors, along with detailed stop timetables, would be a welcome step forward.

Windsor Interim services

In addition to special interim evening services Busways operated on the former Westbus routes in the Penrith area from 7 to 18 October due to the old train timetable still being in operation (see October *Table Talk*), additional trips based on the old Westbus & Hawksbury Valley timetables were provided during the week of 14 October after planned trackworks were cancelled. These included:

- 661 ex Pitt Town Road at 06:16
- 668 ex Spinks Road at 05:45, 06:15 and 06:45
- 675A ex Bligh Park Shops at 05:03, 05:33, 06:03, 06:33 and 06:59
- 675A ex Windsor at 15:54, 16:24, 16:54, 17:24, 17:54 and 18:24
- 675C ex Richmond at 07:02

- 675C ex Windsor at 16:24, 16:54, 17:24, 17:54, 18:24, 18:54, 19:21, 19:51, 20:21 and 21:21
- 676 ex Windsor at 06:04 and 18:20
- 677 ex Richmond at 17:30
- 678 ex Castlereagh Road at 07:03
- 680 ex Bells Road at 06:28
- 680 ex Richmond at 16:28, 16:58 and 18:04
- 682 ex Kurrajong Shops at 06:24, 06:49 and 07:20
- 682 ex Richmond at 16:28, 16:58, 17:32, 18:02, 18:32, 19:02 and 20:02.

Deckers on 607X

By early October Hillsbus were operating their CDi double decker buses on selected services on 607X (Rouse Hill Town Centre – City). The five buses have been used throughout the week on M61 (Castle Hill – City) since 10 June.

Northern Territory

Government bus strikes continue

Darwin Bus Services drivers continued industrial action during October as they continue to seek a fair pay increase from the Territory government. Reduced service timetables were issued for services on October 3 and 4, however drivers showed up for work and took action by refusing to collect fares or wear uniforms. A stop work meeting was called on 17 October, with services reduced after 16:30, which avoid impacting school student. Lists of cancelled trips were made available. Drivers from private contractor Buslink, who jointly operate the Darwinbus network, continue to provide services during each shutdown.

Queensland

Logan and Park Ridge SEQ changes

TransLink undertook community information sessions during October for upcoming timetable changes affecting Bus Queensland Park Ridge and Logan City Bus Service routes across the outer southern suburbs. These changes are the result of the SEQ bus review process undertaken in the first half of 2013. New maps are available online along with frequency and span summaries. Proposed changes include:

- 534 (Browns Plains – Springfield Town Centre): In addition the short extension to Springfield Central Station in December, the route will be realigned in Hillcrest next year following the removal of 544
- 540 (Beaudesert – City) will be truncated at Browns Plains, but services increased to hourly
- 542 (Browns Plains – Park Ridge): Rerouted directly along Browns Plains Rd
- 543 (Browns Plains – Heritage Park): Weekday span reduced and weekend services dropped
- 544 (Browns Plains – Forestdale): Removed due to low patronage. Replaced in Hillcrest by 534
- Additional peak trips for P546 (Park Ridge – City) and modified to follow P142 in CBD
- New 547 (Browns Plains – Woodridge) service introduced for Drewvale residents
- 550 (Browns Plans – Springfield): Reduced Sunday span
- 552 (Loganholme – Kingston): Weeknight services dropped
- 553 (Beenleigh – Tinder Park): Reduced weeknight and Sunday span
- 554 (Logan – Garden City): Additional peak services serving Kuraby Station. Reduced span on weekdays and Sundays.
- 556 (Griffith Uni – Loganholme): University semester service removed due to low patronage and duplication of Routes 555 and 560

- 557 (Garden City – Springwood): Axed due to low patronage, passengers can still access 545 or 550 nearby
- 558 (Logan City loop): Axed due to low patronage, passengers can still access 545, 550, 562 or 563 nearby
- 560 (Loganholme – Browns Plains): Reduced weekday span
- 562 (Loganholme – Beenleigh), 563 (Loganholme – Bethania) and 565 (Windaroo – Loganholme) will have reduced weekday & Saturday span. Sunday services on 562 and 563 will be replaced by new loop services 564 and 568 (Beenleigh – Loganholme – Beenleigh) operating every 2 hours in each direction along with a new Sunday extension to 565
- 570 (Cornubla – Loganholme) will run a reduced weekday span with weekend services dropped
- Weekend services on 572 (Loganholme – Springwood) reduced from half hourly to hourly. It's unclear if evening services operating as an extension of 555 will remain half hourly
- 574 (Loganholme – Springwood) will run a reduced weekday span with weekend services dropped
- 576 (Springwood – Garden City) will operate a reduced span across the week
- 578 (Springwood – Garden City): Reduced span on weeknights & Saturday mornings. Sunday services cancelled.
- Timetable & running time adjustments on Routes 541, 545, 550, 551, 552, 553, 554, 555, 560, 561, 566, P569, 571, 573, 574, 575, 576, 577, 578, P581 and 582.

Timetable changes will take place in "early to mid 2014".

Tramways tradition ends

The Brisbane Transport changes on 14 October that saw Route 199 skipping Fortitude Valley are significant, as it sees the end of the tradition of all New Farm services operating through the 'Valley', a legacy carried over from the tram routes that closed in the late 1960s.

Halloween Street Party in Manly

A special 15 minute loop service between Wynnum Central & Manly Esplanade was provided on 26 October for those attending the Manly Harbour Village Halloween Street Party which took place between 11:00 and 21:00.

Gold Coast 600

Rev heads attending the Gold Coast 600 V8 Supercars races on 25 to 27 October were able to catch a range of special shuttle buses, including:

- Additional buses along Gold Coast Hwy stopping at Main Beach and Surfers Paradise from 07:00 until 24:00 on Friday and Saturday and until 22:30 on Sunday
- Shuttle buses from Gold Coast Turf Club every 5 to 15 mins from 06:30 to 19:00
- Shuttle buss from Helensvale Station every 5 to 20 mins from 06:30 to 19:00
- Shuttle buses between Surfers Paradise and Nerang following the V8 Supercars Concert every 15 to 20 mins until 23:30 on both Friday and Saturday evening

South Australia

Additional 3am 'curfew' buses

Coinciding with new late night trading restrictions for clubs and bars in the Adelaide CBD from 6 October, additional Saturday evening services are being trialed on After Midnight bus routes for 3 months. The extra services depart the City around 03:00, when restrictions for re-entry into venues commence. To avoid dead-running, some routes have also had an additional inbound service added. Timetables have not been reissued as yet, instead a summary sheet showing all additional departures across

Adelaide has been made available, to be read in conjunction with existing timetables.

New rail shuttle buses

In a bid to quell increasing community discontent over delays with the reopening of the Noarlunga line following major reconstruction and electrification works, the state government introduced two free shuttle services on 8 October. One service operates between Hove and Oaklands every 15 minutes during weekday peak periods, connecting with the N3X substitute service, while Seaford residents can catch peak express buses running every 40 minutes to Noarlunga, where they can transfer onto a City service. It is unclear the market for the latter service, given Seaford is already served by T722 and T748 express buses to both the City & Noarlunga.

Southern Expressway works

Honeypot Road in Noarlunga Downs will be closed for approximately 6 months from 26 October due to Southern Expressway duplication works. Circular routes 743 and 744 in Hackham West & Huntfield Heights will be modified during the duration of the works, with services operating as a combined 744 route east of the expressway on a special timetable. Return trips have been extended by approximately 15 minutes.

City Connector proposal

Community consultation is currently underway for proposed changes to the free City loop services in a bid to integrate the state government funded 99C and the Adelaide Council's Adelaide Connector and provide improved access to North Adelaide. Presently on weekdays a 20 min service operates on 99C (weekends half hourly) while the Adelaide Connector only runs hourly. Under the proposed upgrade, services in the CBD would increase to 15 minutes on weekdays, with half-hourly services provided through North Adelaide 7 days. Services would be bi-directional. Proposed implementation date is Australia Day 2014.

Temporary Adelaide Connector timetable

The Adelaide Connector bus operated to a temporary timetable from September 20 until early November as a result of roadworks affecting the centre roadway at Victoria Square. A number of Adelaide Metro routes also faced detours & missed stops.

Real-time information on track

O-bahn passengers will be the first to be able to access real-time information for their services as part of a progressive roll-out across all metropolitan bus, train and tram routes. The information will initially be available online from late October, however display screens will be rolled out in conjunction with future upgrades to stops and stations. The system utilises the GPS tracking component of the Metrocard Smartcard ticketing equipment.

Victoria

Transdev reprints

PTV has begun reissuing timetable booklets for new operator Transdev. New timetables sighted so far include:

- 235/237/238 (City – Fishermans Bend / Port Melbourne) – dated 22 April 2012
- 901 (Melbourne Airport – Frankston) – dated 26 September 2010
- 903 (Altona – Mordialloc) dated 26 April 2010

Each timetable shows a print date of August 2013. The 901 timetable booklet still shows Grenda's as the operator on introduction pages! This adds to other sights in the previous reprint (see March *Table Talk*) that included outdated references to Plenty Valley Town Centre on timetable pages which have not been corrected.

Springvale grade-separation works

September saw various closures of the Springvale Road level crossing at Springvale to allow for the construction of a new bridge deck as part of the long awaited grade separation. Works were carried out between 22:00 and 06:00 nightly from 31 August to 6 September, followed by a full closure from 21 to 29 September.

Buses on Routes 813, 814, 902 and 980 were diverted along Westall Road during the closures, with Transdev providing a shuttle service between Springvale Junction and Springvale following the 902 timetable. Route 885 services to Glen Waverley were unaffected other than temporary relocation of the terminus.

These works also required the closure of platform 2 at Springvale between 16 and 29 September, with special shuttle buses operating to/from Sandown Park. Train services continued to operate during the works.

Additional 216 and 220 peak trips

To cater for increased loadings expected during the latest shutdown of the Sunbury line from October 3 to October 13 (as part of the Regional Rail Link works), Transdev provided additional 'unadvertised' peak services on their parallel 216 and 220 services between Sunshine, Footscray and the City. Passenger information regarding the shutdown recommends both routes as an alternative to the frequent rail replacement service. Melbourne Bus Link provided similar backup services during previous shutdowns.

Craigieburn Central opens

31 October saw the opening of a new shopping complex in Melbourne's expanding outer north. Craigieburn Central is located 3km west of the suburb's railway station and is served Broadmeadows Bus Service's Route 529 (Craigieburn – Craigieburn West) service with a route change via Lygon Drive & Central Park Avenue taking effect the previous week on 22 October. Residents living in the Highlands estate in Craigieburn North can catch 535 services into Craigieburn West to reach the centre.

Cox Plate scratching

Moonee Valley Coaches advised via their official Facebook and Twitter pages that Route 506 would operate a standard timetable on 26 October, with the last bus departing Moonee Ponds as normal at 18:00. This was less than 15 minutes after the Race 8, the Cox Plate, was run and won, with no option for those staying for Race 9 at 18:15. For a number of years the printed timetable has advised that a special bus operates after daytime race meetings, however it seems that this tradition has faded. The earlier start of daylight savings in recent years has led to a later race day program for the Cox Plate than previously – in years past the last race was held prior to 18:00.

Summer in the outer north

The summer timetable for the community bus service linking Patton Hill, Smiths Gully, St Andrews and Cottles Bridge to Hurstbridge recommenced on October 19, incorporating a 17:20 departure ex Hurstbridge. The summer timetable operates until 12 April, with a break during over the Christmas holidays. Special buses were also provided from Hurstbridge on Sunday 27 October for those attending the Paton Hill Festival.

Wallan & Kilmore get onboard with myki

Town Buses in Wallan and Kilmore became part of the myki ticketing system from 28 October with paper tickets discontinued on 10 November. This follows the recent roll-out of myki on V/Line interurban commuter trains in June and July, with majority of passengers of these routes interchange onto Seymour line trains. Other regional commuter feeder services in Bacchus Marsh and Gisborne continue to operate with paper tickets.

Western Australia

Late October timetable changes

TransPerth introduced various timetable changes on 27 October, including:

- Additional off-peak trips on Route 111 between Fremantle and Perth, timed in conjunction with 106 to maximise frequency along Canning Highway
- 140 (Fremantle – East Perth) was renumbered as 160 but continues to operate the same alignment
- 584 (Mandurah – Madoora Bay) modified to serve the Gordon Rd shopping precinct
- Timing changes to Routes 98, 99, 104, 105, 106, 148, 150, 158, 160, 881 and 940

The following timetables were reissued:

- Western 34 (Routes 150 and 160)
- Western 36 (Routes 104, 105, 106 and 111)
- Western 39 (Routes 148 and 158)
- Western 46 (Route 940)
- Southern 118 (Route 881)
- Southern 132 (Routes 583, 584, 586 and 587)
- Circle route 200 (Routes 98 and 99)

Warwick community consultation

Public comment was sought during October regarding various route changes around Warwick, including:

- Additional peak services on 441, 442 and 446 to Whitfields Station, reducing the need to back-track from Warwick
- Route changes to 441 and 442 in Sorrento & Duncraig which will eliminate a time consuming right turn into Marmion Avenue for 441 services
- Realignment of 447 in Warwick to avoid duplication with 344 along Erindale Rd, which now operates to an increased frequency. Buses would instead follow the 446 path into Warwick.

Joondara community consultation

Feedback is also sought regarding changes to Routes 403 and 404 (Osborne Park – Perth). One concept involves merging Routes 403 and 404 into a single higher frequency route in Tuart Hill and Joondarnna. (timetabled with 402 along Loftus St) while the other would see both routes retained with minor modifications made to the Route 404 alignment through Joondarnna. Both proposals also would see the extension of both 403 & 404 from Osborne Park to Stirling.

Thanks to: Tony Bailey, Jason Blackman, Matthew Ellen, Ian Hammond, Geoff Hassall, Peter Hobbs, Victor Isaacs, Michael Marshall, John Morphett, N. McKay, Lourie Smit, Greg Traverris, J. Ward, T. Woolley and various contributors on *Australian Transport Discussion Board*.

FERRY NEWS

Sydney Ferries & Manly Fast Ferries

Sydney Ferries maintained a regular timetable on the Harbour on the long weekend of 5-7 October during the huge Naval review, except for 1800 until 2100 on Saturday 5 October when the spectacular fireworks display was underway. However, the ferries struggled to cope with the huge crowds.

All **Sydney Ferries** timetables were re-issued for the timetable change of 20 October. **Manly Fast Ferries** also issued a new timetable from 20 October. This is as a result of some wharf times clashing as a result of the Sydney Ferry timetable changes.

Thanks to Tony Bailey and Lourie Smit for Ferry news.

AIR NEWS

International

Jetstar will commence flights from Adelaide to Denpasar, Bali, on 18 December.

Thanks to Tony Bailey and the *Australian* for Air news.

ODD SPOT – Egypt does not undertake half measures

Do you sometimes query the extent, duration and reasons for Australian metropolitan railway closedowns? Well, perhaps we are lucky, compared to others. What about this? On 14 September the interim Egyptian government closed down the entire national passenger railway system, in order to prevent Muslim Brotherhood demonstrators travelling to Cairo. The closedown remained in effect for at least the next month. The result was severe traffic congestion and costs, and economic and social dislocation throughout the country. Egyptian Railways usually convey nearly 1300 million passenger kilometres annually.

About *Table Talk*

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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