



TABLE TALK

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NEW RAIL TIMETABLES

ARTC: WTT 26 October 2014

ARTC will introduce a new Working Timetable from 26 October 2014. As usual, copies are available on the ARTC website. Click on "Operations" or go direct to www.artc.com.au/Content.aspx?p=160

Analysis by Geoff Lambert: There will be a considerable reduction in train services on some lines. Due, apparently, to declining intermodal traffic, Pacific National have combined their steel trains with their intermodal trains numbers BM2/MB2 on the ARTC North-South corridor between Melbourne and Brisbane. Only one steel train, a southbound empty, survives. It is unclear yet how PN is going to be able to pack two trains into one and whether this is going to cause crossing difficulties on the NSW North Coast. PN's BM4/MB4 services remain, as do Aurizon's BM7/MB7 services- but rumours abound that both companies may withdraw entirely from intermodal service on this route. Because of dissatisfaction with Port of Melbourne service, Qube has switched its CM1/MC1 Riverina-Melbourne services to run to Port Botany instead. These two changes have taken about one-third of the freight train services off the North East Standard Gauge tracks in Victoria.

NSW Country Regional Network WTT 26 October 2014

John Holland Rail NSW Country Regional Network will introduce a new Working Timetable from 26 October 2014. As usual, copies are available on the JHRCRN website. Click on "Network Operations and Access" or go direct to www.jhrcrn.com.au/Documents.asp?ID=67&Title=Standard+Working+Timetable+%28SWTT%29&pg=1&start=1

With this edition, the JHR NSW CRN WTT has been changed to the same irritating format as ARTC WTTs, that is, a separate table for each day of the week, even where there is no variation in times.

Most of the alterations are to coal trains over the very small distance between Lithgow and Lidsdale. The alterations are: **No. 3372** (Pacific National intermodal 550m) MTWTFs will depart Griffith 0910, arrive Wumbulgal 0945, depart 1225, arrive Murrumbidgee 1240 forms D373

D373 (PN 44m) MTWTFs will depart Murrumbidgee 1315, pass Wumbulgal 1323, arrive Griffith 1339 locos to attach to xCM3

1565 (QUBE 700m) Tue, Thur will run as tabled by ARTC to pass Narrabri Junction 0717, arrive Narrabri West 0720, depart 0930, pass Narrabri Junction 0935 thence as tabled by ARTC

1565 (QUBE 700m) Sun will run as tabled by ARTC to pass Narrabri Junction 0712, arrive Narrabri West 0715, depart 0930, pass Narrabri Junction 0933 thence as tabled by ARTC

LS69 (PN Coal 850m) Sat, Sun will run as tabled by Sydney Trains to pass Hermitage 1004, Coxs River 1014, arrive Lidsdale 1028 forms ER64

ER64 (PN C 850m) Sat, Sun will depart Lidsdale 1522, pass Coxs River 1534, Hermitage 1550 thence as tabled by Sydney Trains

LS98 (PN C 850m) MTWTF will depart Lidsdale 0736, pass Coxs River 0741, Hermitage 0800 thence as tabled by Sydney Trains

LS01 (Southern Short Haul 850m) MTWTF will run as tabled by Sydney Trains to pass Hermitage 1730, Coxs River 1743, arrive Lidsdale 1756 form LS02

1221 (PN 891m) MTWTFs will increase in length to 900m

2122 (PN 891m) MTWTFs will increase in length to 900m

LS71 (SSH) Sat, Sun, **LS72** (SSH) Sat, Sun, **LS09** (PNC)

Sat, Sun **LS10** (PNC) Sun, **LS73** (SSH) MTWTF, **LS74**

(SSH) MTWTF, **LS09** (PN Coal) MTWT, **LS10** (PNC) M-

WTF, **LS10** (PNC) Tue, **LS09** (PNC) Fri, **LS10** (PNC) Sun

are deleted.

V/Line timetable 12 October 2014

V/Line will introduce a new timetable from 12 October 2014. The main features are opening of new stations at Waurn Ponds and Epsom.

Most Geelong line trains will be extended from Marshall to Waurn Ponds (5.5 km) – generally all except a few in the peaks. There will be four weekday morning peak period trains, three in the afternoon weekday peak from Southern Cross, and trains almost hourly throughout the day and on weekends. Warrnambool trains will also stop at Waurn Ponds (at the cost of two minutes extra running time in each direction). More off-peak services will stop at minor stations of North Shore, Corio, Little River as well as stopping at Werribee, reducing gaps at these stations from two-hourly to hourly.

One peak Bendigo train will be extended to/from Epsom. In addition, the existing Echuca trains will stop there (at the cost of two minutes extra running time in each direction). There is an additional train starting at Eaglehawk at 0622. The 1623 from Southern Cross to Bendigo is extended to Eaglehawk, arriving at 1829.

Shepparton has an additional early morning train departing 0515. This is formed by extending the 0620 from Seymour to start at Shepparton, but there is no equivalent new down train. Working Timetables are not yet publicly available, so it is not known how this train is balanced.

There are also new Public timetables for the Ballarat and Seymour lines.

The next V/Line timetable is expected in April 2015 when the final section of the Regional Rail Link will open for Geelong line trains.

RAIL AND TRAM NEWS

Queensland Rail CityTrain: G20 meeting

During the G20 summit of world leaders in Brisbane, there will be considerable disruption to normal transport (and to everything else). From 10 until 13 November trains will run through but not stop at South Brisbane station. From 14 to 16 November trains will not be allowed through the station. Presumably Beenleigh and Gold Coast trains will be diverted via Sherwood. The NSW Train Link XPT is expected to terminate/start at Casino. Friday 14 November will be a special public holiday in Brisbane so that all resources are devoted to the summit. The official advice is that from 14 until 16 November "Changes to public transport timetabling in the Brisbane CBD and South Bank should...be expected. The re-routing of services and the early termination of services may cause delays and people should leave extra time ahead of their journey."

Qube: Junee to Sydney, not Melbourne

Qube's Junee/Harefield - Melbourne trains CM 1 and MC 1 made their last run on 14 September. From the next day, these 1200-1500 metre intermodal trains consisting almost entirely of 40 foot export boxes on 4-slot wagons began running instead to Botany, (Port of Sydney). This is believed to be due to Qube's and client Visy's dissatisfaction with service and pricing at the Port of Melbourne. Whether this will be a permanent arrangement remains to be seen.

ARTC: Hunter Valley closedown

The latest in the regular series of programmed closures of Hunter Valley lines was from Tuesday 30 September until Friday 3 October. NSW Train Link services to NW NSW were replaced by buses for the entire journey.

NSW: Where are the freight trains?

Despite the NSW government having an aim to increase the volume of containers moved from the port of Botany from 14% to 40%, the rail share has declined to about 13%. The intermodal terminal at Enfield, which was to open in 2012 and be the terminus of container trains from the port, is now expected to open late this year. A planned terminal at Moorebank is some years away. The NSW minister for Roads and Freight, Duncan Gay, conceded on 21 September that the amount of freight on NSW's roads, rather than on rail, was a "slight embarrassment" and attributed the split to improved road access to the port.

Sydney: North West Rail services

Good news: The NSW government has announced that when services on the North West line commence in the first half of 2019 there will be 15 trains an hour in the peaks, ie, every four minutes, and every ten minutes off-peak.

Bad news: When the Chatswood to Epping line – opened as recently as 2008 – is transferred to the North West Rail operating consortium, it will be closed for seven months (from late 2018 to early 2019) for conversion to different standards! These changes are mainly to install platform-edge doors, raise the track height at platforms for single deck trains, and alter the signalling.

Sydney: Pain on the train to the plane

The NSW government has decided not to remove the station access fee for passengers travelling by train to Sydney Airport. It cited contractual reasons and budgetary forecasts of revenue. The adult fee of \$12.60 (children \$10.60) applies to all passengers with tickets to or from both of the privately-owned stations, Domestic and International, at Sydney Airport. Last year 150,000 passengers travelled to Sydney Airport by train. This is only 15% of airport users, a much lower figure than at comparable airports also served by rail services.

Sydney Trains: Leppington line energised.

The new South West line from Glenfield to Leppington will be commissioned from 18 to 20 October. (Weekly Notice 39 refers.) Services are expected to commence in January 2015.

Sydney Trains: Major closedown

Services between Port Kembla and Wollongong were replaced by buses from Monday 22 September until Friday 3 October.

Metro Trains Melbourne: Flagstaff station

Both the present Victorian government and opposition have pledged to open Flagstaff station on weekends. Flagstaff has not been opened at weekends since the City underground loop opened in 1981 because that part of the City was then mainly devoted to business. Since then, there has been significant residential development in the vicinity.

This is similar to pledges by both sides to introduce a 20 minute off-peak weekday service on the Geelong line after opening of the Regional Rail Link.

The next Metro and V/Line timetable change is expected in April 2015 which will include full opening of the Regional Rail Link.

Metro Trains Melbourne: Skipping stations

The Victorian Opposition says if it wins the 29 November election it will stop Metro's policy of skipping stations and locking in passengers in order to make up lost time. It follows a warning from Victoria's Public Transport Ombudsman that commuters must be warned before a train switches to express and starts skipping stations. On 22 September Metro conceded that some peak-hour services are switching to express and that this was "the wrong decision". Metro said there was no "minimum warning time" for announcing to commuters a train is being changed to express, but added it tried to give as much notice as possible. Labor Deputy Leader James Merlino said that if Labor won government it would review the policy with a possible ban the likely outcome. "We've got [Transport Minister] Terry Mulder crowing about punctuality, but it's on the back of skipping stations and manipulating timetables," Mr Merlino said. He said under Labor, transport operators would be forced to stick to the timetable.

Metro spokeswoman Larisa Tait said altering a service to run express was only used to assist when recovering from a major disruption, or to avoid a knock-on effect that would ultimately lead to a major delay. When we alter a service, we ensure that our drivers and station staff are made aware of the changes to make announcements, and aim to express services running in the off-peak direction, impacting only the minority of customers." She said a Metro review into the practice of altering services had revealed some services were "expressed" in the peak direction. "We concede that on these occasions the wrong decision has been made and we apologise to our customers who have been affected by this. We heavily monitor how often and which services are altered to run express, and resort to the practice as infrequently as possible. We understand this approach inconveniences some of our customers, but our aim is to ensure the majority get to their destination on time, while delaying the smallest number of customers possible."

Mr Mulder denied skipping stations was about trying to improve statistics around performance. "Fatalities, sick customers, police operations, vandalised trains ... if something like that happens and you get a train out of sequence, and drivers out of sequence, you can either leave

it like that for the rest of the day and disadvantage a whole range of passengers or as quickly as is possible stabilise the timetable," he said. He said the number of trains skipping stations was very low, about .5% of services a week.

If a train service is switched to run express, it counts as a "partial cancellation" and contributes to Metro's delivery performance result. In the 12 months to August, Metro altered 2421 services to run express out of 738,896 services.

Metro Trains Melbourne: On to Mernda?

The Victorian Opposition has promised that if it wins the State election on 29 November it will commence construction of an extension of the South Morang line to Mernda. The 5 km extension would take about five years to build at a cost of \$400-600 million. There has been substantial residential development in this area.

Metro Trains Melbourne, Pacific National & V/Line operations

All Pacific National grain trains operating on the Metro Trains network must be followed by a scheduled Metro Trains suburban electric multiple unit train prior to a V/Line VLocity service operating on that line. (Weekly Operational Notice 25/2014 refers). (Presumably this edict has resulted after split grain has caused track circuit systems to not operate.)

V/Line: Hopetoun line upgrade

Work has started on a \$10 million upgrade of the 112 km freight line between Murtoa, Warracknabeal and Hopetoun. More than 50,000 timber sleepers will be replaced. Victorian Public Transport Minister, Terry Mulder, said the track upgrade will allow temporary train speed restrictions to be lifted. At present there are some 20 km/h speed restrictions.

The Monday-Friday mineral sands train operated by Pacific National for Iluka Minerals (see September *Table Talk*, page 4) was rescheduled to operate about one hour earlier from 8 September, presumably to facilitate this work.

V/Line: Bacchus Marsh trains resume

As from Friday 5 September (1748 down) and Monday 8 September (0611 up) Bacchus Marsh trains which had been cancelled because of a shortage of VLocity DMUs resumed (see September *Table Talk*, page 6).

North Melbourne Flyover XPT derailment

The North Melbourne Flyover was closed from late evening on Saturday 13 September until early morning Monday 15 September. Scheduled trains could not operate over it, and trains under it were re-routed onto other tracks. On the Sunday broad gauge and standard gauge locomotives operated over the Flyover to test the new track arrangements. Then from 2200 on Wednesday 17 September until 0400 next day an empty NSW Train Link XPT tested the Flyover tracks. This is a step on the restoration of XPT services into Melbourne. They have been terminating/starting at Broadmeadows since a derailment on the Flyover on 11 July.

Geoff Lambert adds: On 11 July 2014 a NSW Train Link standard gauge interstate XPT passenger train derailed on points on the North Melbourne dual-gauge flyover. All services across the flyover were suspended for some time, while engineers worked to discover the cause of the derailment, which was at first mysterious. The problem occurred as the train was attempting to negotiate the diverge leg of brand new type 37 mixed gauge (1435mm / 1600mm) turnout. The derailment occurred at the wheel transfer area approximately midway along the point blade of the turnout. The train wheel-sets had a rim width of 127mm. Due to the design of the wheel transfer area of some mixed and dual gauge turnouts, rolling stock with wheel-sets of 127mm rim width are at higher risk of derailment than wheelsets of

140mm rim width. Similar mixed gauge and dual gauge (1435mm / 1600mm) turnouts are used elsewhere on Australian rail networks.

After this discovery, broad gauge services were allowed to resume, but standard gauge services – specifically XPT services – remain suspended indefinitely while a solution to the problem is sought. Given that this may require a complete re-think on the design of such points, the disruption to XPT services may remain for some time- the earliest anticipated return of services is 4 October. In the interim, passengers board or disembark the XPT at Broadmeadows and are shuttled to and from Southern Cross by bus. The arriving services continue to McIntyre Loop to be serviced and/or stored before returning to Broadmeadows to pick up northbound passengers.

V/Line: Significant closedowns

A closedown of the North Melbourne Flyover is reported in the preceding item.

Trains between Shepparton and Seymour will be replaced by buses from Monday 6 until Friday 10 October.

V/Line: Patronage 2013-14

V/Line's Annual Report for 2013-14 shows patronage for the year at 14,474,749 compared to 14,715,601 the year before. The decline was on the Ballarat and Bendigo lines and is attributed to closedowns for Regional Rail Link works and the transfer of Diggers Rest and Sunbury stations from V/Line to Metro Trains. 13,002,311 passenger trips were by rail and 1,472,438 were by bus. V/Line's loss for the year was \$6.913 million compared to \$11.221 million the year before.

V/Line: Bendigo-Echuca line

The Bendigo-Echuca line will be upgraded at a cost of more than \$1 million over the next year. Eight bridges will be upgraded from timber to concrete at a cost of \$730,000, and \$400,000 spent on upgrading bridge decks and undertaking track on the line to Deniliquin NSW, used by SunRice for containerised rice. 20,000 passengers a year use V/Line Echuca line trains.

Avalon Airport: Will it gain a train to the plane?

Plans for a rail link connecting Avalon Airport to Melbourne and Geelong have been released by the Victorian government but no timeline has been given for its construction. The route would connect the airport to the existing railway between Lara and Little River. In 2010 the Coalition promised to start construction of the rail link in its first term, but has since said the airport would need to increase passenger numbers first. Currently Jetstar is the only commercial airline that uses Avalon and operates five flights in and out of Sydney every day. Victoria's Public Transport Minister Terry Mulder would not say how many flights Avalon Airport needed to secure to make a rail link viable. "It could be more domestic flights, it could be more international flights," Mr Mulder said. He said the plans would give the airport's managers confidence to attract more flights.

Great Southern Railway: Overland bustitution

The Overland departing Adelaide on Monday 29 December will be replaced by a bus, as will the Overland departing Melbourne on Tuesday 30 December 2014. Obviously, this is a sign of more far-reaching closedowns around Melbourne in the Christmas period. *Table Talk* will report these as details become available.

WA Iron ore transport

A contract formerly held by Aurizon for transport of iron ore from Mt Walton (west of Kalgoorlie) to Kwinana has now been transferred to Mineral Resources Ltd, but will, in fact, be managed and crewed by Pacific National.

Transwa: Avonlink service increased

Transwa's AvonLink rail service which operates between Northam and Midland will receive nine extra return services per week from 1 December. This will include two extra return services on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays, a new return service on weekends and one return service for 10 special events per year. The timetable for these has not yet been released. The present timetable has just one return service from Northam to Midland on weekdays only, plus a Perth-Merredin return on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. One year ago, the Avonlink was to be scrapped altogether, but local pressure saved it. Now \$6,575,000 from the WA Royalties for Regions program will be provided to support the Avonlink over the next three years.

Transperth: Trains to Fremantle resume

Train service between North Fremantle and Fremantle resumed from Monday 1 September. Services had been replaced by buses since the Fremantle railway bridge was damaged when a ship slammed into it during storms on 17 August.

Australia Capital Territory

Flexibus launched

A 12-month trial of improved demand responsive buses in Canberra commenced in September as part of the Network '14 network and the establishment of a central Community Transport Coordination Centre to manage phone bookings.

Flexibus is available to seniors and residents with limited mobility along with their carers. Bookings must be made two-days in advance. A fleet of mini-buses operate over four zones covering:

- Inner Belconnen on Mondays, Wednesdays & Thursdays
- Northern Belconnen on Tuesdays & Fridays
- Inner South on Tuesdays, Thursdays & Fridays
- Woden and Weston on Mondays & Fridays

Further routes are due to be introduced in coming months.

Buses pick up at homes from 9:30am onwards and travel to the nearest town centre & hospital. Return buses then depart either Calvary Hospital or Canberra Hospital at 13:30, and Belconnen or Woden 15 mins later.

Nightrider Consultation

ACTION is calling for feedback regarding the design of Nightrider services in 2014 with an online survey running until 20 October. Two options are being considered:

- Suburban Model – following the model of previous years, eight routes would depart Civic Interchange every 90 minutes operating to different suburbs, dropping passengers home at their local bus stop, roaming as appropriate.
- Town Centre Model – A frequent 20 min service would operate along the Blue and Red Rapid corridors to Gungahlin, Belconnen, Woden and Tuggeranong, where passengers would need to find their own way home.

The latest survey follows one conducted earlier in the year seeking feedback on the service provided last December.

Fyshwick parking & Kippax cage

On 20 August a new Park+Ride facility was opened in Fishwick on Canberra Avenue near Tom Price St as part of

Veolia Auckland: Electrification

The final segment of the Auckland suburban system has been energised. The Western suburbs went live on 4 September. However, electric train services will not commence on this line until 2015.

Italy: Another paper timetable succumbs to electronic

The official Italian railway timetable book, In Treno Tutt Italia, is no longer published in hard copy. It is still available electronically to download. It does not appear on FS Italian Railways' English-language website, but is on their Italian language website – see http://www.trenitalia.com/cms-file/allegati/trenitalia/servizi_per/DigitaleTUTTITALIA.pdf. Another Italian timetable, Orario Veltro, is still available in hard copy at station kiosks for €5.

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BUS NEWS

a package of bus priority improvements in the area. Kippax, now served by selected Blue Rapid services, received new secure bike cage on 3 September.

Twitter updates cancelled

ACTION discontinued their handy @ACTIONbusAlerts twitter service as of 12 September, which had advised passengers of cancellations and major delays during the morning peak. Passengers are directed to use the new NXTBus real-time information system to determine if their bus is disrupted. It appears short-sighted to delete the Twitter service only weeks after NXTBus was launched, and before the planned NXTBUS SMS and email alert feature was activated. The Twitter account has unfortunately been deleted, meaning the interesting record of service disruptions can no longer be accessed.

Tidbinbilla Extravaganza buses

Those attending the Tidbinbilla Extravaganza celebrating Aboriginal culture on 19 October can catch a shuttle bus provided by ACTION from Tuggeranong. Return tickets cost \$8 for adults and \$4 for kids, and must be purchased in advance. Buses will depart at 10:00 and return at 15:30.

New South Wales

Transit Systems boost

South-western Sydney bus services received a boost on 22 September with the introduction of improved timetables & routes by Transit Systems, including:

- Services on Route 807 have been split, with the northern half now operating between Cabramatta and Cecil Hills. Southern half has become 827 between Cecil Hills and Liverpool. Following completion of roadworks in Elizabeth Hills, it is proposed to extend 827 to Valley Plaza Shops, as indicated on the booklet timetable pages & map.
- Evening and Sunday services on 807 & 827 doubled to half-hourly, with a common weekend timetable introduced.
- Weeknight services on both routes have been extended by around 30 minutes. Weekend services on 807 ex Cabramatta now finish at 21:52 (previously 20:20 Saturday and 21:20 Sunday), while last 827 departs

Liverpool departs at 22:00 (previously 21:03 Saturday and 20:03 Sunday).

- Sunday frequencies on 809 (Merrylands - Pemulwuy) have doubled to hourly creating a common weekend timetable.
- Peak services have been reviewed on 810, 810X, 811 and 811X (Parramatta – Merrylands).
- Improved evening services are now provided along Old Prospect Road with direct 810X buses via Great Western Highway operating on weeknights between Parramatta and Pemulwuy. Evening shortworkings ex Merrylands now extend to Parramatta as 810X. Trips between 19:00 & 20:00 have doubled to 15 mins intervals, with services after 20:00 weeknights and 18:00 weekends doubling to 30 min intervals. Last bus departs Parramatta at 23:30 weeknights (previously 22:00) and 22:47 weekends (previously 21:14 Saturday and 19:14 Sunday). The new common weekend timetable also sees departures ex Merrylands extended by 72 mins until 18:38.
- 812 (Fairfield - Blacktown) realigned in Pemulwuy to operate directly along Reconciliation Road
- 813 (Fairfield – Prarieewood – Horsley Park) has a revised peak timetable to maintain combined 15 min headways along The Horsley Dr with 812. Changes have been made to weekend departures ex Horsley Park, including a new late morning trip on providing a second service on Sundays.

Timetable updates have also been made to 802, 803, 804 and 806 (Parramatta – Liverpool).

More changes in the mountains

Following timetable changes in August, Blue Mountains Bus Company made further timing revisions on 22 September affecting the following routes:

- 685H (Springwood – North Hazelbrook)
- 690C (Springwood – Faulconbridge)
- 690P (Springwood – Penrith)
- 691 (Penrith – Mt Riverview)
- 692W (Springwood – Winmalee)

PDF files were again made available on the BMBC website highlighting the old & new times, with adjustments of up to 30 mins made. Booklets for Lower, Mid & Upper Mountains have been reissued.

Punchbowl updates

Punchbowl issued updated timetables on 22 September for their Sydney operation to coincide with changes to their accessible bus allocation, although it's not known if the online PDFs have been issued in printed format. Notably, timetables for Routes 446, 940, 945, 946, 953/4/5 & S14 remain in the old operator format and have not been updated to the standardised Transport for NSW format.

Hillsbus October Growth Buses

Improvements keep rolling out in the Hills district, with Hillsbus introducing more than 500 extra weekly services on 4 October as part of the 2014-2015 State Government Growth Buses program, with some routes receiving their fifth upgrade in under a year.

The popular 607X (City – Rouse Hill) receives several enhancements, all outside the height of the peak.

Inbound:

- First weekday departure ex Rouse Hill 30 mins earlier at 04:47, plus an extra service at 06:00
- CBD arrivals between 10:00 & 11:00 weekdays now every 10 mins, formerly every 20 mins
- CBD arrivals between 11:00 & 12:15 weekdays now every 15 mins, formerly every 30 mins
- Six extra trips during the PM counter-peak, with buses operating 15 mins from 15:00 to 18:30

- Extra trips ex Rouse Hill on weekends improving Saturday morning span to 06:23 and providing a 30 min service early morning & early evening, formerly hourly
- CBD arrivals between 10:00 & 13:30 weekends now every 15 mins, formerly every 30 mins

Outbound:

- Two extra counter-peak trips, with a 15 min frequency arriving Rouse Hill around 09:00
- CBD departures between 13:30 and 15:00 weekdays now every 15 mins, formerly every 30 mins
- CBD departures between 15:00 & 16:15 weekdays now every 10 mins, formerly every 15 mins. Two trips operate as per peak variation 617X.
- Weeknight departures upgraded from 30 mins to 15 mins until 22:15
- Extra trips at 23:15 & 24:15, extending Monday to Thursday span by 30 mins and doubling late evening frequency to half-hourly
- CBD departures between 10:10 and 12:10 weekends now every 30 mins, formerly hourly
- CBD departures between 14:40 and 18:40 weekends now every 15 mins, formerly every 30 mins
- Extra trips on Saturday night at 00:40 and 01:40 doubling frequency to half-hourly, plus a new overnight trip one hour later at 03:10

Key improvements elsewhere include:

- Inter-peak, northbound weeknight and Saturday services on 601 (Parramatta – Rouse Hill) upgraded from hourly to half-hourly.
- 611 (Blacktown – Macquarie Park) gains trips at 05:08 and 17:05 ex Blacktown plus 06:05 and 18:15 ex Macquarie Uni, a boost on the previous start times of 05:28 and 06:35 respectively. Weeknight departures ex Macquarie Uni doubled to half-hourly, following previous evening upgrades in January.
- Three westbound weekday 705 services have been extended from Seven Hills to Parramatta, extending arrivals from 07:03 – 17:55 to 06:30 – 18:50, while later trips depart Parramatta at 19:18 and 19:48. On Saturdays five trips have been added or extended at the both ends of the day, while Sunday frequencies have doubled from 2-hourly to hourly. First bus arrives Blacktown at 09:15 instead of 10:15 with last services extended by two hours to 17:57 ex Blacktown and 19:15 ex Parramatta.
- Weekday inter-peak services on T65/T66 between Parramatta and Rouse Hill now operate every 15 mins instead of every 20 mins, following a previous upgrade from 30 min frequency in January, along with a boost to Saturday services from half-hourly to 15 mins. Some additional trips also operate during counter & shoulder peaks & at night.

Timetables for Routes 606 (Parramatta – Winston Hills) and T64 (Parramatta – Rouse Hill) are also being revised.

September Opal rollout

Opal Smartcards became 'legally' valid on the following services during September:

- Selected Hunter Valley Buses services in the Toronto area (260 – 263, 267 – 271, 273 – 276 and 278 – 281) were gazetted from 1 September, although not announced by the Minister's office until 9 September
- Sydney Buses services Routes 400, 401, 407, 408, 410, 460, 462 – 464, 466, 473, 480, 487, 490 – 493, 495, 526 and M41 in the inner-west across Kingsgrove and Burwood gazetted from 3 September, although not announced by the Minister's office until 12 September
- Parramatta Rd and Glebe Road Sydney Buses Routes 433, 442, 448, 501, 508, 510, L37, X04 were gazetted to go live from 17 September, but as a late September

had still not been officially announced or list on the Opal website.

The multi-depot operation of many Sydney Bus routes has seen Opal become valid on selected trips on some routes which are otherwise not officially part of the roll-out yet. Several passengers on these routes have been observed using Opal. There are also instances where selected trips on Opal routes may be operated by a bus from a depot that is yet to go live.

Manly Ferry Express Routes E32, E35, E36 and E41 will require passengers using Opal pay a fare from 20 November. These routes, introduced last July, had been offering free travel to Opal card passengers since September 2013 to encourage early adoption of Opal and to use the trial routes to connect with ferries.

Nowra Coaches consultation and changes

A draft timetable was provided on the Nowra Coaches website as part of community consultation in May and June. Key features of the new timetable included:

- The creation of an hourly loop service through East Nowra, with a two-hourly loop for Worrige.
- Improved connections from East Nowra, West Nowra to Bomaderry Railway, Bomaderry TAFE, South Nowra and the Bay and Basin areas.
- New return shoppers weekday service from and to Hyams Beach and Erowal Bay.
- Direct weekday service from Vincentia / Bayswood Estate along Jervis Bay Road.

Updated timetables have since surfaced on their website issued in August 2014 with more subtle interim changes. The Tuesday and Friday 733 shopper bus no longer serves Wreck Bay or Hyams Beach. The limited afternoon service via Jervis Bay Primary School back to Nowra has also been withdrawn. Among alternations to 732 see the 12:35 trip ex Bomaderry Station moved 15 mins later prior to Nowra avoiding the dwell in town, which more buses operate to Central Ave in South Nowra.

Queanbeyan and Jindabyne Night Buses

As part of an initiative funded by Roads and Maritime services, a night bus service was introduced in Queanbeyan on 13 July, operated by Qcity Transit. The service commences at 22:30 Saturdays, and operates two circuits via the following venues:

- Tourist Hotel, Royal Hotel, Hotel Queanbeyan (Top Pub), Queanbeyan Bowls Club, Queanbeyan Leagues Club, Walshes Hotel, Tigers Club, Jerrabomberra Tavern, Kangaroos Club and the RSL Bowling Club

It is understood passengers may alight at regular stops between venues, although a route map is not available.

After completing the 'venue hopper' circuits, the bus departs the Tourist Hotel at 00:30 for Canberra (Civic). From 9 August a return trip to Queanbeyan's taxi rank was advertised, departing outside the Canberra Theatre (rather than Civic Interchange) at 01:20. Due to government regulations, the bus cannot set down prior to the NSW border. A flat \$2 fare applies to all travel both within Queanbeyan and to/from City, significantly cheaper than regular tickets.

A similar night bus operated around the small Snowy Mountains township of Jindabyne on Wednesday, Friday and Saturday between 26 June and 7 September 2014 at 20 minute intervals, provided by Hummingbird Charters.

Qcity and TBX reprint

CDC issued an updated fold-out timetable for the Qcity Transit & Transborder network in August, the first printed

timetable sighted for Queanbeyan and Yass since the re-brand last July. The new timetable reflects the March 2013 change to Route 834 to incorporate Majura Park (although no map is provided) as well as a routing change to 831 from an unknown date to bypass Sturt Avenue and Canberra Avenue. Annotated wheelchair accessible trips have greatly increased reflecting recent fleet acquisitions, while times for the Thursday only 850 Bungendore Localink is presented in a slightly more conventional format. The 15:00 trip on 836 to Jerrabomberra Heights has been corrected to operate NSW school holidays only - the previous timetable suggested it ran on NSW school days only, stranding unsuspecting customers for 65 mins until the next trip.

Queensland

Cairns joins Translink plus new bus station opens

Conducting with the opening of the Cairns City Bus Station in Lake St on 8 September, Translink has taken over as the governing authority for public transport services in Cairns, replacing the former Qconnect brand of Department of Transport and Main Roads.

Timetables are now issued in the Translink format, while a new sub-site, similar to the one created recently for the Gold Coast, has been launched for as an online destination for public transport information, including integration of the real-time information from the Bus Tracker system previously introduced in November 2011. The existing 10-zone paper fare system remains in place. Service providers are unchanged, with Sunbus operating the urban network & Loves operating school bus services.

Routes entering Cairns City from the north operate via Cairns Hospital, Cairns Private Hospital and Cairns City Bus Station before terminating at Cairns City Shopping Centre, while southern suburb routes terminate at Cairns City Bus Station. As part of the changes, buses no longer serve Abbott St or operate to The Pier. The interim terminus at The Pier was introduced in March to facilitate the works, with revised timetables issued at the time.

Sunday services are now hourly on the following routes:

- 112 (Smithfield to Yorkeys Knob) – was 2-hourly, last bus now at 19:10 instead of 21:10
- 120 (Cairns City – Smithfield) – was 2-hourly
- 121 (Cairns City – Redlynch) – was 2-hourly, last outbound bus now at 21:25 instead of 20:18
- 122 (James Cook Uni – Redlynch) – was 90 mins, last outbound bus at 21:57 instead of 20:45
- 123 (Cairns Central – James Cook Uni) – was 90 mins, all trips continue to terminate at Redlynch
- 130 & 131 (Cairns City – Raintrees Shopping Centre) – was 90 mins/45 mins combined, now 30 mins combined. Last outbound 130 at 19:30, previously 21:13
- 133 (Cairns City – Earlville) – was hourly, last outbound bus at 18:40, instead of 16:31
- 142 (Cairns City – Edmonton) – was two-hourly, first inbound bus at 07:55 instead of 09:08, last outbound bus at 18:00 instead of 16:13

Later Friday buses operate on the following routes:

- 121 – last bus at 22:32 instead of 21:28
- 122 – last bus at 23:08 instead of 21:02
- 142 – last bus at 22:45 instead of 21:43
- 143W (Cairns City - Mt Sheridan Plaza) – last bus at 23:25 instead of 22:15

Route 122 has been realigned through Caravonica to improve coverage.

New Toowoomba Bus Station

The existing Toowoomba Bus Station on Neil St in Toowoomba was refurbished during the first half of 2014. The upgraded interchange was re-opened on 30 June and saw the relocation of Bus Queensland and Greyhound services from the former long distance interchange to one consolidated location.

South Australia

Show shuttles

In addition to changes to stopping restrictions to limited stop and express buses in the vicinity of the Adelaide Showgrounds for the duration of the Royal Adelaide Show from 5 to 14 September, two shuttle buses were available. 21W operated every 15 mins departing Currie St from 08:00 (09:00 Sundays). Last buses departed at 23:20 Monday to Saturday and 21:20 Sundays. A half-hourly 22W bus operated along the O-Bahn, departing Tea Tree Plaza from 09:00 Monday to Saturday and 09:30 Sundays, with selected morning trips originating at Golden Grove. Last buses departed the show until 22:45 Monday to Saturday and 20:15 on Sunday.

SANFL Grand Final Express

To cater for almost 40,000 fans attending the SANFL grand final at Adelaide Oval on 21 September, Adelaide Metro operated the Footy Express network on a special timetable. Selected regional routes also provided services.

Victoria

October Transdev revisions

Following widespread community outrage at Transdev's 27 July timetable change, network adjustments have been announced to take place on 13 October, following a series of community drop-in sessions.

Route 271 (Ringwood – Box Hill) will be alerted to operate via Marchiori Road, Goodwin St, Elm St and Fir St in Blackburn North, after complaints that 901 stops on Whitehorse Road were dangerous to access and a direct trip to Box Hill and near-by schools had been severed.

Peak-only Route 303, linking Ringwood North, Park Orchards and North Blackburn with the CBD will also make a return, with the announcement made just days after the ALP promised to reinstate the service should they win the 2014 state election in November. The removal of the popular route had forced commuters to transfer to train services, blowing out commute times and making return trips home unreliable.

Consideration will also be given to the reinstatement of peak-hour freeway services from Greythorn and North Kew as part of the April 2015 Greenfields network, however this will be subject to negotiation with Ventura, who operate the near-by 548 service with territorial 'grandfather rights'. Although Kilby Road received a significant service boost in July with the realignment of 207, all services now travel via Kew Junction.

There have been reports of regular overcrowding along Johnston St during peak periods following the service rationalisation, exacerbated by bunching due to late running.

Buses to serve new regional stations

In conjunction with the opening of the new station at Epsom on Bendigo's northern outskirts on October 12 (see item under *Rail News*), Christian's Route 10 will be modified to operate past the station.

Those using Waurn Ponds Station will be able to connect to CDC Geelong Route 14 and McHarry's Route 19 access Deakin University, Grovedale, Highton and Belmont. Route 19 will no longer serve nearby Marshall Station.

Suitjet to land soon

A new business-class model for commuter travel is expected to launch on 6 October utilising five-star coaches chartered through Dysons. Founded by Darren Heiberg, a former Jetstar and HP executive, the service will target executive and white-collar CBD workers who are looking for an alternative to traffic congestion and overcrowded trains and buses. Proposed fares are \$30 return, with passengers required to book their seat in advance. Although around three times as expensive as myki pass fares (with an even greater divide when Zone 1 extends across outer Melbourne in January), the company argues that the guarantee of a seat will attract those who wish to work on their commute using onboard wi-fi, or otherwise allow passengers to unwind, adding invaluable extra time for a better work-life balance.

The Age reports routes under consideration include:

- Werribee, Hoppers Crossing and Point Cook
- Craigieburn and Essendon
- Doreen and Eltham
- Ringwood and East Doncaster

Buses are likely to depart from a single central location in each suburb, adjacent to sporting grounds and hotels with under-utilised parking during business hours, and drop off commuters in the City at Spring St, Melbourne Town Hall and the ANZ building in Docklands. Timetables are yet to be announced, but will no doubt be limited to a handful of services on each corridor.

The company claims tens of thousands have expressed initial interest via their website. A similar trial by Grenda's in 2008 targeting wealthy commuters on the Mornington Peninsula was withdrawn after only a few months, however Bullet Bus has found success in Sydney with a more moderately priced option competing against Hillsbus' M2 services.

Further Springvale changes

In early July, a new bus stop opened on Springvale Rd outside the recently grade-separated Springvale station for Routes 813, 814 and 902, with near-by stops at Sandown Road and Springvale Shops closed.

Route 811 was modified on 16 July, with trips towards Dandenong now turning directly from Springvale Road into Lightwood Road thus eliminating the need for the previous turning movement via Windsor Avenue and St John Avenue. Brighton-bound buses were unaffected.

On the same day, the 885 terminus was relocated to Lightwood Road, with the temporary terminus on Springvale Road closed. The turning movement utilises the new bridge at the eastern end of the station. This unfortunately reinstated the previous situation of 885 buses to Police Road and Glen Waverley departing separating locations than other routes to these destinations.

QR Code trial at stops

Transdev has recently placed QR code stickers at bus stops along Routes 234, 236, 237, 246, 250 and 251 as part of a trial in conjunction with PTV. Using the code directs passengers to the 'Next 5' timetable feature on the PTV website showing scheduled information. In the future, this will link to real-time departures. Although stops already have a stop ID badge which includes braille, the stop numbers do not appear to work on the 'Next 5' feature.

Meanwhile, PTV has announced that from 29 September, the older mobile phone apps will not be able to access the public transport information, with passengers required to

upgrade to the latest version of the IOS and Android apps, which were recently overhauled to improve functionality and usability.

Skybus sold

Skybus, who operate the profitable bus link between the CBD and Melbourne Airport, has recently sold to a consortium that includes OPTrust Private Markets Group and Catalyst Direct Capital Management. Managing director Simon Cowen will retain a significant equity interest in the business and stay on as a non-executive director. The operation was formed in June 1978, with the service expanding with acquisition of airline shuttle buses from TTA and Ansett in 1982. Although the service may ultimately be superseded by a rail link to Melbourne Airport, this is likely to be over a decade away, with only the State Liberal party committing to it as a medium-term transport priority.

Additional trip to Drysdale and Clifton Springs

To address overcrowding on the 15:10 and 16:12 Route 79 services to Drysdale, McHarry's introduced an additional service on 7 July departing at 15:40. Upon arrival at Drysdale, the bus continues via local Route 78 to Clifton Springs. The trips are oddly not shown on the PTV website, with PTV's modal coordination team citing that current policy 'does not allow us to add these additional services until major timetable changes occur', quite a bizarre statement given the state-wide timetable changes which took place on 27 July.

Dysons arrive in Wangaratta

Dysons took over operation of thirty buses in north-east Victoria on 1 September with the purchase of Wangaratta Coaches from Don and Brenda Joyce, who purchased the service in 1987. Services acquired include V/line routes from Wangaratta to Bendigo, Bright, Chiltern and Corowa; Albury to Seymour plus Benalla to Yarrawonga / Mulwala. Other services depart Wangaratta for Carboor, Chiltern, Glenrowan & Yarrawonga / Mulwala, along with services from Albury to Wangaratta or Myrtleford via Yackandandah.

Western Australia

Butler changes

On 21 September, Transperth made substantial timetable changes in northern Perth to coincide with the opening of the rail extension to Butler. Significant routing changes include:

- 390 (Joondalup – Banksia Grove) has been realigned in Tapping.
- 391 (Joondalup – Banksia Grove) extended north of the future Banksia Grove Town Centre
- 414 (Glendalough – Stirling) and 428 (Warwick – Stirling) have been realigned in Balcatta
- 468 (Whitfords – Joondalup) now mirrors the 467 alignment into Joondalup, improving access to Joondalup Health Campus.
- 471 and 474 (Joondalup – Kinross) – several changes to school deviations
- 480 (Clarkson – Butler), 483 and 484 (Clarkson – Alkimos) have a minor route change to serve Butler Station
- 482 (Clarkson – Butler) no longer operates via Mindarie to reduce travel times in Quinns Rocks travelling to Clarkson
- 490 (Butler – Two Rocks) has been extended to Butler Station and operates a more direct route along Marmion Avenue in Yanchep, reducing journey times by up to 25 mins
- A second bus route has been added through Alkimos, Eglinton and Yanchep, known as 491

Impressive peak frequencies on Routes 390, 391, 415 (Mirrabooka – Stirling), 481 (Clarkson – Quinns Rocks), 480, 481, 482, 483 and 484 see an upgrade to 10 min services, while 490 and 491 operate every 20 mins.

Timing adjustments also took place on Routes 352, 387, 402, 403, 404, 407, 410, 412, 413, 421, 422, 423, 424, 425, 427, 441 - 450, 460 - 466, 469, 470, 473 and 990. Timetables 57 - 69, 73, 77 - 81 and 83 - 85 have been updated.

Thanks to: Victor Isaacs, Peter Parker, Lourie Smit, Roger Wheaton and various contributors on *Australian Transport Discussion Board*.

ODD SPOT

Some places take timetable planning seriously. Switzerland is currently undergoing consultations on the public transport timetable to be introduced in 2021!

Onerous border controls imposed by the British government will force passengers using Eurostar's new Marseille to London service to leave the train and go through immigration and security controls lasting one hour and 43 minutes while the train waits at Lille Europe station when the service starts next year. The service will operate thrice weekly in May, June, September and October, increasing to five days per week in the p-peak holiday months of July and August, and on Saturdays only in November and December. It is very rare for passengers to be forced to alight from trains to pass through border controls even across borders where visas are

required. In most cases these checks are carried out on the train while it crosses the border, a situation which existed previously when Eurostar first started to operate through the Channel Tunnel. Passengers on the southbound journey from London and Ashford will go through border and security controls before boarding the train

A railway public timetable with times expressed in seconds? Yes, that is South Africa Metrorail's infrequent suburban service from Port Elizabeth to Uitenhage. This shows arrival and departure times at intermediate stops, and each stop is for only 30 seconds. See this on the web at http://www.metrorail.co.za/TimeTables/Eastern%20Cape/METROEL_LIB_Weekday_Sat.pdf

About Table Talk

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