



TABLE TALK

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VIC PARK – ARMADALE/THORNIE

SHUTDOWN

FROM 20 NOV '23

NEW AND ENHANCED BUS ROUTES

- **Route 36**
AS - Airport Central to Cannington Station
 - **Route 51**
AS - Cannington Station to Perth Busport
 - **Route 206**
AS - Cannington Station to Murdoch University via Thornlie and Murdoch Stations
 - **Route 221**
LS - Armadale Station to Perth Busport
 - **Route 230**
LS - Thornlie Station to Perth Busport
 - **Route 529**
AS - Armadale Station to Cockburn Central Station
 - **Route 907**
LS - Armadale Station to Perth Station
 - **Route 908**
LS - Cannington Station to Victoria Park Station
 - **Route 930**
AS - Thornlie Station to Elizabeth Quay Bus Station
- Train Line
 - Train Line Closed
 - Bus Station
 - Train Station

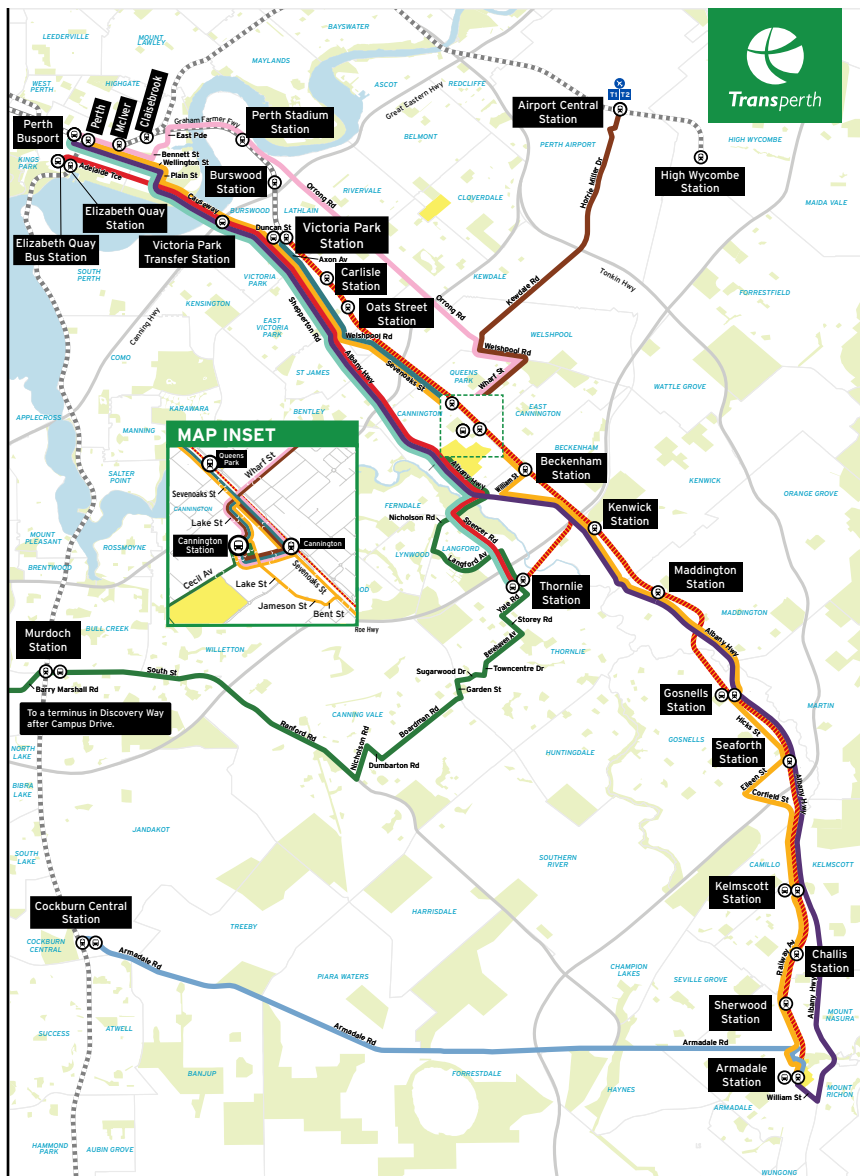
AS - All Stops (including regular bus stops on route)
LS - Limited Stops Services

There may also be a more convenient timetabled bus that stops near you.
Plan your journey at transperth.wa.gov.au



BUILDING FOR TOMORROW

METRONET



RAIL & TRAM NEWS

QUEENSLAND



Gold Coast light rail

The state's transport minister said in July that G:link, Gold Coast's light rail line, has grown so much post-pandemic it now has higher numbers than pre-pandemic - sitting at 115 per cent.

Meanwhile, three of five new light rail vehicles has been received ahead of the extension of the line from Broadbeach to Burleigh. *THE BRISBANE TIMES*

NEW SOUTH WALES



Bankstown Metro going ahead

The state government confirmed on 1 August that the **Sydney and South-west Metro** would be extended past Sydenham using the existing rail corridor through to Bankstown.

Since the election of the Labor government in March, there had been conjecture over whether it would continue this section of the project, as planned with the previous Coalition government. The project has been delayed by industrial action, the pandemic and various project-related delays. There has also been a blow-out in project costs, with an additional \$1.1 billion now allocated to get the conversion completed.

Accordingly, from a date to be confirmed (but expected to be between July and October next year), the legacy T3 rail line between Bankstown and Sydenham will close for a period of up to 12 months. Work is being undertaken to plan for suitable replacement bus services during this period.

Whilst a new Sydney-wide working timetable was earmarked for May next year, it is yet to be confirmed if it will be delayed until the closedown occurs as a reorganisation of sector two train services is anticipated.

Australasian Railway Association's chief executive, Caroline Wilkie, said the project would "address one of Sydney's biggest rail bottlenecks" - "This service will provide up to 15

trains every hour and connect to major employment and education hubs in the city, North Sydney and Macquarie Park".

The confirmation of this extension comes from a review undertaken by a special Metro taskforce set-up by the new government to review existing and upcoming Metro rail projects across the city.

For now, **Sydney Metro West** (Hunter Street-Westmead) remains in limbo while a significant cost blowout is evaluated, and after the Premier made comments about potentially adding more stops to the line in order to increase its catchment, which was resisted by at least one previous transport minister over the need to keep travel time between Parramatta and the City down to 20 minutes. *ABC NEWS, TRANSPORT FOR NSW*

Sydney Trains: Disruption

The late evening of Wednesday 16 August saw significant disruption of the heavy rail network due to signal system issues. The disruption which occurred at a back-end signal control building in Ashfield caused all signals across the interlocking to be put at stop as part of usual fail-safe requirements.

It was later determined that the failure was caused by vandalism by a couple of homeless people (later charged) that had allegedly been accessing the site for a period of time, throwing into question security arrangements at critical infrastructure locations on the network.

The incident led to the closure of the main line between Redfern and Strathfield, as well as a number of trapped trains for up to two hours in the area. The incident coincided with the end of the FIFA Womens World Cup game played at Olympic Park's Stadium Australia between the Australian Matildas and England Lionesses.

Several post-event services from Olympic Park were diverted into the City via Bankstown, while others were either delayed or cancelled, with thousands of revellers stuck at Olympic Park for an extended period until rail services could resume.

Most suburban and intercity lines were directly affected by the closure of the spine of the city's network. A number of shuttle services were instituted for the T9 Northern and T1 North Shore lines to provide some movement. *NINE NEWS*

Operator restructure and Intercity fleet

The state government announced in August that the state's key rail entities will indeed be restructured as widely anticipated. However, it will not be a straight return to the pre-July 2013 entities, with some difference in coverage.

As expected, the NSW Trains organisation will shrink, with Sydney Trains to take over the following service areas:

- Intercity Central Coast and Newcastle
- Intercity Blue Mountains
- Intercity South Coast

- Regional Bomaderry services
- Regional Hunter line services

NSW TrainLink will continue operating Regional South/West/North rail services operated by Xplorer and XPT stock, as well as the Southern Highlands and Bathurst Bullet services. NSW Trains also continues to oversee the operation of regional coach services privately operated on behalf of itself.

Meanwhile, the August signing of a deed between the Labor state government and rail unions will see the introduction of the D set trains, also known as the New Intercity Fleet (NIF), commence in 2024.

Fleet modifications will be done by the RailConnect consortium which built them, with modifications for most sets already in the country to be done in Australia, while the rest will be done in South Korea. **RAIL EXPRESS, NSW GOVERNMENT**

Level crossing speeds lowered

Since November 2020, road vehicle speed limits approaching a total of 103 railway level crossings across New South Wales have been lowered to no higher than 80 kilometres per hour, as part of Transport for NSW's Level Crossing Speed Zone Reduction Program.

Completion of this program in June this year is expected to yield better outcomes, with a total of 92 vehicle/train collisions recorded along with 10 deaths from 2008/09 to 2021/22 financial years inclusive. **RAIL EXPRESS**



V/Line: Service/consist updates

Effective from Saturday 16 September, some adjustments will be made to weekend V/Line services to further accommodate increased passenger demand from the state government's flat fare cap.

On the **Bendigo line**, an additional trip operates departing Bendigo at 09:44 for Southern Cross (SX) on both days. The Sunday 19:37 trip ex SX to Bendigo, and the Saturday 16:06 trip ex SX to Bendigo are now built-up to 6VL.

On the **Geelong line**, the Sunday 08:30 and 19:10 trips ex SX to Waurin Ponds are now built-up to 6VL, as is the Sunday 17:30 trip ex SX to Wyndham Vale. In the opposite direction, the 09:58 and 20:38 ex Waurin Ponds, as well as the 18:21 ex Wyndham Vale, trips are now also subsequently built-up to 6VL.

Some V/Line services will use different platforms at Southern Cross. The Circular is included in the September Distribution List.

Meanwhile, the state government says it will trial reservation-only seating on **Albury line** services from 2 September until late November. Transport minister Ben Carroll said "We've improved the trains and services on the Albury line and dramatically slashed the cost of travel. Now we're ensuring passengers have more certainty about when seats will be available on the busiest services. By asking V/Line to trial reservation-only seating on Saturday and Sunday services, we're giving passengers peace of mind when they book their travel." **LEN REGAN, V/LINE, RAIL EXPRESS**

The Overland to continue

The Overland, an interstate service between Melbourne and Adelaide, will continue to operate after the Victorian government confirmed it will provide \$11.5 million over three years, while the South Australian government will chip in \$1.4 million over four years.

The new funding deal ensures *The Overland* will continue to operate until 2027. **THE CANBERRA TIMES**



Tram disruption

No trams operated on Friday 25 August between 10:00 and 15:00 due to industrial action by Torrens Connect employees.

Adelaide Metro says that it organised substitute bus services to operate between Glenelg and Entertainment Centre during this time. **ADELAIDE METRO**



Armadale/Thornlie extended closedown

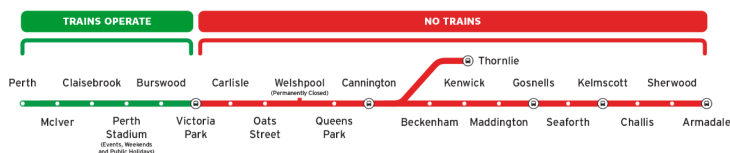
From Monday 20 November, most of the Armadale/Thornlie line will cease operating between Armadale/Thornlie and Victoria Park for around 18 months due to various MetroNet project works. Seven new and five enhanced bus services will operate to support mobility along local corridors. Three temporary bus interchanges to support these services will be provided (at Victoria Park, Cannington and Armadale).

The major replacement bus routes list and map are provided on our cover page.

Amongst the projects to be undertaken are the removal of 13 level crossings and progress of the line extension to Byford.

More specifically, from 20 to 22 November, there will be a three-day total line shutdown to enable works at Victoria Park to allow the Victoria Park-Perth shuttle services to operate safely without impacting project works, with extra bus replacement provided between Victoria Park and Perth.

From Thursday 23 November, the following line map will be in effect:



Trains are to operate every 7-8 minutes during the day and every 15 mins in the evenings.

For special events at Optus Stadium, a new bus route, **651**, will operate to/from Stadium Bus Station. Existing special route **661 CBD Shuttle** will be withdrawn from the same date, with extra Red CAT services to service Matagarup Bridge. **TRANSPERTH, RAIL EXPRESS**

NEW ZEALAND



Auckland: Mount Eden working

Western line services are no longer impacted by single-line working at Mount Eden. The dual line had been consolidated into single-line working back in 2020 to allow space for City Rail Link works, while the station there was also closed at this time.

A free shuttle bus (64) is currently operating between Kingsland and Newmarket via Mount Eden while the station is closed. The new Maungawhau station is due to open in its place next year. **RAIL EXPRESS, AUCKLAND TRANSPORT**

Te Huia resumes Auckland CBD run

The cross-regional Te Huia service was due to recommence running into the heart of Auckland in early August following a restriction placed by New Zealand Transport Agency (NZTA) from 11 July which saw services instead only running as far as Papakura.

The prohibition occurred after two incidents across June and July where Te Huia trains had passed a signal at stop.

At the time, NZTA said that it wanted ETCS (European Train Control System) to be immediately installed before it would allow Te Huia to recommence running into The Strand, however after negotiations with KiwiRail, a compromise had been reached, with the fleet since installed with Electronic Train Protection as a first step. It said that all drivers would also do route training prior to resumption of the full route.

KiwiRail said it would wait to see if its running rights are extended past its current five-year contract before making the investment in ETCS, likely to take years to implement, while it also plans to implement it for its mainline freight trains running on the Auckland network. **WAIKATO REGIONAL COUNCIL**

Auckland: Rail Network Rebuild

Auckland's Rail Network Rebuild is under a funding cloud after a cost blowout has necessitated an infusion of an additional \$NZ75 million (\$AU69 million) into the project by New Zealand Transport Agency, which KiwiRail says will enable it to complete stage two (Eastern line) on-time and continue into the next stage, although it won't be enough to complete the entire project.

The project aims to rebuild the corridor foundations underneath running lines to prevent many speed restriction issues occurring on the network as well as forming part of preparations for the opening of City Rail Link and a planned intensification of service levels pencilled in for 2026.

Originally priced at \$330 million, the injection brings the total project cost past \$400 million. KiwiRail says to blame for the cost increase is inflation plus increased scale of work only determined after digging underneath running lines began. David Gordon, KiwiRail's Chief Capital Planning and Asset Development Officer said "The outcome of Rail Network Rebuild work in the areas completed so far has resulted in more extensive formation replacement than our geotechnical investigations predicted".

KiwiRail says it will need more money to fund the rebuild on the outer reaches of the network beyond New Lynn to Swanson in the west, and south of Otahuhu and around Papakura in the south. **STUFF ONLINE**

Capital Connection upgrade

KiwiRail is currently refurbishing carriages for the Capital Connection, before a hopeful surge in patronage on the service that runs between Wellington and Palmerston North.

An event was held in late July at Wellington station, with five refurbished carriages, heralding the government investment in the service to ensure the train can run until the anticipated introduction of a hybrid-powered train due in five years time.

Horizons Regional Council's Ged Shirley was at the unveiling - "Up till now, if you talked about the Capital Connection, the word was 'survival'. The last 15 years on and off has all been about

'will we have a train next year'."

Mr Shirley told the crowd that securing the future of the train service had been essential for the growing Manawatū-Whanganui region - "This is just a point in time and actually a launch pad to something way more exciting, which is going to be multiple services a day on a brand new set of rail stock."

Transport Minister David Parker said there would be a look at increasing the daily return service offered once the new hybrid train is introduced.

Mr Parker said that the refurbished carriages had new seats, carpets, tables, bathrooms and a cafe with barista coffee sold on board. Wheelchair access is available as is a special area to store bikes, while suspension has also been improved across the carriages which should deliver a smoother ride. **RADIO NEW ZEALAND**

INTERNATIONAL

US: Patronage increasing in LA

Intelligent Transport reports that patronage is growing on Los Angeles' combined 'Metro' train and bus system, with monthly numbers now at 81 per cent of pre-pandemic levels. Echoing numbers seen in other international cities such as some in Australia, its weekend numbers are even higher, now at 90 per cent of pre-pandemic levels (Sundays are on top at 94 per cent). Weekdays are lagging with an average of 76 per cent of pre-pandemic numbers.

LA Metro says June saw its seventh consecutive month of growth with an average 866,670 trips per weekday, 646,743 on Saturdays, and 542,727 on Sundays.

The city's mayor, Karen Bass, said that the opening of the Regional Connector had contributed to increased ridership. The city also says it has invested in its bus network (which accounted for 78 per cent of all June trips) with over 1,000 drivers hired since 2022, over 30 miles of bus priority lanes installed and full restoration of the timetable.

The growth followed a record 10 per cent increase recorded in April for the combined network. **INTELLIGENT TRANSPORT**

Belgium-France service

Operators from France and Belgium are examining the worthwhileness of recommencing conventional rail services between Brussels and Paris, with the aim of commencement by the end of next year. Services on the route via Mons was withdrawn back in 1995, with the Thalys high-speed service taking its place.

International Rail Journal says that a draft timetable provides for five return locomotive-hauled services per day with a one-way trip

taking three hours. **INTERNATIONAL RAIL JOURNAL**

ENDS

BUS & COACH NEWS

NEW SOUTH WALES



Griffith: Network changes

In August, Transport for NSW (TfNSW) released upcoming bus network changes for the southern regional city of Griffith, funded through the agency's *16 Regional Cities Services Improvement* program (holistic planning phase), which undertook community consultation last year.

From **Monday 18 September**, an additional 77 trips are to operate each week including improved coverage on Sundays & public holidays as well as new residential growth areas. Around 50 extra bus stops have now been installed across the city, while a smaller number of pre-existing stops will no longer be serviced due to route changes.

Network changes include:

- **Route 940** (*Griffith loop via East Griffith and Collina*): New Sunday/PH services. Extended coverage into Collina. Only selected trips extend to Hometown Shopping Centre. Wednesday evening and Thursday AM trips to link with NSW TrainLink Xplorer services.



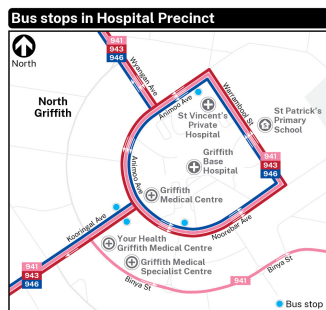
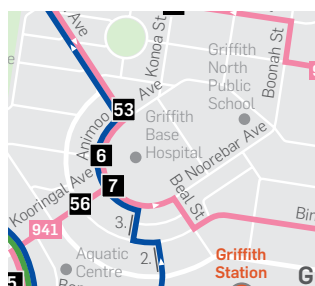
Previous and newly extended 940 coverage in Collina.

- **941** (*Griffith loop via Hometown and North Griffith*): New Sunday/PH services (*it is unclear why the most recent TfNSW timetable did not list pre-existing Saturday services*). Minor route path extension at the northern

tip of the route. Seven additional trips each week.

- **942** (*Griffith loop via South Griffith and Pioneer*): New Sunday/PH services. Only selected trips run via Hometown. Minor route extension near West Griffith to serve the Regional Sports Centre.
- New route **943** (*Griffith loop via Hometown, Pioneer, West Griffith and North Griffith*): Weekday-only service providing extra services between South Griffith/Pioneer and Griffith Hospital. Wednesday evening and Thursday AM trips to link with NSW TrainLink Xplorer services.
- **944** (*Griffith-Yenda or Beelbanger loop*): Combines the old 943 and 944. Continues to only operate on weekdays. Beelbanger and Yenda no longer closely linked, with separate daytime trips to cover either half of the route. 30 additional trips each week.
- **945** (*Griffith-Darlington Point*): Trips now to also operate during school holidays. Continues to only operate on weekdays. 10 additional trips each week.
- **946** (*Griffith loop via Three Ways and Mayfair*): New Sunday/PH services. Minor route adjustment near Griffith railway station, with all trips running via Koorlingal Avenue. Only selected trips extend to serve Hometown. Six additional trips each week.

Routes servicing **Griffith Hospital** (941 and 946) also have adjusted paths aimed at improving access, which is copied by the new 943.



Previous and new running at Griffith Base Hospital. All routes run around in an anti-clockwise direction.

It is not clear what will happen with the sole weekly route 947 bus trip operating Wednesday nights (which runs along a combined route 940 and 941 path), possibly subsumed by the route 940 trip above.

These services, operated by Griffith Buslines, only accept cash fares on board (TfNSW says it is investigating future contactless options). Paper timetables are reportedly available direct from the bus depot. A 4-minute video and 18-page Q&A document were also released with this announcement by TfNSW.

Meanwhile, there are no changes for local school services, which remain accessible to the general public where there is capacity.

This set of changes builds on the July 2020 changes which saw extended service hours on weekdays and Saturdays and a total 57 extra trips each week across the network. **TRANSPORT FOR NSW, GRIFFITH BUSLINES**

Region 10 services

Updating last month's article on the troubles experienced with U-Go Mobility services across bus region 10, *The Leader* reported post-publication that the new temporary timetable effective 31 July has 314 weekly trips removed from the full timetable, which amounts to an 11.9 per cent reduction in trips. On top of this, approximately 12 per cent of trips are currently being cancelled, assumed more so correct on weekdays as that is where the strain should be with a driver headcount shortfall of approximately 75.

Underneath this article is the operator's customer apology, signed by its new interim managing director (who is from the other side of the joint venture - Go-Ahead group). The company has also placed advertisements in local media with its apology to passengers. **ST GEORGE & SUTHERLAND SHIRE LEADER, U-GO MOBILITY**



A SINCERE APOLOGY TO OUR COMMUNITY

We want to begin by offering our sincere and heartfelt apologies to the community which we serve. We deeply regret the unacceptable service that has been provided since the commencement of our bus operations on 1 July.

We understand that countless people have faced inconvenience and frustrations due to our performance. This is not the standard we set out to achieve, and we are working to do better.

From the very beginning, our intention was to bring a positive change to customer experience under the newly zoned Region 10 contract. Transport for NSW entrusted us with this opportunity.

We have fallen short of expectations, and we take responsibility for the impact this has had on our customers. We are fully committed to making things right, swiftly and effectively.

OUR PROMISE AND ACTION PLAN:

- 1. Improving Reliability Daily:** In partnership with Transport for NSW, we are focused on achieving a reliable timetable and reducing bus cancellations. As part of this effort, we are working with Transport for NSW to sub-contract dedicated school services to another operator to prioritise the safety of students.
- 2. Better Customer Information:** Our customer experience team will ensure you stay informed about any service changes, disruptions or improvements promptly. We have affixed notices at key interchanges and on buses and we will keep you updated through our social media channels, providing greater transparency and responsiveness to better serve you. Please continue to check the Trip Planner or similar trip planning apps each day before making your journey.
- 3. Attracting & Empowering Drivers:** Our exceptional team of drivers, both experienced and newcomers, deserves our heartfelt thanks for striving to uphold our service during these challenging times. As the industry grapples with a driver shortage, it's causing us acute pain. In support of our current drivers and to attract new talent, we're offering incentives to existing drivers and new recruits.
- 4. Support & Accountability:** We have taken decisive actions to provide additional resources and ensure accountability in our service delivery. This includes appointing an Interim Managing Director with specialised expertise and dedicated U-Go Mobility executives to oversee operations and ensure sufficient resourcing.

REBUILDING TRUST:

We are genuinely sorry for the inconvenience and frustration caused by our early performance. We care about rebuilding trust within the community, and we are committed to keeping you informed every step of the way throughout this process.

We are fully aware that words alone are not enough, and that you want to see action. Rest assured that there are great people in the team working tirelessly to make significant and positive changes, so you can have a bus service you can rely on.

Once again, we apologise wholeheartedly for the rocky start. We value your feedback, support and understanding.

Sincerely,

Daniel Corbin
Managing Director
U-Go Mobility

School service timetables

Transit Systems NSW, operator of Sydney region 3 and 6 services, has a suite of school bus timetables that draw on relevant services for school travel within their growing Sydney bus network. Services can include dedicated school services, commuter route (and even Shopper Hopper) trips split by morning and afternoon. One example below.

<https://nswschools.transitsystems.com.au/>

Chester Hill Intensive English Centre Timetable

Effective 30 January 2023. Revised August 2023

Morning services

M91 From Bankstown	916 From Guildford
Bankstown Station Stand D 07:57	Guildford Station Railway St (opp) 08:20
Bankstown Central The Mall (opp) 08:00	Old Guildford Public School Orchardleigh St (opp) 08:27
Yagoona Station Hume Hwy (opp) 08:07	Chester Hill Gurney Rd before Miller Rd 08:33
Bass Hill Walshaw Park, Buist St 08:13	Chester Hill High School Miller Rd 08:36
Chester Hill Station Waldron Rd 08:21	
Chester Hill Campbell Hill Rd before Burrows Ave 08:25	

916 From Chester Hill	S402 From Yagoona
Chester Hill Station Waldron Rd 08:30	Yagoona Auburn Rd after Alexander St 08:13
Chester Hill North Public School Campbell Hill Rd (opp) 08:33	Bass Hill Walshaw Park, Buist St 08:20
Chester Hill Gurney Rd at Miller Rd 08:35	Sefton High School Hector St (opp) 08:28
Chester Hill High School Miller Rd 08:36	Chester Hill Station Waldron Rd 08:34
	Chester Hill High School Miller Rd 08:42

S536 From Carramar	S595 From Fairfield
Carramar Public School The Horsley Dr 07:45	Fairfield Station Stand E 07:55
Villawood Immigration Detention Centre, Gurney Rd (opp) 07:57	Fairfield East Normanby St before Tangerine St 08:03
Chester Hill High School Miller Rd 08:00	Chester Hill High School Miller Rd 08:10

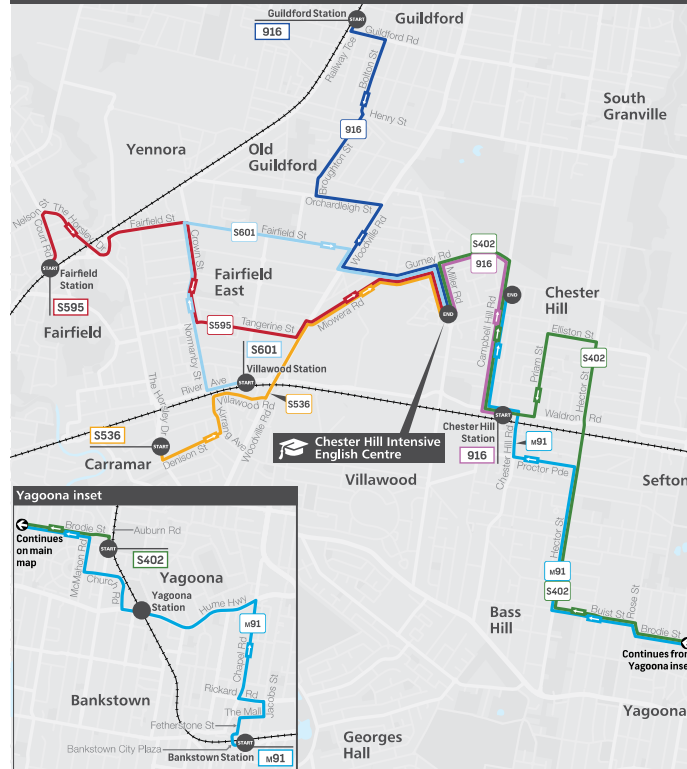
S601 From Villawood
Villawood River Ave opp Mandarin St 08:25
Yennora Fairfield St at Ellis Pde 08:31
Chester Hill High School Miller Rd 08:40

Morning bus route map - see next page Page 1 of 4

Chester Hill Intensive English Centre Timetable

Effective 30 January 2023. Revised August 2023

Morning bus route map



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Chester Hill Intensive English Centre Timetable

Effective 30 January 2023. Revised August 2023

Afternoon services

M91 To Bankstown	M91 To Granville
Day Restrictions	Day Restrictions
Chester Hill Campbell Hill Rd at Arlewis St 13:43 14:13	Chester Hill Campbell Hill Rd before Burrows Ave 15:15 13:45 14:00
Chester Hill Post Office Waldron Rd (opp) 13:46 14:16	Muhammadi Welfare Association Blaxcell St (opp) 15:19 13:50 14:05
Bass Hill Walshaw Park, Buist St (opp) 13:53 14:23	5th Granville Blaxcell St opp Pegler Ave Walkway 15:27 13:53 14:08
Yagoona Station Hume Hwy 14:00 14:30	Granville Blaxcell St opp Charles St 15:32 13:58 14:13
Bankstown Central The Mall 14:07 14:37	Granville Station Stand B 15:38 14:02 14:17
Bankstown Station Stand B 14:10 14:40	

916 To Guildford	916 To Chester Hill
Chester Hill High School Miller Rd (opp) 15:33	Day Restrictions
Chester Hill Gurney Rd after Miller Rd 15:35	Chester Hill High School Miller Rd 15:20 14:07
Old Guildford Public School Orchardleigh St 15:38	Chester Hill Post Office Waldron Rd (opp) 15:26 14:12
Guildford Station Railway St (opp) 15:44	Chester Hill Station Waldron Rd 15:26 -

S4 From Chester Hill to Villawood	S403 To Sefton
Day Restrictions	Day Restrictions
Chester Hill Post Office Waldron Rd (opp) 14:15	Chester Hill High School Miller Rd 15:05
Villawood East Public School Lowana St 14:23	Chester Hill Nugent Park, Chester Hill Rd (opp) 15:09
Villawood Carawatha St opp Yugilbar Ave 14:28	Sefton Virgil St after Hector St 15:15
Villawood Place Shops Villawood Pl 14:30	

S598 To Fairfield East	S599 To Fairfield
Chester Hill High School Miller Rd 15:05	Chester Hill High School Miller Rd 15:05
Leightonfield Station 15:08	Villawood Station River Ave 15:11
Villawood River Ave opp Mandarin St 15:11	Fairfield Station Stand F 15:20
Fairfield East Normanby St after Tangerine St 15:13	

S616 To Fairfield East
Chester Hill High School Miller Rd 15:05
Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses, Tangerine St (opp) 15:12
Fairfield East Mitchell St opp Lals Pde 15:25

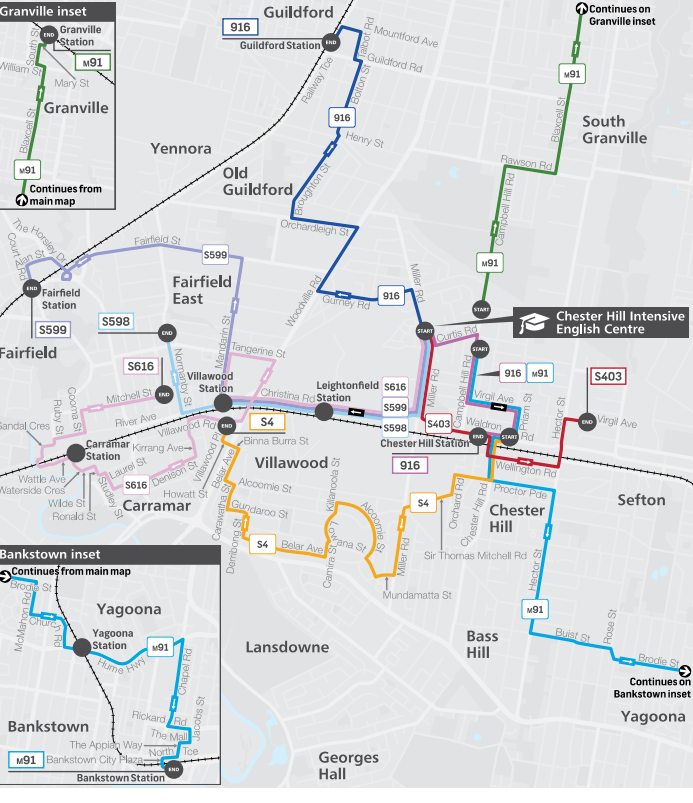
Explanation of definitions and symbols
 U trip operates on alternate Tuesdays

Afternoon bus route map - see next page Page 3 of 4

Chester Hill Intensive English Centre Timetable

Effective 30 January 2023. Revised August 2023

Afternoon bus route map



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Bus Industry Taskforce

The state government's Bus Industry Taskforce continues its review of the reliability, quality and effectiveness of the state's bus services. It will then provide recommendations to the transport minister to address issues.

The taskforce includes BusNSW, union representatives, and community representatives. It is chaired by former State Transit Authority chief executive John Lee.

Focus areas include:

- Service delivery and asset management models, including the contract and performance management framework, transparency in activities and the related capabilities required;
- Service planning, including equity of services across the community, and related community engagement;
- Infrastructure and technology supporting effective delivery of bus services, including a cleaner energy transition;
- Arrangements relating to the employment of drivers, mechanics, and other key personnel;
- Other steps to improve performance including legislative amendments, regulatory changes, contractual or other related actions.

Interested parties, including members of the public, can complete a survey or provide a submission until 31 March 2024 - https://www.haveyoursay.nsw.gov.au/bus-industry-taskforce?tool=survey_tool&tool_id=complete-a-survey#tool_tab.

A final report is due on 1 May next year. **NSW GOVT**

WSI Airport rapid links

Plans for rapid bus links across Western Sydney for the upcoming Western Sydney International (WSI) Airport at Badgery's Creek remain under wraps despite promises by the new Labor state government to get to work following ongoing delays with this issue under the previous Coalition state government.

There is widespread concern that services will not commence operating in time for the airport's opening in 2026. At this stage, the only confirmed significant public transport infrastructure will be the Western Sydney Airport Metro, which will effectively operate as a self-contained shuttle between the Airport and St Marys station, located on the T1 Western line on the conventional heavy rail network.

Local stakeholders, including Liverpool mayor Ned Mannoun, argue this will lead to significant reliance on private vehicle use for local workers.

Director of Future Transport at Aurecon, Terry Lee-Williams concurred that rapid bus links to connect the airport with Penrith, Liverpool and Campbelltown are crucial as the airport is set to be a major employment hub - "it needs a 24/7 service to support the 24/7 airport".

The Sydney Morning Herald reports that Labor had announced \$305 million in funding would be required over three years to get the bus links to the starting gate, including \$50 million for a special transit corridor along Leppington's Fifteenth Avenue. It reports that previous internal cost estimates from Transport for NSW have totalled \$1.6 billion.

The report suggests there is a funding shortfall from the state and federal governments to get the ball moving, while an options paper under consideration by both the Transport and Roads ministers is yet to reach cabinet. **SYDNEY MORNING HERALD**



Kinetic expansion continues

The month of August saw Kinetic grow its Victorian operation, through the acquisition of the route service contract for routes **510** and **512** from MorelandBus as well as the transfer of 10 buses and the offer of transfer for 15 of Moreland's employees to Kinetic's North Fitzroy depot.

Moreland maintains a school and coach charter service operation. **INTELLIGENT TRANSPORT**

Extra Bannockburn school service

The state government announced in late July that an extra service would operate from the start of Term 3 for students of Bannockburn P12 College and St Mary Mackillop Catholic Primary School. The improvement forms part of \$25 million in funding for improved school bus services this financial year across the state. **VICTORIAN GOVT**

Bus Reform proposal

Committee for Melbourne has published a document detailing a proposal for the reform of the city's bus network. Titled *Course Correction: Reforming Melbourne's buses*, the 39-page document has provided six recommendations:

- Commence selling the need for bus reform to Melbournians.
- 10-minute service frequencies on key routes.
- Re-design the bus network prior to recontracting due in 2025.
- Add patronage growth incentives into both existing and new contracts.
- Reinvest savings or additional revenue from the plan back into the network.
- Develop stronger partnerships with key

stakeholders to deliver the reform.

The document outlines the factors for the network’s **current under-performance**, indirect routes, poor service frequencies (with a city-wide weekday average of a bus every 30 minutes), congestion from lack of bus priority, poor integration with other transport modes, and challenged accessibility. It says that continued use of incremental planning has failed to account for growing and changed travel demand over the decades, leading to a situation where many people say they have to rely on private vehicles for mobility, mostly those away from the inner city.

A case study of **Auckland**, New Zealand is provided, where an overhaul of the city’s bus network was undertaken in the mid-2010s with the aim of doubling stagnant patronage over the next decade. It says that the reforms led to a 40 per cent increase in service hours for 7 per cent additional cost, while the reforms undertaken over six stages across five years led to a 10 per cent increase in patronage.

Another case study provided, of **Houston**, Texas, USA quotes a 2015 reform of its bus network with a grid-like providing all-day fast frequency across the entire city, along with a 4 per cent increase to the network operating budget, which led to modest patronage gains on the bus network, but the light rail line experienced a simultaneously large gain from improved integration. The document reports that the modest bus gains seen with Houston countered bus use declines seen with many car-centric cities across the globe. The Houston reform process lasted 18 months.

The document presents the need for a single and unified multi-modal plan for the city, including a core network of direct routes serving key destinations and a backbone of secondary local routes linking with the core rapid network as well as other transport modes to prioritise passenger convenience. The report also states that route deviations should be minimised as they often add travel time for the majority of passengers.

The report suggests a “modest” increase in operating costs for the city’s bus network of 25 per cent per annum, at a time where the state government is increasingly looking for budgetary savings, recently demonstrated by the withdrawal of the state’s hosting of the 2026 Commonwealth Games. However, the report authors lean on potential savings from the upcoming contract re-tendering process which could be used to support the increased funding requirements.

The authors lean on the need to liaise and consult closely with stakeholders ranging from local and state government to bus operators and industry groups as well as the general public, media, and academia to achieve a positive reform outcome.

Source provided by **PAUL NICHOLSON**

Source **COMMITTEE FOR MELBOURNE**



Hobart: Weekday temporary timetable

With trip cancellations on the increase due to ongoing driver shortages, Metro Tasmania has resolved to reduce services on weekdays by instituting a temporary timetable across its Hobart network, which it says will provide greater certainty for passengers.

Effective from Monday 28 August, 177 weekday trips “temporarily” disappear from the timetable. Earlier reports from union sources had suggested that around 155 trips would be cut, with Metro’s announcement therefore providing a larger cut than anticipated.

	Cancelled trip volume by route			
	MON-THU		FRI ONLY	
	IN	OUT	IN	OUT
401	1	-	5	2
402	-	1	2	5
407	4	1	1	1
408	1	2	1	-
409	2	1	2	-
412	1	2	-	1
413	1	1	1	1
415	-	-	1	1
426	2	1	2	1
429	1	2	1	2
446	3	3	1	1
447	-	1	-	1
448	1	1	4	4
457	-	-	2	-
458	1	2	-	-
500	2	-	-	-
501	6	1	6	10
502	1	1	3	1
503	4	5	1	2
504	2	5	1	1
510	2	4	1	2
511	2	1	4	3
513	-	2	-	-
530	1	1	5	3
540	3	2	-	3
541	2	1	3	1
542	1	-	3	-
550	1	1	2	1
551	1	-	1	-
552	-	-	-	1
553	-	1	-	-
560	-	1	3	1
561	1	-	1	-
562	3	-	-	3
601	5	8	2	3
606	2	3	1	3
615	1	2	5	4
616	1	-	-	2
624	2	3	1	1
625	3	-	1	-
634	2	2	2	2
654	1	2	1	2
655	2	2	4	2
664	1	1	-	-
665	1	1	-	-
676	1	2	1	-
684	1	1	1	1
685	1	-	1	-
694	1	3	1	2
695	3	3	1	-
696	2	2	-	-
X01	1	-	1	-
X02	1	-	-	-
X07	1	1	1	1
X10	1	-	-	-
X11	-	1	1	-
X13	-	1	-	2
X16	-	1	1	1
X20	3	2	4	5
X30	1	-	2	-
X42	-	1	1	-
X50	-	1	-	2
X58	1	1	-	2
Total	89	88	90	87
Day Ttl	177		177	

Right table: List of temporarily cancelled Hobart trips by route (In = towards Hobart).

Metro assures that school services have been protected, with regular route services therefore taking the hit from the cuts, with patronage data and existing service gaps used to identify trips to cut.

Days before Metro's confirmation of the cuts, state premier Jeremy Rockliff addressed the rumours, saying "I'm aware of some changes that Metro are working through to ensure that we do improve that consistency and reliability and enable us to address what is a challenging time in terms of workforce pressures".

Whilst random checks in months past had seen an average of between 50 and 100 trips cancelled per weekday, Tuesday 22 August saw a whopping 210 trips cancelled, signifying that pressure has been mounting on Metro to address a situation not getting any better, while continued widespread cancellations at late notice causes disruption to the lives of passengers.

An ex-driver told *ABC News* that Metro has an issue with driver retention - "The problem is keeping their staff. Their retention rate is absolutely horrendous. They are losing more drivers than they are recruiting every year." She said as well as low pay, anti-social behaviour was another deterrent to the role - "I had a rock thrown in my face, I've had one of my very good friends get punched in the face by someone, I've had rocks through the window, I've had food trashed throughout my bus, this is not a new thing, this happens day in, day out." *ABC NEWS (2), METRO TASMANIA*

to plug the gap.

City-wide, bus driver vacancy rates are at their lowest for a long time, with 88 positions unfilled as of mid-July, compared to around 550 vacancies at their worst late last year. In August, agency Auckland Transport declared the end of its driver shortage, saying it now had a surplus of three drivers required to operate the full timetable (2,306 are required).

Meanwhile, the city's rail network continues to be heavily impacted by its Network Rebuild project with a significant portion of the network experiencing prolonged bus replacement. *STUFF ONLINE, AUST'N BUS & COACH MAGAZINE*



Hamilton: Meteor set to commence

Hamilton's long-delayed *Meteor* bus service will finally commence on Monday 28 August. Previously due to start as early as February 2022 (*Table Talk*, March 2022, p. 12), bus driver shortages forced local authorities to delay its implementation to ensure better continuity for existing routes.

Operating between the east and west of the city, its timetable provides for a trip every 15 minutes 07:00-18:00 weekdays then every 20-30 mins at other times.

The Meteor bus was fare-free for launch day. It forms part of the city's Bus Refresh program (*Table Talk*, July 2022, p. 8).

An extension into Rotokauri Transport Hub is due to be added to the route in October. *HILAIRE FRASER, BUSIT, WAIKATO REGIONAL CCL*

"Meteor is our first major service improvement since COVID-19 held up our plans. We are really excited to see our customers back in good numbers and to offer them the options they asked for to suit their travel needs."

Waikato regional councillor Angela Strange

WESTERN AUSTRALIA



Minor adjustments

Effective from Sunday 10 September, Transperth advises that route **360**, **361** and **362** trips will undergo minor trip time changes to "address late running services". *TRANSPERTH*

NEW ZEALAND



Auckland patronage rebound

Patronage on Auckland's bus network has rebounded, having touched above pre-pandemic levels in mid-July, reports *Stuff Online*. This coincides with reduced cancellation rates which have eased following a sustained hiring campaign with both local and foreign sources of labor used

Christchurch adjustments

Metro is replacing two of its routes to better meet passenger needs, 'making commuting a breeze'.

Effective from **Monday 4 September**, enhanced frequency routes 8 The Port to Port (Airport-Lyttelton) and 27 (Northwood-Huntsbury) commence running, replacing old routes 17 (Bryndwr-Huntsbury) and 28 (Casebrook-Lyttelton).

Metro says the new routes serve communities previously served by 17 and 28, while the new routes also have more frequent buses and simpler schedules, including general weekday frequency of a bus every 15 minutes (8) and every 20 minutes (27).

New route 8 has alternating weekday trips diverting via Ara Polytechnic until 17:30 (ergo a service every 30 minutes), while some trips extend past Lyttelton wharf to Rapaki. The timetable includes a handful of express services between Bus Interchange and Lyttelton wharf or Rapaki. Weekday evening trips operate every 30 mins, trips on Saturdays operate every 20-30 mins and every 30 mins on Sundays. Operating hours are (direction ex Airport): Weekdays 06:00-23:00, Saturdays 06:00-22:00, and Sundays 07:00-22:00.

New route 27 "connects the heart of our city with the sought-after retail destinations of north Christchurch and the leafy suburbs of the south". On weekday evenings and weekends, trips operate on average every 30 mins. Operating hours are (ex Northwood) 06:00-22:30 daily. The online PDF timetable unusually has different sized pages.

Contrary to the consultation proposal, route 125 (Redwood-Westlake) continues to serve Christchurch Airport, in response to community feedback.

Meanwhile, local council Environment Canterbury reports continuing passenger growth, with June recording 101 per cent of pre-pandemic patronage, while Timaru has now had its highest annual patronage in a decade.

Source supplied by **PAUL BROWN**

Sources **METRO CHRISTCHURCH, ENVIRONMENT CANTERBURY**

Wellington: Articulated trial

Metlink has announced that it will trial the use of an articulated bus on route 2 during September school holidays, in an effort to increase capacity.

The bus itself is already in the existing fleet, but currently used for dedicated school services.

If successful, a Metlink spokesperson said that bus stops would need to be lengthened to enable permanent use of the bus on the route.

Other ideas floated to increase capacity like the use of double-decker vehicles are less desired due to the extra costs and works needed to adjust infrastructure such as tunnels. **METLINK**

Wellington: Temporary timetable

Greater Wellington Regional Council has said it plans to revert all trips temporarily cut from the timetable by the end of the year. Council says the number of bus driver vacancies is now less than half the number there was at the start of the year.

At last count, there were 79 vacancies, with two-thirds of that number expected to be filled by current trainee drivers, leaving a vacancy of just 26 drivers. Council chairperson Daran Ponter said this "takes us out of a gloomy period. Auckland announced today that their bus driver shortage is over and it won't be long before we can announce the same for Wellington. Once we know we're back to normal with all previous services reinstated, we can start looking forward at how we can expand the network."

Stuff Online reports some trips have already quietly returned into operation, such as on route 21. Routes to see improved services include 3 (16 trips), 2 and 22 (seven trips each). **STUFF ONLINE**

Mosgiel Express launches

From 4 September, a new express peak-hour bus route **78 Mosgiel Express** commences operation between Dunedin and Mosgiel with three morning and six afternoon peak-period trips, while the existing regular route **77** (Dunedin City-Mosgiel) service has an increased services during peak periods, with buses to now operate every 15 minutes. Route 77 reportedly has 15 additional trips per weekday.

Initially due to commence last year, the Mosgiel Express was delayed by 12 months due to driver shortages.

Further **Dunedin** service improvements have also been made, effective from the same date, as follows:

- **Route 15 Ridge Runner** (North Dunedin-South Dunedin via Highgate): Trips increased to operate every 30 minutes through the day on weekdays.
- **3 Ocean Grove**: Updated route following community consultation. Map below.



The bus stops at Dunedin Hospital have recently also been upgraded to be more accessible.

Meanwhile, over in **Queenstown**, the following adjustments have been made:

- **2:** Detours via Quail Rise between Arrowtown and Arthurs Point have ceased.
- **3:** Minor route adjustment to provide direct trips between Kelvin Heights and Quail Rise.
- **5:** Extended bus route covering Lake Hayes Estate.

These improvements follow ongoing collaboration between Otago Regional Council, Dunedin City Council and New Zealand Transport Agency.
OTAGO REGIONAL COUNCIL, OTAGO DAILY TIMES

Hawke's Bay

From Monday 28 August, several bus routes were reinstated by operator goBay following impacts to infrastructure from Severe Tropical Cyclone Gabrielle earlier in the year.

Route **11**'s Havelock North extension has now returned operating in both directions, as is the route **15** extension between Westshore and Bay View.

The well-used route **12** is also back to its full route (Napier-Hastings via EIT), with hourly trips six days a week, replacing the truncated temporary route **12** (Napier-EIT) which is now withdrawn. Hawke's Bay's bus route numbering practice is to provide separate labelling for each direction. Route 12 numbering follows:

- *Normal route 12H: Hastings-Napier via EIT*
- *Normal route 12N: Napier-Hastings via EIT*
- *Temporary route 12B: Napier-EIT*
- *Temporary route 12C: EIT-Napier*

Hawke's Bay Regional Council Policy and Regulation Group Manager Katrina Brunton said "While the recent opening of the Redclyffe Bridge at Waiohiki has been instrumental in bringing back these services, we've also had to work through driver availability and ensure traffic flows would allow our schedule to run on time."

However, **Sunday** trips now no longer operate. Council says in its announcement that "Driver availability continues to put pressure on the services offered. To effectively manage driver flexibility, illness and leave entitlements as well as ensure the legally required 24-hour break per seven days for each driver, Sunday services will no longer be offered." *HAWKE'S BAY REG CCL, GOBAY*

ENDS

FERRY & SHIP NEWS

NEW SOUTH WALES



Parramatta wharf temporary closure

From 4 to 15 September, **F3 Parramatta River** Ferry services were only running to/from Rydalmere to allow for Gasworks Bridge works in Parramatta. During this period, bus 60F3 operates between Parramatta and Rydalmere wharves.
TRANSPORT FOR NSW

Sydney: Increased demand

The Sydney Morning Herald reports that ferry patronage has surged past pre-pandemic levels on the **F1 Manly** route this past winter.

It reports that an additional 72 per cent of F1 trips were made this past July compared to the same month last year, as well as exceeding levels hit in 2019. Meanwhile, **F3 Parramatta** saw a 64 per cent rise.

Across the whole Transdev Sydney Ferries network, usage was up 63 per cent on the same metrics, and again total numbers have been higher than in 2019.

The state's transport agency is facing an uphill battle to cater for the rush of demand, which typically peaks in the summer months, with scores sure to be left behind on the wharf if the challenge cannot be met.

Transport for NSW said it expected similar demand this Summer to last Summer, when a record 4 million trips were made, a level last seen during the 2019/20 Summer period.

The operator's fleet is constrained by reduced capacity and ongoing issues plaguing the newer Emerald-class vessels, while it has now been confirmed that three of the four Freshwater vessels will remain in operation over the coming years, with increased costs to be borne in maintaining the ageing vessels. The vessel named Queenscliff is expected to return to service in November, in time to provide additional Manly trips over the upcoming Summer period. *SYDNEY MORNING HERALD*

NEW ZEALAND



Ferry network disruption

There will be significant cuts to ferry services provided by Fullers360 **from 1 October** as some existing maritime crews and vessels are redeployed to accelerate a crew training program, expected to last 14-18 months.

The network impact will be significant, with **Birkenhead, Northcote Point** and **Bayswater** cancelled outright, while the **Gulf Harbour** and **Half Moon** services will operate to a reduced timetable.

Auckland Transport (AT) says it is looking into alternative options, such as another operator taking over these services temporarily or bus replacement.

AT's executive general manager of public transport services, Stacey van der Putten, said "The ongoing shortage of qualified ferry crew means it is not possible to reliably run AT's full ferry network and to train meaningful numbers of new ferry crew members at the same time."

Fullers chief executive Mike Horne said the program and redistribution of its resources will see up to 30 crew members become qualified deckhands or skippers.

Currently, a handful of Gulf Harbour and Half Moon ferry services are already being replaced by buses due to the crew shortages. **AUCKLAND TRANSPORT, STUFF ONLINE**

A spokesperson said that they believed there was strong demand for such a service from essential workers, with the potential for connections at Newcastle Airport with other flights. **PAUL BROWN, FLYPELICAN**

Jetstar overhauls check-in process

A while back, Qantas' budget subsidiary Jetstar overhauled its check-in process which required passengers to arrive for check-in earlier and board their planes earlier.

It follows comments by outgoing Qantas chief executive Alan Joyce last year that many passengers were "not match-fit" after the pandemic, and therefore causing further queuing delays during check-in.

Jetstar said that its overhaul has seen the airline fall into line "with other low-cost carriers around the world". Check-in and bag drop now closes 40 minutes before departure for ANZ domestic flights, rather than 30 mins. For international flights, the cut-off is set at 60 mins. Boarding gates for all flights is now set at 20 mins prior to departure time.

Jetstar's chief operating officer, Matt Franzi, conceded "we know our performance hasn't been up to scratch and we are working hard to boost punctuality and reliability".

In March, BITRE data found Jetstar had the highest cancellation rate of the domestic airlines at 7.1 per cent, and over 15 per cent on the Sydney-Melbourne route. **AUSTRALIAN AVIATION, THE DAILY TELEGRAPH**

ENDS

AIR NEWS

DOMESTIC



FlyPelican adds new NSW route

FlyPelican will commence operating two flights a week between **Newcastle and Narrabri** from Friday, 25 August to operate on Mondays (08:15 ex Narrabri) and Fridays (13:10 ex Newcastle) with a 60-minute flight time.

INTERNATIONAL



Qantas' SYD-LAX adjustment

Qantas is adjusting the schedule of one of its Australia to United States flights. From March 2024, flight QF11, departing Sydney 07:00 for Los Angeles, will instead depart Sydney at the new time of 17:15. It appears that the change will not occur on Fridays.

An *Executive Traveller* article reports on potential impact to thousands as a result of poorer connections at LAX airport to flights to other parts of the country, potentially not reaching those destinations until the evening or middle of the night (particularly for east coast destinations). This because the flight will now be due to arrive in LAX at 14:00 (instead of 07:00).

This move is expected to result in reduced layover time for the aircraft at LAX.

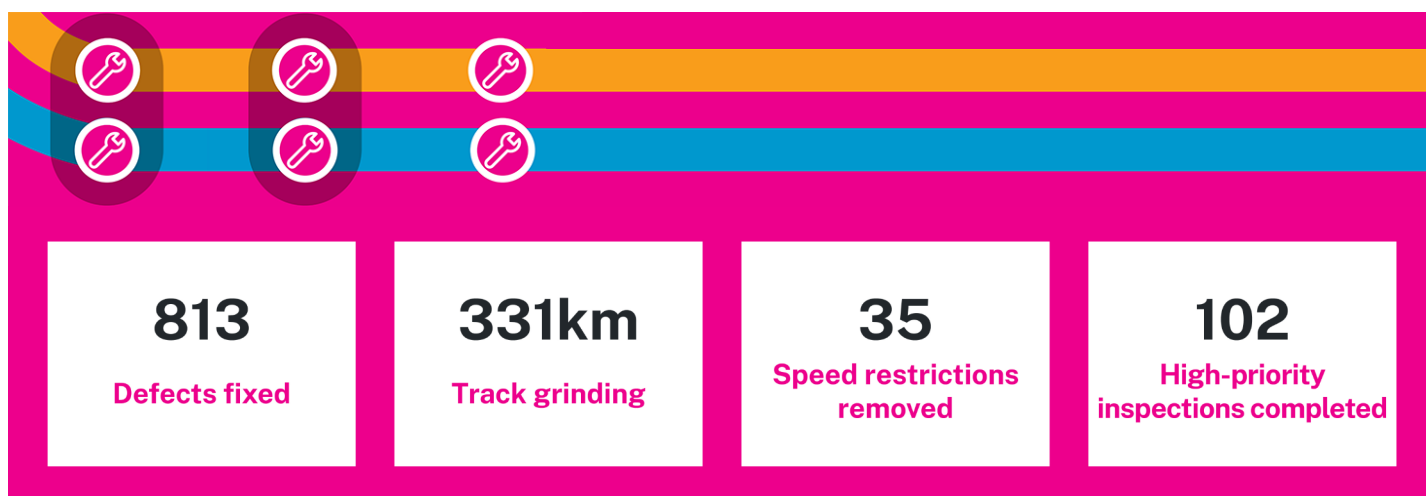
Source supplied by **PAUL BROWN**

Source **EXECUTIVE TRAVELLER**

ENDS

Sydney: Rail Repair Plan

Transport for NSW provides the below information on works and outcomes out of the enhanced trackwork plan across Sydney's rail network in recent months as of 22 August. The numbers as well as the current planned trackwork is being updated: <https://transportnsw.info/getting-sydney-back-on-track>.



Source: Transport for NSW.

Front Cover: Map of Armadale/Thornlie line major replacement bus routes from 20 November 2023 (source: Transperth).

About Table Talk

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