39 SPRING 2025

NEWS POST

RAIL FUTURES INSTITUTE (Inc) - Members QUARTERLY Newsletter

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THE WAY IT USED TO BE



A 19 car broad gauge overnight "The Overland" climbs out of Bacchus Marsh early morning on it's way to Spencer Street in the mid 1980's. *Photo – Doug Spike*

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CONTRIBUTING TO RFI NEWSPOST

Members are invited to submit news articles, opinion pieces, letters to the editor plus reports of construction activities on transport projects. Submissions ideally should be no more than 800 words.

Members photos of current rail / tram activities are also welcome in jpeg or png format.

Contributions may be edited to fit the available space.

RFI reserves the right to edit / decline articles it considers not appropriate. Please forward all submissions to: secretary@railfutures.org.au

Opinions expressed in RFI Newspost are those of the individual authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Rail Futures Institute (Inc) . (RFI)

Editor - Val Sands *Publisher - David Hardy*

Picture of the Quarter:



Seen above the station concourse and platform screen doors at the newly completed ARDEN Station on the Metro 1 line due to open by the end of 2025.

Photo – Courtesy Victorian Government

PRESIDENTS WORDS

MM2 - MELBOURNE'S MISSING MAJOR RAIL PROJECT

Melbourne Metro 2 (MM2) is a proposed new cross-city mass transit railway, a transformational project designed to fill a major gap in transport services connecting the city's outer north and west. Rail Futures aims to see this vital project, currently missing from the State Government's forward plans, back onto the agenda of Melbourne's transport future.

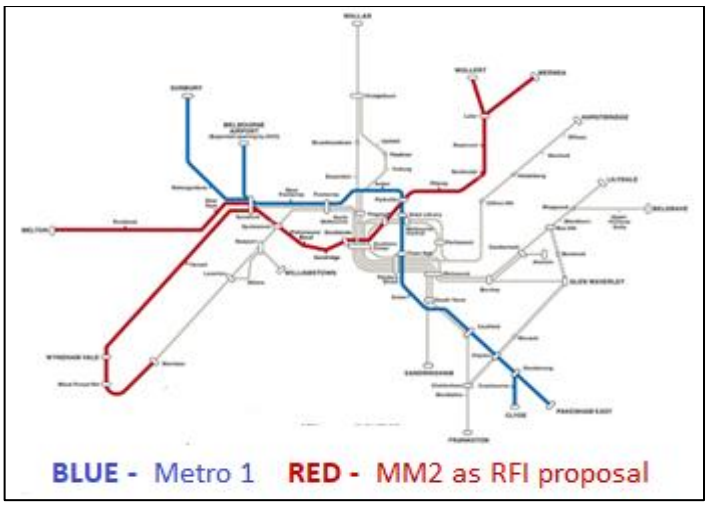
MM2 is a crucial step in helping Melbourne keep its place as a genuinely livable city as its population grows to 8 million by mid-century, or earlier. A city of this size cannot function without highly connected public transport services.

Concerningly, recent survey data shows that Melbourne's public transport share of average motorized weekday travel is only 8% - two percentage points lower than it was pre-COVID, while car use is said to be at record levels. With road congestion only set to worsen as the population grows, this is unsustainable.

Rail Futures has been developing its concept for MM2 for some years. It would involve staged construction of 17.5 km of twin tunnels, 7 underground stations, 23 km of new surface lines and linked to 70 km of upgraded existing lines. MM2 will be an advanced zero-emissions transit system set to replace many car trips due to its speed, frequency, reliability and convenience and set new standards for Melbourne rail travel.

MM2 will fulfill long promised high-capacity frequent electric train services from Melton and Werribee via Wyndham Vale and extend to Mernda in Melbourne's north together with a new line from Lalor to Wollert. It will provide fast, convenient access to job opportunities in the CBD, Fishermans Bend, Parkville and Inner North with substantial reductions in trip times.

MM2 will release critical capacity on the Regional Rail Link lines between Southern Cross and Sunshine to allow for added regional services. It will also enable faster trains on the Geelong and Ballarat lines through full segregation of regional trains from metro tracks.



BLUE - Metro 1 RED - MM2 as RFI proposal



MM2 will provide convenient train/train connections at Docklands (for Southern Cross), Spotswood, Sunshine, Wyndham Vale, Flagstaff and Parkville, giving access to hundreds of destinations across Melbourne and statewide. It will also connect with multiple tram and bus routes in the CBD, at Parkville and Fitzroy enabling fully integrated public transport in inner Melbourne.

The project will be a catalyst for the development of transit-oriented precincts including Sunshine, Werribee, Fishermans Bend, Preston and Epping, incentivizing expansion of housing supply and employment opportunities.

MM2 will be a very different railway to anything previously in Melbourne. The concept involves autonomous operation, i.e. driverless, similarly to the current Sydney Metro. High capacity signaling will provide ultimate capacity for up to 30 trains per hour in each direction. Trains will be noticeably faster and services highly reliable as other driverless railways have shown. There will be no level crossings and the entire corridor will be secured to ensure no unauthorized access.

This will be a very large undertaking and its implementation will be necessarily staged over several years. Like all such projects, it will have engineering design and construction challenges including "under river" crossings at Docklands and Spotswood and tunnelling bored through Melbourne's notorious highly variable ground conditions. There will be unavoidable disruption during construction of the underground stations and disposal of massive quantities of rock and spoil (some inevitably contaminated) will have to be sensitively managed.

It would not be sensible in this context to not mention Suburban Rail Loop (SRL). In other circumstances, MM2 construction would be getting underway now, having previously been seen as the successor project to MM1 when resources could have been readily redeployed.

SRL East and MM2 serve totally different markets and needs. MM2 fills a huge gap in west to north cross-metropolitan connectivity via the CBD. The main SRL East market is for cross-eastern suburban trips. SRL East will have 6 stations. MM2 will serve 41 stations including 7 at Major Activity Centres and the CBD.

To our knowledge, no formal assessment has ever been made between the projects. Arguably MM2 should have had the higher priority. It is still badly needed.

John Hearsch OAM, President

ARTC DETAILS NETWORK UPGRADE PROGRAM

The Australian Rail Track Corporation (ARTC) has recently announced it's Network Investment Program as at the start of the 2025/2026 financial year.
Some eight priority projects are to be progressed across the ARTC Network funded by both the ARTC and also by special works funding allocated by the Commonwealth Government.

Mainline Upgrading of Culverts:

Here drainage culverts are to be selectively upgraded between Tarcoola and Kalgoorlie, Tarcoola and Crystal Brook and Albury and Sydney to improve drainage and water throughput. Project cost $ 140m.

Interstate Mainline Re-Railing:

Between Tarcoola and Kalgoorlie new 60 kg rail will progressively in future years replace life expired 47 kg rail. Delivering enhanced service reliability and the ability to carry heavier rail axle loads. Project cost $ 200m.

Interstate Mainline re-habilitation: (Albury – Sydney)

Ballast cleaning, upgrading of drainage, track undercutting , ballast top up and align and tamping. $ 195m.



Photo – Doug Spike

Maroona – Portland (Victoria) Track Upgrade:

Track upgrade including concrete sleepers to increase axle loads and increase train speeds.$ 150m.

Interstate Corridors – Removal of Aerial Signalling Lines:

Replacement of overhead aerial copper signalling lines subject of on-going theft with buried signalling cables between Wolsoley and Melbourne. $ 70m.

Interstate Network – Extension of Crossing Loops:

Between Broken Hill and Parkes selective extension of crossing loop to 1800m allowing for operation of longer trains carrying greater loads earning more revenue $ 85m.



Image – Courtesy Pacific National

Flood Proofing - Trans Australian Railway

This project will see some total 20 kms of track re-built at a higher level at multiple locations between Crystal Brook and Kalgoorlie. This will improve availability of the Trans Australian Line in times of wet weather. Works may also include levees to divert water clear of the rail alignment at some locations. $ 92m.

Interstate Signalling Upgrade – Bi-directional Signalling

This project will further make available bi-directional signalling on both tracks between Moss Vale and Goulburn.
Bi-directional signalling on duplicated track such as in this section allows for more intensive density of total train movements, and also for faster passenger trains to overtake slower freight trains. $ 49 m.



Freight Train at Mc Intyre *Image – Doug Spike*

FIRST AUCKLAND
UNDERGROUND TRAIN RUNS

The Auckland City Rail Link notched up a major achievement early August, 2025 when the first passenger carrying train operated through the new underground rail tunnel.

The train carried the NZ Prime Minister, Transport Minister and project management executives through the new city underground rail link between Maungawhau and Waitemata stations

There is a new intermediate underground station at Karanga-Hape. The New Zealand government and Auckland Council are jointly funding the $5.5 billion underground link , which, which is the country's first underground railway.

Test trains started earlier in February, 2025 and over 1500 test runs have been made to date.
Kiwi rail is in parallel making a number of other enhancements to the Auckland metro rail network to realize the full benefits of the new CBD underground link will bring with increased trip choices across the network.

EXECUTIVE TEAM CHANGES AT QR

Four new appointments have been made to the Board of Queensland Rail. (QR), with the Minister for Transport and Main Roads Brent Mickelberg welcoming the new appointments.

Andrew Wellington is the new Chairman, with Lisa Hewitt, Julian Haber and Wendy McMillan appointed as Board members joining existing board member Loretta Lynch.



Brisbane Suburban Train *Photo - Queensland Rail*

MORDIALLOC WORKS
NEW PREMIUM STATION

A new elevated premium station will be built at Mordialloc in conjunction with the elimination of three level crossings in the vicinity of the station. The new station and grade separations will open in 2026. The new elevated station will feature enhanced DDA accessibility with access to platforms at both ends of the platforms.

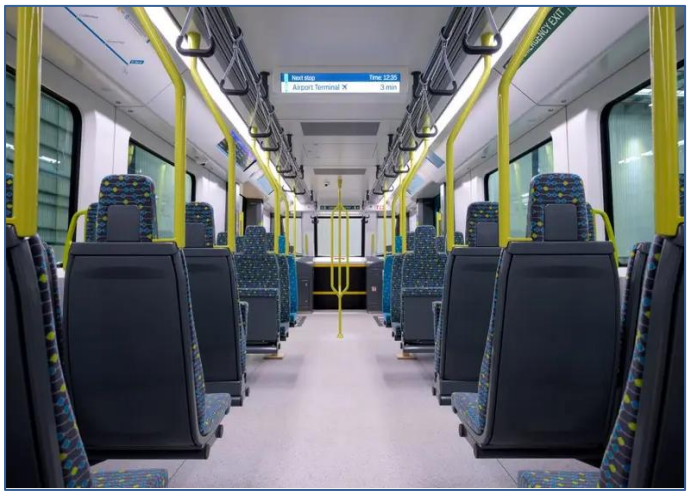
GRADE SEPARATION WORKS

Rail over road grade separations will replace existing level crossings at Mc Donald Rd Mordialloc, and at Station St Aspendale. These new arrangements will also see the existing level crossing at Bear St, Mordialloc permanently closed, with the area under the elevated rail overpass and new Mordialloc station being re-developed as public open space. All three grade separations will be completed in parallel with the new Mordialloc station in 2026.

SYDNEY METRO
CELEBRATES FIRST YEAR

The 18 August, 2025 marked the first full year of operation for the ground breaking Sydney Metro line. The new fully automated Metro line recorded incredible average on-time running of 99.4 per cent, with around 210,000 passenger trips made each day, including 120,000 daily trips under Sydney Harbour between the CBD and North Shore.

The attractiveness of the new under harbour public transport option in Sydney Metro, is also reflected in Southbound road traffic volumes over the Harbour bridge reducing over the last year by around 5 %.



Metro train interior. *Image courtesy – Sydney Metro*

BHP SOUTH AUSTRALIA / AURIZON RAIL TEAM UP IN NEW TRANSPORT DEAL

In June 2025, Aurizon Rail was awarded contracts to provide an integrated rail, road and port logistical solution for BHP "s South Australian copper mining operations from October, 2025 for 15 years.

At commencement of contract the annual task will be 1.3 million tones'.The transport of copper concentrate and cathode from mines as well as inbound freight via the Port of Adelaide will all shift from road to rail between Pimba and Port of Adelaide. The contract is scaleable and can be increased in volume as required when export tonnages increase.

A new rail freight terminal at Pimba will b constructed by Aurizon. The shift of this BHP traffic task from road to rail is a major plus in getting a major bulk mine product onto rail generating a big reduction in green house gas emissions, significantly less damage to South Australian regional highways and reduced road safety risks for other motorists. Inward rail freight to the mine sites will arrive via Berth 29 at the Port of Adelaide, and export product from the mines will be shipped from Berth 29 at the port. The new Aurizon rail freight arrangements for BHP Copper will remove seventy (70) road trains a day from South Australian regional highways.



Road train ex Olympic Dam *. Image – Aurizon Media Release*



Aurizon Trains *Image – Courtesy University of Queensland*

MELBOURNE'S ROUTE 64 SECRET NIGHT TRAM SERVICE

Since late 2024, the Yarra Trams franchise has been run by a joint venture between Transdev and John Holland. During the day Route 64 operates as a through route from Melbourne University via Swanston St, St.Kilda Rd, Dandenong Rd and Hawthorn Rd to East Brighton as it has done since JC was a boy. Recently at nights the route has been truncated at Dandenong and Wattletree Roads with Route 64 then continuing as a shuttle tram with a change of trams taking place on Route 64 in both directions at Dandenong / Wattletree Roads where Routes 5 and 64 part their ways. The changeover for Route 64 passengers works quite smoothly.

But the new franchisee for Yarra Trams communications to travellers to date have been virtually non-existent to say the least. Stops in Swanston Street, St Kilda Road and Dandenong Road incorrectly display time tables which state "NO SERVICE" at night. Downloadable Route 64 time tables show blank spaces between Wattletree Road and East Brighton in both directions at night. There is no indication to passengers that Route 64 operates right through to East Brighton albeit a change of trams is required en-route in Dandenong Road at Wattletree Road.

Where there are Public Information Displays at stops between Wattletree Rd and East Brighton the departure time for the first service next day is shown ! On Sundays, the next service is shown as being the first service on Mondays !

Over this same section of Route 64 pressing the button on the platform stops gives the next departure as a message that "route 64 ... next service is more than one hour away. Again this is totally incorrect.

The only information given as to the need to change trams for the full route 64 is on the actual tram which shows correctly that it caters for passengers for both routes 5 and 64. I have written to the new Yarra Trams franchisee most recently on 30/04/2025. To date four (4) months later a response is still awaited.

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- Rod Watson

HISTORIC MELBOURNE CBD UNDERGROUND ARCADE REVIVAL COMPLETED

Works forming part of an underground pedestrian link between Town Hall station on Melbourne's new Metro 1 line and the existing MTM Flinders Street station via the historic Campbell Arcade have recently been completed following a three year closure of the arcade.

Restoration and upgrading works have ensured retention of the arcades much loved 1950 s features including it s distinctive retro pink tiles and charm. The new underground weather free pedestrian connection between Town Hall and Flinders Street stations will open later in 2025 along with the new Metro 1 line.

The skillful restoration of Campbell Arcade has brought it back to its "former glory", incorporating original heritage features including granite columns, curved tiled walls and twelve historic display cases.

The arcade also retains eight retail shops with new tenancies to open later in 2025. The historic display cases along the arcade have been retained and the City of Melbourne will use them to tell the story of the new Metro Tunnel Project.

Passengers will now also be able enter the arcade and access Flinders Street Station from Degraves Street. New elevators at Flinders Street station will for the first time provide accessible access via the Degraves Street Subway and right through to Town Hall station.



Campbell Arcade in it's revived form. *Photo – MTM Trains*



New ticket barriers at Campbell Arcade. *Image- Jonathan Scutt*

MELTON LINE WORKS PROGRESS

Works to support ultimate medium term operation of 9 car Vlocity trains on peak period Melton commuter services are to commence shortly

Platforms will be lengthened at Deer Park, Caroline Springs, Rockbank and Cobblebank stations. Whilst at Melton a new four platform station is being built with two suburban platforms also supporting 9 car trains.
The new station at Melton is expected to open in 2026, with 9 car peak Melton trains operating from 2027, Additionally four level crossings will be removed on the Melton line and at Truganina.

Additionally to support the operation of 9 car trains a new stabling yard will be built at Cobblebank. Initially this facility will house Vlocity trains used on the Melton services, but will also in the future be capable of stabling electric trains when the Melton line is electrified in the medium term.



Velocity train at Coburns Road grade separation, Melton.
- *Image Jonathan Scutt*

METRONET NEWS UPDATE FROM PERTH

The WA Government has announced that the Metronet BYFORD Rail Extension will open from mid October, 2025. The Byford extension includes a new station at Byford in Perth's South East with over 400 commuter car parking spaces, and a new elevated station at Armadale also to offer 200 car parking spaces.

Seven level crossings have been eliminated as part of the project and eight hectares of new public space created along with 8 kilometres of new shared use paths for pedestrians and cyclists.



Grade Separation Byford Rail. *Image – WA Government*

NEW DM LOCOMOTIVE ARRIVES IN NEW ZEALAND

KiwiRail's first new DM class diesel electric locomotives have entered service, between Christchurch and Timaru on the South Island of New Zealand. Two locomotives of the new DM class are undergoing a rigorous program of in traffic testing before the balance of the order is shipped from Spain. The new locomotives are a lot quieter, and come with full air conditioning for the comfort of locomotive crews.



New Spanish DM locomotive on trial. *Image – Kiwi Rail*

SOMERTON INTERMODAL TERMINAL LATEST NEWS

As construction nears 90 % completion on the ITC Intermodal Terminal at Somerton with precinct developments totaling over $ 400 million, two national rail operators have recently announced their intention to use the Somerton Intermodal terminal from later in 2025 when rail operations are expected to commence at the site.

The new terminal will have the ability to handle Interstate and Victorian Intra-state intermodal trains of 1500 and 1800 metres in length, and Melbourne Port Shuttle trains up to 600 metres in length

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The 15 hectacre Inner terminal at Somerton will commence operations in October, 2025. The ITC Somerton terminal will offers users direct access to the ARTC mainline Interstate network to the West and North and in future to Stage – 1 of Inland Rail linking Melbourne via Illabo to Parkes NSW with onward connections via Broken Hill to Adelaide, Perth and Darwin.

The Somerton terminal also has access to Victorian regional broad and standard gauge rail freight lines.
Initial capacity at the Somerton Terminal on opening will be around 1 million 20 foot equivalent units (TEU) containers per annum. The site has considerable further ability to scale up volumes in throughput and associated logistical activities such as consolidation and on-site warehousing.

In the first days of July Aurizon announced it would be a key user of Somerton for an initial period of 9 years., and this was followed within days by SSR (Southern Shorthaul Railroad) announcing their intention to also operate to/from the Somerton Intermodal Terminal.



New rail sidings at the Somerton Intermodal terminal.
Image - Jonathan Scutt

RIDING AMTRAK - CHICAGO TO WASHINGTON D.C.

Chicago has four major downtown train stations:

- Union Station serves Amtrak and multiple Metra lines including the BNSF Railway, Heritage Corridor, and the Milwaukee District lines
- Ogilvie Transportation Center, (formerly North Western Station) serves the Union Pacific North, West, and Northwest Metra lines
- LaSalle Street Station serves the Rock Island District Metra line
- Millennium Station (formerly Randolph Street Terminal) serves the Metra Electric District and the South Shore Line

July 24 was hot, 37 ºC. So I indulged a short Uber ride from my hotel to Chicago's Union Station where there was the loudest thunderclap followed by a torrential downpour for about 30 min.

I was entitled to free wi-fi in the Amtrak Metropolitan Lounge where connectivity was excellent. My train, No. 41 *The Floridian*, on which I'm only going as far as Washington DC, is a seasonal combination of the *Capitol Limited* and the *Silver Star*. Amtrak claim that this re-arrangement has been forced on them due to the logistical difficulties they face arising from their ongoing East River Tunnel Project in New York City. Other rail sources suggest Amtrak has a serious backlog of carriages awaiting maintenance forcing the amalgamation of some trains.

Tonight, my train No. 41 has been delayed from it's scheduled 6:40 pm departure back to 9:10 pm. Amtrak provides us with a $10 meal voucher redeemable at the station Food Court upstairs.

The evening wears on and we finally board at 10:00 pm. – in my case, Track 28, and right at the far end of the train. The two big 4,200 hp locomotives—a GE P42DC 'Genesis' unit and a Siemens ALC-42 'Charger' unit—face us as we approach the train, prime movers singing lustily as they satisfy the trains' hotel power requirements on a 35 ºC night.

We finally depart without fanfare at 10:20 pm, reversing out of the terminal, and pushing back for about 2 km, sliding through the orange glare of yard lights between the Amtrak and BNSF/Metra servicing and maintenance facilities, and around the BNSF Y junction used by westbound Amtrak trains such as the *California Zephyr* and the *Empire Builder*.

The Y junction permits our train to face east, and with that we're on our way. Within 90 minutes of pushing back at Chicago Union Station, we make a brief stop at South Bend, Indiana , before I fell asleep. Amtrak trains traveling between Chicago and Washington D.C. utilize the route formerly served by the *Capitol Limited*. Using this route, the *Floridian* traverses or touches several states, including Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Maryland, West Virginia, and Washington D.C.

I sleep through the stop at Toledo, Ohio and awaken as we depart Cleveland at daybreak, turning away from Lake Erie to traverse the Allegheny Mountains (part of the larger Appalachian Mountain Range), crossing Ohio and a northern corner of West Virginia to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, for a 30-min stop to water the train carriages and fuel the locomotives.

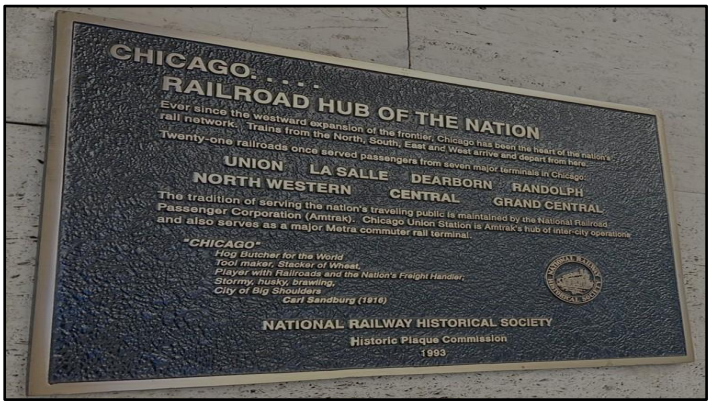
Departing Pittsburgh, we follow an extremely scenic and serpentine route, on which we enter several crossing loops to cross long freight trains, including double-stacked container trains incorporating mid-train distributed Motive Power.

Later, I'm talking to folks in the Café Car when we arrive into Harpers Ferry and I almost miss this . If John Brown was aware of my interest in the military history of this area and that I'd almost missed it, he'd wouldn't just be 'a-mouldering' in his grave, he'd be turning in it as well ! Due to our late-running, passengers detraining in D.C. are offered the opportunity of a 5:30 pm sitting for dinner – a meal we wouldn't normally get, so I accept.

Our arrival into Washington's Union Station is around 4 hrs late. We draw into a track at Union Station, and beside us can be seen Train No. 40, our opposite number preparing for it's departure north to Chicago.

[PS: I paid more than $ 800 US in total for these two one-way sectors in a Roomette cabin on the *Floridian* and a Business Class coach seat on the *Palmetto*].

- **Fergus Moffat** .



Plaque – Union Station Chicago *Photo – Fergus Moffat* **> >>>>>**

(See page - 17 for a larger version of this photo.)

SYDNEY METRO WEST PROGRESS UPDATE

Tunnelling for Sydney Metro West is approaching completion with two tunnel boring machines (TBMs) breaking through at Clyde, with more than 80 per cent of the project's 24 km twin tunnels having been completed.

Tunnel Boring Works to date include:

- TBMs Daphne and Beatrice completed 11 kms of twin Metro tunnels between The Bays and Sydney's Olympic Park in October 2024
- TBMs Betty and Dorothy have each built over 75 per cent of the 9 kms of tunnel between Sydney's Olympic Park and Westmead
- TBMs Jessie and Ruby have completed 33 per cent of the 2.3 km twin tunnels between The Bays and Hunter Street in the Sydney CBD. The remaining 1.7 km of the alignment is being excavated by roadheader machines

As is TBM tradition worldwide, TBM Betty is named after Olympian Betty Cuthbert and TBM Dorothy after human rights activist Dorothy Buckland-Fuller.
Sydney Metro West is aiming for a completion date of 2032.



Sydney Metro – 1 Train . *Image – Courtesy Sydney Metro.*

Overall tunnelling on Sydney Metro West is now over 90 % complete linking the Sydney CBD to Parramatta.
Six of the nine station boxes on the line have now been excavated and lined at The Bays, Five Dock, Burwood North, Strathfield North, Olympic Park, and Westmead. Work continues on excavation of the remaining three station boxes at Parramatta, Pyrmont and Hunter Street in the Central Sydney (CBD).
The Metro West Transit Hub at Parramatta will include access to Metro West Rail and the Parramatta Light Rail network, as part of an overall development including retail and office space, 100 new homes and dining.



Tunnelling machine break through. *Image – Sydney Metro West*

METRO EXTENSION TO BANKSTOWN ON TRACK

Sydney's historic Bankstown station's transformation is nearing completion to accept extension of Metro 1 trains from the existing temporary turnback at Sydenham.

Upgrading works to allow extension of Metro 1 trains Metro I trains at Bankstown include installation of platform screen doors on two 170 metre long platforms.
Other benefits for Sydney Metro 1 travellers at Bankstown will include a new pedestrian concourse with eateries and other retail outlets.

When the Metro 1 extension to Bankstown is opened later in 2025, Metro 1 will extend from Tallawong in the north over 66 kms via Chatswood, Central and Sydenham to terminate at Bankstown.
The final extension of Metro 1 in the West will in future see it reach Sydney's second international airport at Badgerys Creek.

Sydney Metro – Western Sydney Airport has reached a further milestone, with work progressing in building platforms at the six new stations. The new platforms are already in place at the future Bradfield Station, and are progressing at the Airport and Airport Business Park and Orchard Hills stations.

When complete, the new 23-kilometre Metro will offer 15-minute travel trips from the Airport to to St Marys, where passengers will be able to interchange to T1 Western Line trains.

The future Metro rail corridor between St Marys and Bradfield will create a new transport spine for Greater Western Sydney, connecting suburbs and travellers with the new Western Sydney International (Nancy-Bird Walton) Airport.

UPGRADED V/LINE NORTHERN & GIPPSLAND SERVICES

NEW V/LINE timetables have operated on the Traralgon, Bairnsdale, Bendigo, Eaglehawk, Epsom and Echuca lines from Sunday 14/09/2025.

Principal changes are:

Traralgon and Bairnsdale lines

- 55 new Weekday services, and 32 new Weekend services, have been added = 87 trips each week.
- Trains between Melbourne and Traralgon now run around every 40 minutes between 0800 and 2100, on Weekdays..
- On Sundays, the former 1023 train from Southern Cross to Sale now terminates at Traralgon, and the former 1223 from Southern Cross to Traralgon has been extended to terminate at Bairnsdale.
- Weekday Berwick school trains stop once in the morning and afternoon on school days. The Weekday afternoon train stopping at Berwick now departs from Southern Cross at 1617.
- Some Gippsland coach services have altered timings to better connect with trains.

Commentary: Overall the new Gippsland timetable offers a significant improvement in frequency to Traralgon, Sale and Bairnsdale

There are however SHORTFALLS :

- *The last Up service from Traralgon on Sundays at 1949 is too early, and the later 2025 from Traralgon (as operates Saturdays) needs to be added in due course to the Sunday timetable from Traralgon.*
- *Whilst frequency to Bairnsdale is now good, far too many Inter City Bairnsdale trains stop unnecessarily at all stations between Pakenham and Bairnsdale.*

  Inter City Bairnsdale services should progressively move to stopping ONLY at Garfield, Drouin, Warragul, Moe, Morwell, Traralgon then Rosedale, Sale, and Stratford - – reducing travel times to Bairnsdale by around 15 minutes.



V/Line- Velocity regional train, 3 or 6 cars. *Photo - V/Line*

Bendigo / Echuca Lines

- The 1006 Weekday service from Southern Cross to Bendlgo has been extended to Eaglehawk (replacing the former 1106 Weekday service from Southern Cross to Eaglehawk).
- The 1106 Weekday service from Southern Cross has been altered to terminate at Echuca ,eliminating the need for Echuca passengers to change trains at Bendigo and reducing travel time by eight (8) minutes for all passengers travelling to all six stations north of Bendigo to Echuca.
- A new Weekday service departs from Epsom at 1932 and arrives at Southern Cross 2151.

Fourteen existing Weekend Bendigo trips have had passenger capacity doubled to seat 444 passengers.

DERAILED V/LINE COMMS

Thursday 14/08/2025:

BENDIGO Line - Minor Delay

The 1652 Southern Cross - Eaglehawk service will end early at **Ballarat** and no longer run to Eaglehawk.

A Melbourne to Eaglehawk service can terminate short at Bendigo, BUT not at Ballarat which is on the Western line to Wendouree and Ararat.

Sunday 31/08/2025:

ALBURY Line - Minor Delay

The 1802 Southern Cross – Albury is delayed 86 minutes owing to an equipment fault.

If V/line regards 86 minutes a MINOR delay, one wonders what they regard as a Major delay ???

WORLD's BEST TRAM DRIVERS TO HEAD DOWNUNDER IN 2027

Melbourne home of the worlds largest tram network is to host the next World Tram Driver Championships in 2027. The announcement comes hard on the heels of the recent 2025 Championship held in Vienna, Australia where Melbourne tram drivers Craig Maher and Sally Burgess represented Australia competing against 27 other teams from around the world.

Melbourne's tram network is the largest in the world, operating over 5,000 daily services over 250 kilometres of double track, carrying nearly 200 million passengers annually.

In 2022, Australia was the first ever non-European country chosen to compete in the European Tram Driver Championships in Leipzig, Germany.

Yarra Trams Chief Executive Officer Vincent Destot said : "This event is more than a competition – it's a celebration of the people, culture, and innovation that make trams such an important part of our city."



Yarra Trams drivers who represented Australia in Vienna
. Photo Yarra Trams

WOOLLAHRA STATION TO GET A NEW LIFE

Woollahra station was to have been a station on Sydney's Eastern Suburbs railway. Work started on the station at Woollahra in the 1970's but construction has never been completed although the Eastern suburbs line to Bondi Junction has operated as a key component of the Sydney Metro rail network for over 45 years.

Crews started building a station at Woollahra on the Eastern Suburbs line in the 1970's but the station has never been completed and opened to the public.

The New South Wales Government recently announced that land around Woollahra and Edgecliff stations on the Eastern Suburbs lime is to be re-zoned, allowing around 10,000 new homes to be built, all within 8 minutes travel time of Central Sydney on the existing Eastern Suburbs line.

The Eastern Suburbs train line between Central Sydney and Bondi Junction currently operates at less than 50 % of capacity during Weekday am peak periods.

Re-zoning of the identified land is expected to take up to two years, with construction work to finally complete and commission Woollahra station to take around 2 years commencing in 2027 for completion in 2029.



Artists impression of the future Woollahra station.
Photo – NSW Government.

DOMAIN ROAD TRAM TURNBACK AT ANZAC STATION COMPLETED

Over the June Kings Birthday Long Weekend of early June, Yarra Trams undertook works to install new overhead wiring to complete the new tram turnback in Domain Road at Anzac station between St Kilda Road and Dallas Brooks Drive at Melbourne Grammar School (MGS).

Previous works had created two separate tram platforms with direct connections to the underground train platforms at Anzac station, and an altered tram track layout in Domain Road . The now completed new tram turnback in Domain Road at MGS will allow for Park Street (South Melbourne) trams to terminate / originate short at Anzac station.

Commissioning of this new tram turnback will presumably occur later in 2025 with the opening of the Metro 1 rail tunnel linking Pakenham East / Cranbourne through to West Footscray and Sunbury.



Completed tram turnback in Domain Road at Anzac Station looking towards St Kilda Road. *Photo – David Hardy*

SUNSHINE SUPER – HUB WORKS TO CRANK UP :

Jointly funded Federal / Victorian works will commence early in 2026 to transform Sunshine Station with an extended station concourse and re-configured track layout of six platforms. From the Northern side platforms 1 & 2 will serve Sunbury & Bendigo trains, platforms 3 & 4 Melton & Airport trains, and 5 & 6 Geelong, Ballarat and Black Forest Road trains.

At this stage North Eastern Albury line travellers appear still to be denied access at Sunshine to both the Metro 1 tunnel and RRL trains to/from Geelong, Ballarat and Bendigo. Victoria is still stubbornly refusing to re-instate a platform on the existing standard gauge line passing through Sunshine station. This on-going refusal will in future deny ALL Albury line travellers access to Metro 1 trains as Dandenong / Pakenham / Cranbourne trains will no longer operate via Southern Cross once the Metro tunnel opens. The latest response from the Victorian Government to RFI on this issue claims incorrectly that standard gauge Albury line travellers will be able to change at North Melbourne for other Suburban lines !!!

ELIZABETH / VICTORIA STREET TRAM WORKS TO BE COMPLETED IN OCTOBER

Over 3 weeks in October tram trackage at the intersection of Elizabeth and Victoria Streets is to be totally replaced and enhanced with the installation of a a new twin track cross connection in Victoria Street at Elizabeth Street.

The intersection will be closed 24/7 to ALL road and tram traffic for 3 weeks. Route – 57 will terminate short in Victoria St west of Elizabeth St, and Route 19 will terminate short in the northern end of Elizabeth St. Route 59 trams will be diverted from Flemington Road at Parkville via Peel, William and Queensbridge Streets to turnback at Kingsway and City Road in South Melbourne.

Past failure to install a double curve pair towards the East at Elizabeth & Flinders Streets coupled with lack of a trailing crossover in Elizabeth St at a"Beckett St makes it impossible to provide a shuttle tram service in Elizabeth St between Flinders St Station and Victoria Market during the track works. DoT gave no reason for NOT providing a shuttle bus service over this sector in lieu of trams.
See page – 17 for a diagram showing the new track layout at Elizabeth and Victoria Streets allowing trams in future to travel continuously East / West along Victoria Street.

V/LINE SERVICE DELIVERY STATISTICS - JULY 2025

Inter – Urban – Commuter Services

	Geelong South Geelong Waurn Ponds	Bacchus Marsh Ballarat Wendouree	Kyneton Bendigo Eaglehawk/Epsom	Seymour	Traralgon
Reliability	96.2 %	98.0 %	94.8 %	97.6 %	N/A **
Punctuality	91.9 %	88.9 %	82.0 %	89.2 %	N/A **

Reliability – Measured as 96 % of scheduled services to run
Punctuality - 92 % of services to arrive at terminal station within 6 minutes of schedule
*** - Denotes Traralgon services largely Bustituted for the month of July.*

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Inter – City - Long Distance Services

	Warrnambool	Ararat & Maryborough	Swan Hill & Echuca	Shepparton	Albury / Wodonga	Bairnsdale
Reliability	99.3 %	98.7 %	98.6 %	98.9 %	98.4 %	N/A **
Punctuality	92.8 %	89.7 %	80.9 %	94.6 %	89.6 %	N/A **

Reliability – Measured as 96 % of scheduled services to run
Punctuality - 92 % of services to arrive at terminal station within 11 minutes of schedule
*** Denotes Sale & Bairnsdale services largely Bustituted for the month of July.*

NOTES:

1. *Services are counted as having operated when run by train or even when substituted by bus.*

2. *Services are counted as having operated to the scheduled public timetable, including when services are terminated short of, or originate short of the timetabled destination / origin station.*

3. *Train services counted as having run even if the train runs as a reduced number of cars.*

Information Source : V/LINE Corporate Website

V/LINE IMPROVEMENTS V. ACTUAL DELIVERY

	GOVERNMENT / DoT COMMITMENT				DELIVERY STATUS at 09/25	
	INTER URBAN SERVICES					
1	Waurn Ponds 20 minute Off Peak frequency on Weekdays	By 08/24	1	NOT DELIVERED	Still HALF Weekday Off Peak trains terminate at SOUTH GEELONG
2	Waurn Ponds 20 minute Off Peak frequency on Weekends		2		DELIVERED
3	Wendouree 40 minute Off Peak frequency on Weekdays		3		DELIVERED
4	Wendouree 40 minute Weekend frequency		4		DELIVERED
5	Bendigo 40 minute Off Peak frequency on Weekdays	By 11/26	5	NOT DELIVERED	
6	Bendigo – Additional Evening Trains Saturdays & Sundays		6	INCLUDING : Selective lengthening of Bendigo weekend trains	DELIVERED
7	Shepparton 9 return services on Weekdays	By 07/25	7	NOT DELIVERED	Potentially Feb 01 2026 introduction
8	Shepparton 5 return services on Weekends	By 07/25	8	NOT DELIVERED	Potentially Feb 01 2026 introduction
9	Additional Seymour Weekday am Up/PM Down peak service	???	9	NOT DELIVERED	Potentially Feb 01 2026 introduction
10	Seymour 60 minute frequency on Saturdays & Sundays	???	10	NOT DELIVERED	Potentially Feb 01 2026 introduction
11	Traralgon 40 minute Off Peak frequency on Weekdays		11		DELIVERED
12	Traralgon – 40 minute Weekend frequency		12		DELIVERED
	INTER CITY SERVICES					
13	Warrnambool 5 return services 7 days a week.		13		DELIVERED
14	Ararat 5 return services 7 days a week.		14		DELIVERED
15	Echuca 5 return servicers on Weekdays	By 07/25	15	NOT DELIVERED	
16	Echuca 3 return services on Weekends	By 07/25	16	NOT DELIVERED	
17	Albury 5 return V/LINE services on Weekdays	???	17	NOT DELIVERED	
18	Albury fourth Weekend return trip over Sat / Sunday		18		DELIVERED
19	Bairnsdale – Existing V/locity Weekend SALE trips extended to Bairnsdale.		19		DELIVERED
20	Upgrade to Class-2M track allowing 130 k/mh to Albury, Warrnambool, and Shepparton	???	20	**NOT DELIVERED :** Warrnambool, and Shepparton.	**DELIVERED :** Albury
21	Upgrade to Class-2 track allowing 115 km/h Traralgon to Sale	???	21	NOT DELIVERED	

NEWS PICTURES AROUND THE TRACKS



Calder Park Grade Separation *Image – Vic Govt*

Grain Train - McIntyre Loop *Image – Doug Spike*



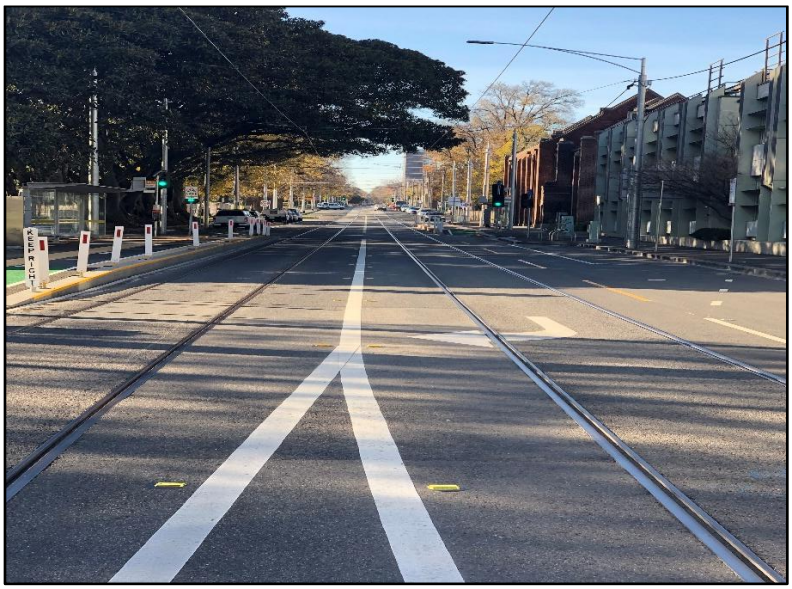
Euroa Station Final Concept *Image - Inland Rail*



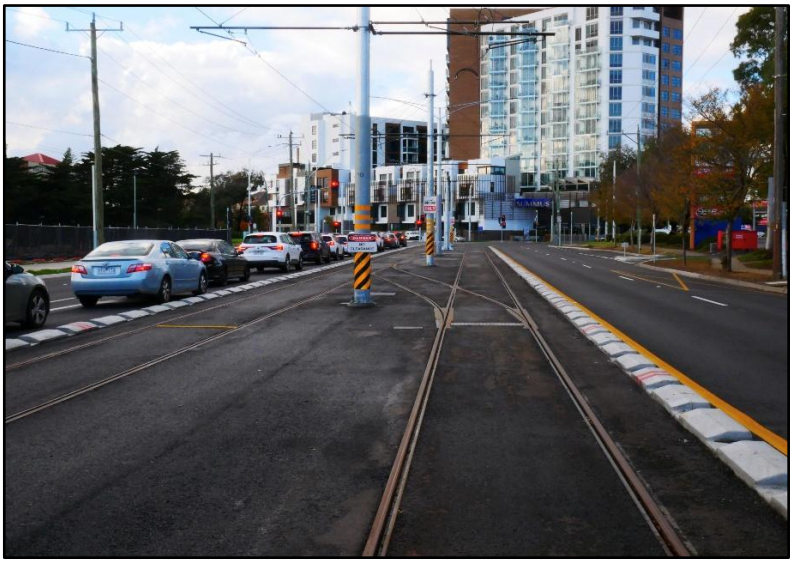
Elevator tower for new pedestrian bridge, Ballarat.

- *Image Jonathan Scutt*

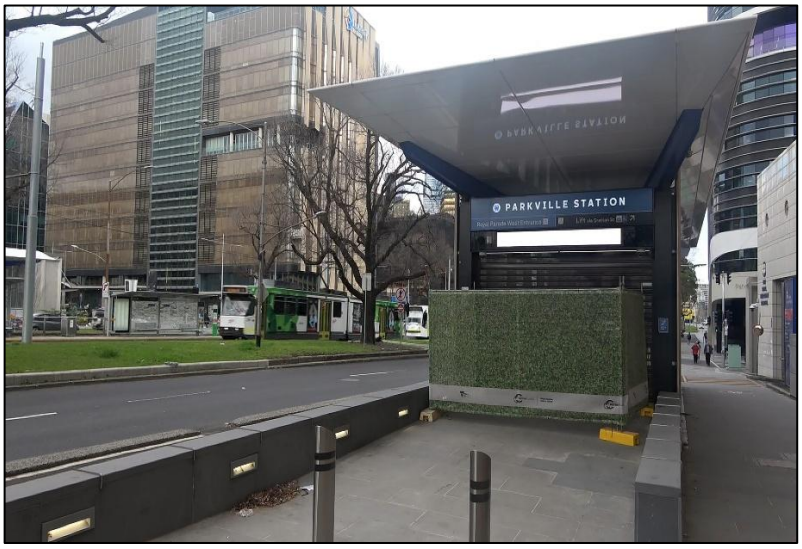
NEWS PICTURES AROUND THE TRACKS



Tram turnback at Anzac Station *Image - David. Hardy*



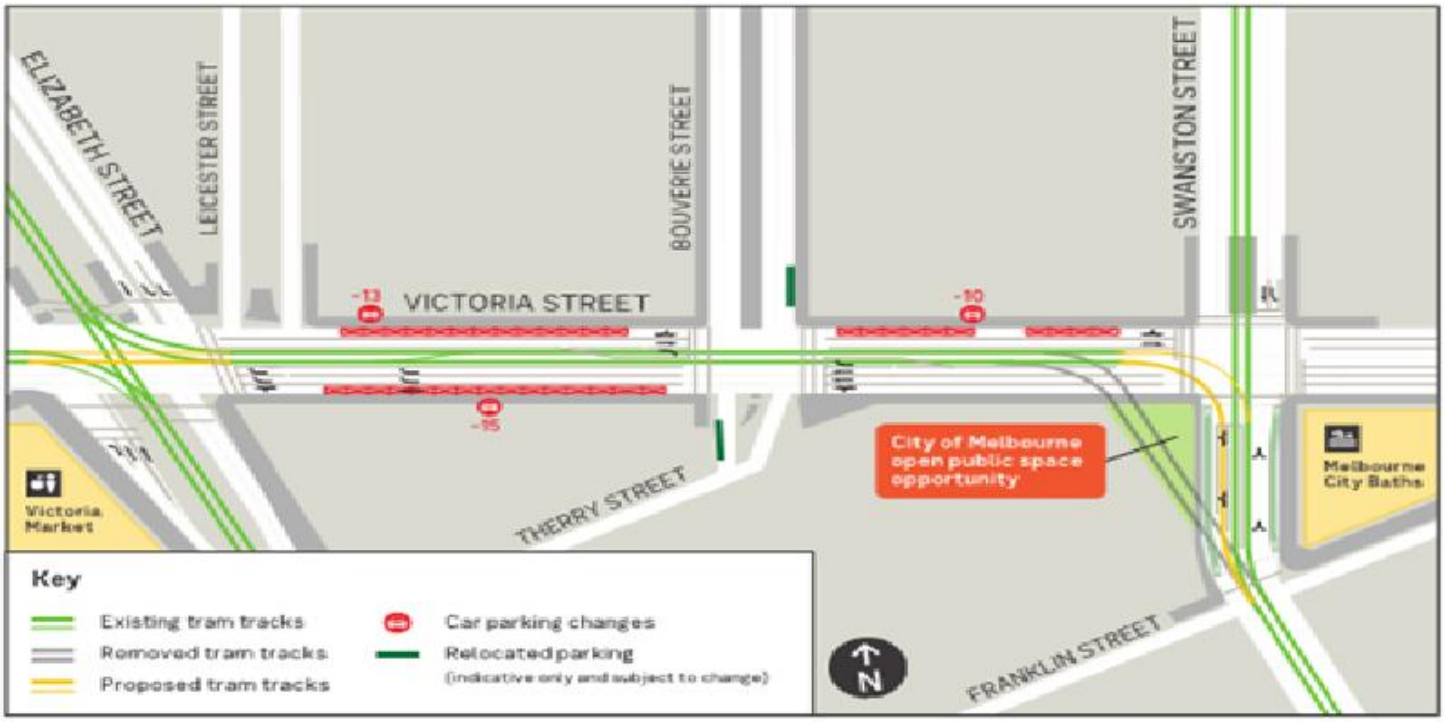
Outside New Maidstone Tram Depot *Image- Rod Watson*



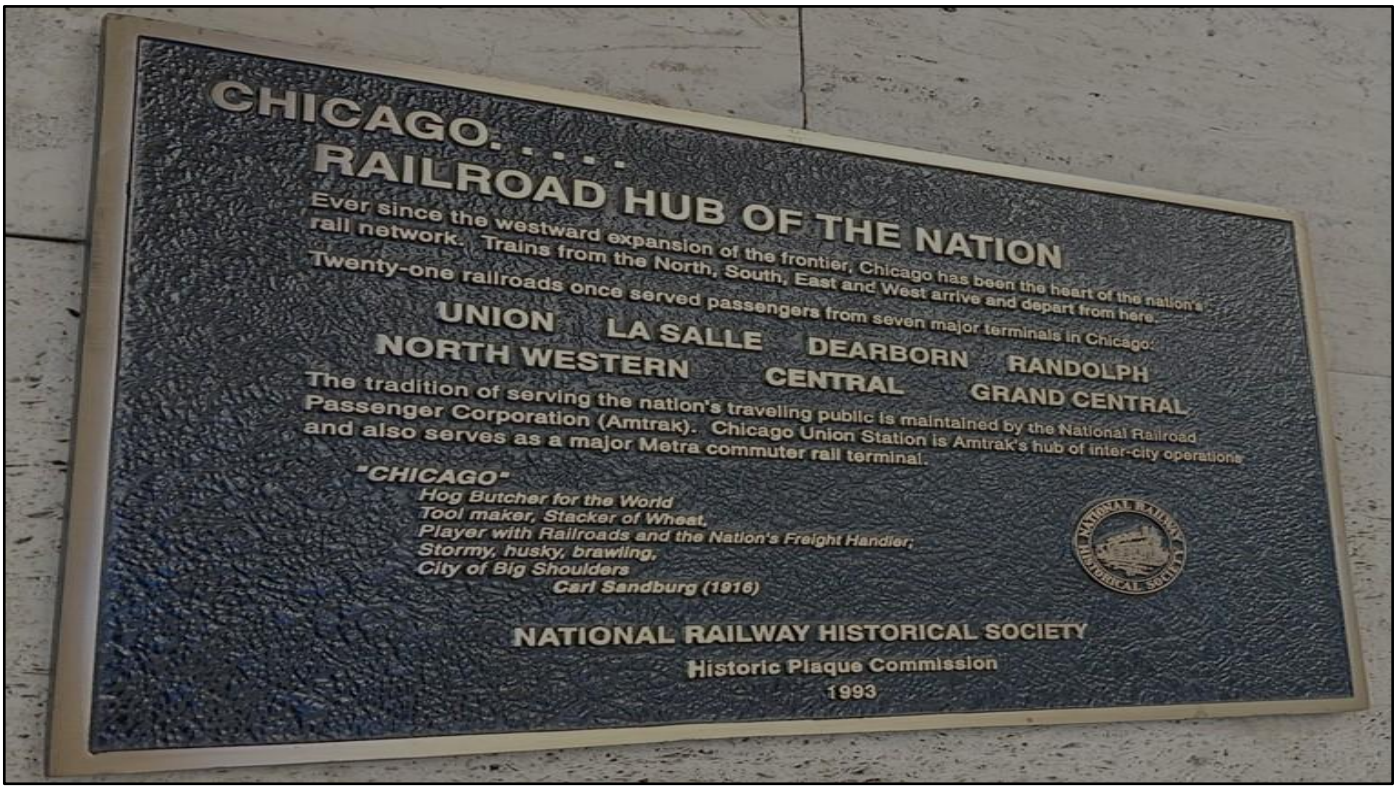
- Image – Jonathan Scutt

Parkville station on Grattan St & Route – 19 tram from North Coburg

NEWS PICTURES AROUND THE TRACKS



Showing CBD tram track works (in conjunction with Metro 1 train tunnel) in Victoria Street at Elizabeth & Swanston Streets.
- The works at Victoria and Swanston Streets were completed in September / October of 2024.
- Renewal of existing tracks at Elizabeth and Victoria Streets and installation of the new cross link tracks in Victoria Street (shown above in yellow) across Elizabeth Street will be undertaken in October 2025 *Diagram - DoT, Yarra Trams (02/24)*



Plaque at Union Station , Chicago. (USA) . The Rail Crossroads of the USA. *Photo – Fergus Moffat*