

Newsrail - Operations Observations for November and December 2022

Passenger

Journey Beyond Rail

The Overland (-am8/-ma8) – several trips cancelled due to track closure

The Overland passenger service operates twice weekly in each direction, eastbound Sundays and Thursdays, westbound Mondays and Fridays. The train usually operates with six vehicles and did so during November and until Mon.19 December westbound. It then had nine vehicles eastbound on Thurs.22 and Sun.25.12, and westbound on Fri.23 and Mon.26.12. Ten vehicles ran eastbound on Thurs.29.12 and westbound on Fri.30.12.

Due to a freight train derailment near Inverleigh early on Mon.14.11, the train did not run westbound that day. It should have run eastbound on Sun.13.11, but did not run for an unknown reason. That was fortunate as the carriages would have been stranded in Melbourne for a week. The service resumed with the eastbound train on Thurs.24.11 and westbound on Fri.25.11.

A single NR Class locomotive usually hauls every service. Locomotives during November were: NR8 (3), NR121 (4), NR85 (6), NR64 (7), NR117 (10 and 11), NR112 (24, 25, 27 and 28). Locomotives during December were: NR52 (1 and 2), NR12 (4), NR47 (5), NR61 (8), NR34 (9 and 11), NR95 (12), NR9 (15, 16 and 18), NR5 (19), NR96 (22), NR35 (23 and 25), NR71 (26), NR114 (29), NR90 (30).

Indian Pacific (-AM8/-MA8) – Diverted via Victoria due to floods

The *Indian Pacific* passenger service was diverted to operate via Victoria from the start of November, due to its normal route in western NSW being closed due to floods. It is predicted that route may not reopen until early 2023. It continues to operate its normal weekly schedule between Adelaide and Perth, with a shuttle run to and from Broken Hill.

It ran through Western Victoria eastbound on Tuesdays and westbound on Thursdays, although one week was missed due to more floods, with the line closed for a week from Mon.14.11 by a flood induced derailment east of Inverleigh. Its times at Gheringhap generally only fluctuated by around one hour different each way each week.

Services operated in November and December and times at Gheringhap were:

Thurs.3.11: NR34-NR85, 32 vehicles, 4SA8, 05.44. Tues.8.11: NR25-NR7, 32 vehicles, 3AS8, 23.01. Thurs.10.11: NR26-NR86 (both in IP livery), 32 vehicles, 4SA8, 04.24. Tues.22.11: NR29-NR27 (both in IP livery), 33 vehicles, 3AS8, 22.28. Thurs.24.11: NR25-NR85, 33 vehicles, 4SA8, 04.00. Tues.29.11: NR86-NR60, 33 vehicles, 3AS8, 22.30. Thurs.1.12: NR27-NR29, 33 vehicles, 4SA8, 03.38. Tues.6.12: NR25-NR27, 33 vehicles, 3AS8, 22.45. Thurs.8.12: NR26-NR99, 33 vehicles, 4SA8, 03.17. Tues.13.12: NR29-NR28 (both in IP livery), 33 vehicles, 3AS8, 21.41. Thurs.15.12: NR86-NR58, 33 vehicles, 4SA8, 04.40. Tues.20.12: NR26-NR115,

33 vehicles, 3AS8, 22.12. Thurs.22.12: NR9-NR28, 33 vehicles, 4SA8, 04.27. Tues.27.12: NR86-NR112, 33 vehicles, 3AS8, 21.58. Thurs.29.12: NR29-NR87, 33 vehicles, 4SA8, 05.05.

Great Southern (6KT8/2TA8) – 2022/2023 season commences

Journey Beyond Rail introduced a seasonal weekly *Great Southern* passenger cruise service from Adelaide via Melbourne to Brisbane and return during December 2019 and January 2020. *Great Southern* did not operate during Summer 2020/2021 due to the pandemic travel restrictions and missed the first three weeks of the 2021/2022 season during December 2021 for the same reason. The 2022/2023 season commenced ex-Adelaide on Fri.2.12.22 and is scheduled to run until at least a tenth weekly departure on Fri.3.2.2023, returning the following Monday ex-Brisbane. The train utilises carriages that are idle during the off season for the *Ghan* train. Several stops for off-train excursions are made en route.

Schedules northbound (times approximate as may vary from trip to trip): Adelaide dep. 09.00 Fri., Stawell 16.30/19.30 (passengers off train for excursion), through Melbourne overnight, Albury 04.30* Sat., Yass Junction 09.00 (passengers alight), Goulburn 17.50 (passengers join), Coffs Harbour 18.15/21.10 Sun., Brisbane (Acacia Ridge) arr. 07.30 Mon. Southbound: Acacia Ridge dep. 12.15 Mon., Coffs Harbour 18.00/22.00, Maitland 08.45 Tue. (passengers alight), Port Waratah Yard 15.15 (passengers join), Albury 06.30* Wed., Broadmeadows 10.45 (passengers alight), Inverleigh Siding 13.00/18.00 (passengers alight and join), Adelaide arr. 08.45 Thurs. Most services seemed to run fairly close to 'on time' in Victoria.

The services are hauled by the two specially-painted NR Class locomotives, NR30 and NR31. Observations during December were: 6KT8, Fri.2, NR31-NR30, 25 vehicles, Gheringhap 00.19 (Sat.3). Fri.9, NR30-NR31, 27 vehicles, Gheringhap 22.48. Fri.16, NR30-NR31, 26 vehicles, Gheringhap 22.26. Fri.23, NR30-NR31, 26 vehicles, Gheringhap 22.31. Fri.30, NR30-NR31, 26 vehicles, Gheringhap 23.23. 2TA8, Wed.7, NR 31-NR30, Gheringhap 12.43. Wed.14, NR 31-NR30, Gheringhap 12.48. Wed.21, NR 31-NR30, Gheringhap 13.16. Wed.28, NR 30-NR31, Gheringhap 12.52.

V/Line

New network service plans

A new network service plan was effective from Sun.4.12.2022. It replaced previous short-lived versions effective from 17 July, 23 August and 23 October. New versions have usually been issued around every six months. The main change in the 17 July version was the opening of new stations beyond Bendigo at Goornong on the Echuca Line, and Raywood on the Swan Hill Line. The main change in the 23 August version was new schedules on the Albury Line due to locomotive-hauled trains being replaced by VLocity railcars on all services. That change actually commenced on and from Sun.31.7.2022, when the changes were made via circular S.22/8012.

The main change in the 23 October version was implementation of new schedules on the Shepparton Line due to locomotive-hauled trains being replaced by VLocity railcars on all services. VLocity trains did not commence on the scheduled date of Sun.23.10.2022 due to

floods closing the line beyond Seymour from the afternoon of Thurs.13.10. Shepparton services resumed with VLocity trains operating from Mon.31.10.

The main change in the 4 December version was implementation of new signalling between Warncoort Loop and Warrnambool, including commissioning of the new crossing loop at Boorcan and introduction of a fifth return train service on weekdays. Two new return weekday services were introduced on the Echuca Line during the middle of the day. A new return service was introduced between Ballarat and Maryborough on Saturdays and Sundays.

Scheduled evening coach replacement services

To permit track access for routine maintenance for sufficient hours to enable useful work to be undertaken, in recent years, V/Line have replaced all evening train services with road coaches for the entire journey on Sunday, Monday, Tuesday (and sometimes Wednesday) evenings on interurban lines. These are the times when the least patronage is experienced. The works are referred to as Early Week Night Occupations (EWNO).

The services are generally replaced after 20.00 or 21.00 ex-Southern Cross and 19.00–20.30 ex-Geelong, Ballarat, Bendigo, Seymour and Traralgon. In the latter case, Metro and other Big Build works have been almost constantly ongoing and enable V/Line to access their Traralgon Line tracks while closures in the Metro area have prevented V/Line services from operating. The Geelong, Ballarat, Bendigo and Seymour Line closures take place every four weeks, with each line being worked on during a different week.

Closures during November and December were:

Geelong/Waurn Ponds: Sun.27.11 to Tues.29.11 inclusive and Sun.25.12 to Tues.27.12 inclusive.

Ballarat/Wendouree: Sun.13.11 to Tues.15.11 and Fri.9.12 to Tues.13.12 inclusive (including level crossing removal works at Ardeer and Deer Park).

Bendigo/Eaglehawk/Epsom: Evening trains were cancelled every evening in November and Thurs.1.12 (except Tues.1.11 to Sat 5.11 inclusive and Fri.18.11 to Mon.21.11 inclusive) due to extended V/Line track upgrade works.

Seymour: Sun.20 to Wed.23.11 inclusive (planned but may have been cancelled) and Sun.18.12 to Wed.21.12 inclusive.

Geelong and Warrnambool Lines

From Sat.5.11 until Sat.3.12 inclusive, due to Warrnambool Line upgrade works, coaches replaced all trains between Geelong and Warrnambool. On Fri.4.11, the 17.12 and 19.16 Southern Cross to Warrnambool services ran as trains to Geelong with road coaches beyond, so that the locomotives and carriage sets were not stranded in Warrnambool for a month. Coaches then replaced all trains between Warrnambool and Geelong for the month,

connecting with trains between Geelong and Melbourne. On Mon.28.11 and Tues.29.11, the 17.39 service ex-Warrnambool was replaced by coaches for the entire journey to Southern Cross due a Geelong Line evening shutdown.

From Sat.5.11 until Sat.3.12 inclusive, due to Geelong Line upgrade works, coaches replaced all trains between Waurin Ponds and Geelong. Trains still ran between Geelong and Melbourne. Coaches departed Waurin Ponds, Marshall and South Geelong up to 27 minutes earlier than the train times, connecting with trains at Geelong. In addition, on all weekdays, the 05.56 Geelong to Melbourne and 16.31 Melbourne to were replaced by coaches for the entire journey.

From Fri.9.12 (evening) and all day Sat.10 and Sun.11.12, due to level crossing removal works at Ardeer and Deer Park, coaches replaced all evening services on Fri.9.12 between Southern Cross and Geelong/Waurin Ponds after approximately 21.30. On Sat.10.12 and Sun.11.12, coaches replaced all trains between Waurin Ponds and Geelong, and Wyndham Vale and Southern Cross. Trains ran between Geelong and Wyndham Vale.

On Sat.10.12 and Sun.11.12, due to the above level crossing works and work on the South Geelong to Waurin Ponds duplication, coaches replaced all trains on the Warrnambool Line for the entire journeys.

Ballarat, Ararat and Maryborough Lines

On Sat.10.12 and Sun.11.12, due to level crossing removal works at Ardeer and Deer Park, coaches replaced all Ararat, Ballarat and Maryborough Line services between Southern Cross and Melton. Trains still ran between Melton and Ballarat/Wendouree, Ararat or Maryborough. On Sun.11.12, evening Ballarat/Wendouree services after 19.00 were all replaced by coaches for the entire journey.

Bendigo, Echuca and Swan Hill Lines

From Sun.6.11 until Thurs.17.11 inclusive, and Tues.22.11 until Thurs.1.12 inclusive, due to V/Line track upgrade works, coaches replaced Bendigo trains during the evenings. On all weekday evenings, coaches replaced all services between Southern Cross and Bendigo after 20.00 and ex-Bendigo after 19.30. On Sat.6.11, 12.11 and 26.11 and Sun.13.11 and 27.11, coaches replaced all trains between Southern Cross and Bendigo after 20.30 and ex-Bendigo after 20.00. All Echuca and Swan Hill Line trains still ran between Bendigo and Echuca/Swan Hill.

Traralgon and Bairnsdale Lines

On most days during November and December, due to Victoria's Big Build works or Metro and V/Line maintenance works, coaches replaced some Gippsland trains during most evenings. Generally, coaches replaced all trains between Southern Cross and Pakenham with trains between Pakenham and Traralgon and vice versa. Coaches did not stop at Flinders Street (after 19.00), Richmond or Clayton Stations. There were also several full or partial line closures, as below.

Sat.5.11. until Sun.13.11 inclusive, plus Sat.3.12 and Sun.4.12, due to the Pakenham Level Crossing Removal Project and Gippsland Line upgrade works, coaches replaced all Bairnsdale and Traralgon Line services for their entire journeys.

On Sat.10.12 and Sun.11.12, coaches replaced all trains between Southern Cross and Pakenham. Trains ran between Pakenham and Traralgon/Bairnsdale and vice versa.

Catering cancellations

On some occasions throughout November and December, services on Albury, Bairnsdale, Swan Hill and Warrnambool Lines ran without buffet catering, due to staff shortages, a situation that has applied for most of this year. The buffet service cancellations seem particularly frequent on Albury services, where brand new VLocity trains with catering facilities were only introduced from the start of August 2022.

Freight

PN Warrnambool freight (9203/9204)

The service is scheduled (as at 23 October 2022) to operate five nights per week (Mon–Fri).
9203 Appleton Dock dep. 03.15 (via Werribee), Geelong 04.45*, Warncoort Loop 05.44/05.49, Camperdown 06.43/07.07 (cross 8860 passenger), WestVic Siding arr. 08.22.
9204: WestVic Siding dep. 18.17, Camperdown 19.40/20.06 (cross 8867 passenger), Warncoort Loop 20.56/21.10 (cross 8869 passenger), Geelong 22.11*, Appleton Dock arr. 00.14 (next day). The load is usually 13-18 wagons loaded with 44–48 twenty-foot-equivalent (teu) of containers, hauled by a single G or BL Class.

Trains and locomotives observed during September, October, November and December were:

September:

Thurs.1.9 and Fri.2.9:	G536
Tues.6:	G536*
Wed.7:	XR552-XR554**
Thurs.8 and Fri.9:	G536
Mon.12 to Fri.16 inclusive:	G536
Mon.19 to Wed.21 inclusive:	G536
Mon.26 and Tues.27:	G536***

Wed.28 to Fri.30 inclusive: G536

* 9204 delayed until 23.00 departure due to track occupation on the Up side of Geelong and ran as 9206.

** 9203/9204 was the first time that two XR locomotives have operated the Warrnambool Goods.

*** 9203 was late both days, held at North Geelong Yard until after the morning passenger peak, departed approx. 09.30, crossing 8662 Passenger at Warncoort Loop, 8864 Passenger at Camperdown and arrived Warrnambool 14.00.

Sat.10.9: N469 turned on the turntable approx. 06.30.

October:

No trains ran on Mon.3 to Fri.7 inclusive (due to a nine-day track occupation), Wed.12 and Mon.31.10.

Mon.10 and Tues.11: G541

Thurs.13 and Fri.14: G536*

Mon.17 to Fri.21 inclusive: G536

Mon.24: G536

Tues.25 to Thurs.27: G522

Fri.28: BL29**

* 9204 Thurs.13.10 was cancelled (unknown reason), remained at Warrnambool and ran 9204 Fri.14.10.

** 9203 Fri.28.10, G536 failed at Tottenham Yard. G541 ran light engine from Appleton Dock and hauled the train to North Geelong Yard, where BL29 replaced it for the run to Warrnambool and returned 9204 that evening.

Sat.29.10: A²986-R761 arrived on a Steamrail special at 14.30 (scheduled 14.00 - S22/6735), turned and departed as R761-A²986, scheduled 18.30.

November.

No trains ran on Tues.1 (Melbourne Cup Day) and Mon.7 to Fri.25 inclusive, due to a three week total line occupation beyond Geelong.

Wed.2: G524

Thurs.3: G522*

Fri.4: G522

Mon.28: G524*

Wed.30: G524

* 9203 was late, held at North Geelong Yard until after the morning passenger peak, departed approx. 09.30, crossing 8662 Passenger at Warncoort Loop, 8864 Passenger at Camperdown and arrived Warrnambool 14.00.

** 9204 delayed until 23.00 departure due to track occupation on the Up side of Geelong and ran as 9206.

December:

No trains ran on Tues.13, plus Mon.27 and Tue.28 (Christmas and Boxing Day public holidays).

Thurs.1 and Fri.2: G524

Mon.5: G524

Tues.6 and Wed.7: G529

Thurs.8: BL29

Fri.9: G529*

Mon.12: G529**

Wed.14 to Fri.16: G531

Mon.19 and Tues.20: BL34

Wed.21: BL34*

Thurs.22 and Fri.24: G531

Wed.28: G531*

Thurs.29 and Fri.30: G531

* 9203 – due to 9204 the previous evening striking cattle near Winchelsea, that train was late arriving at Appleton Dock. 9203 was late departing, held at North Geelong Yard until after the morning passenger peak, departed approx. 09.30, crossing 8662 Passenger at Warncoort Loop. Prior to the new timetable from 4.12, it would then cross 8864 Passenger at Camperdown and arrive Warrnambool 14.00.

On this occasion, the new Boorcan Loop with its intermediate crossover to enable handling three trains, demonstrated that ability, with 9203 Goods arriving and crossing 8864 Passenger. By then, the new 10.13 (8863) Passenger from Southern Cross had caught up and was due to also cross 8864 at Boorcan Loop, so 9203 was held there for the three-train cross

and overtake move, then followed 8863 to Warrnambool, arriving 15.00 (one hour later than usual in such circumstances) and just prior to departure of the new 15.13 (8866) Passenger ex Warrnambool.

9203 on Wed.21.12 and Wed.28.12 ran late as 9203 and also arrived Warrnambool 15.00, having crossed 8862 and 8864 and been overtaken by 8863.

** Mon.12.12: G529 on 9203 goods failed at Cudgee at approx. 07.30 with a water pump fault and loss of coolant. It had crossed 8860 Passenger at the new Boorcan Loop. It was being followed by a 707 Operations special chartered sleeping car train with 13 carriages, hauled by A66-S306-N471. That special had waited at Warncoort Loop from 05.00 until 07.45 to be overtaken by 9203 Goods and then cross 8860 Passenger. The special was due to arrive at Warrnambool at 09.15 and stable in No.3 Road for the day. It was delayed at Boorcan Loop for over two hours due to the failure of 9203 at Cudgee.

N473 at Warrnambool to run 09 28 (8862) Passenger was sent light engine to Cudgee to haul the goods to Warrnambool and then out to Westvic Siding. The 09.28 (8862) Warrnambool to Melbourne was cancelled and replaced by coaches to Geelong.

07.20 (8861) Passenger had terminated at Geelong and was replaced by coaches to Warrnambool. The 12.23 (8864) ex-Warrnambool that it forms was replaced by road coaches to Geelong, connecting there with the next train to Southern Cross.

The Seven-O-Seven Operations special arrived at Warrnambool approx. 11.30. N471 was detached from it and attached to the cars from cancelled 8862 to form the 15.13 (8866) Passenger.

G543 arrived light engine at Warrnambool approx. 14.00, ran to WestVic Siding, attached to defective G529 and pulled it out of the way, releasing N473 to return to Warrnambool and take N471's place on the Seven-O-Seven Operations special.

10.13 (8863) Passenger terminated at Geelong and was replaced by coaches to Warrnambool. That train formed the 13.08 (8865) Warrnambool, originating at Geelong.

13.08 (8865) Warrnambool, originating at Geelong on time at 14.10. Passengers from Melbourne boarded the 13.30 Southern Cross to Wauran Ponds and transferred to coaches at Geelong to follow the train to Warrnambool. On arrival at Warrnambool (scheduled 16.40) 8865 formed the 17.36 (8868) Passenger as usual. Some normality then descended, except that the 707 Operations special and 9204 Goods (with defective G529 still attached) had yet to be dealt with.

The special was scheduled to push from No.3 Road at 20.40 towards Westvic Siding to beyond signal WBO24 and wait while 8867 passenger arrived in the platform (due 20.40) the loco ran around and shunted the cars to the yard (No.3 Road) to stable for 8862 the next morning. The special was then to pull forward into No.2 Road to await arrival of 8869 Passenger (due 22.40). It stables in the Platform overnight to form 8860 the next morning. The special could then depart from No.2 Road at 23.00. Then 9204 Goods could come up from Westvic Siding (hauled by G543 with G529 dead attached) and depart via No.2 Road for Appleton Dock at midnight. It is normally due to depart Warrnambool 18.45, cross 8867 at Boorcan Loop, 8869 at Warncoort Loop and arrive Appleton Dock 00.14 next day.

As a result, 9204 Goods would not have arrived at Appleton Dock until around 04.30 on Tues.13.12, when it was due to be already passing through Corio on the way back to Warrnambool as 9203. Needless to say, 9203 was cancelled on Tues.13.12 and 9204 did not run from Warrnambool that evening.

Sat.3.12: As no locomotives and carriage sets had been left at Warrnambool during the four weeks that no passenger trains ran (Sat.5.11 until Sat.3.12 inclusive), two empty car trains were scheduled to run from Southern Cross to Warrnambool on Sat.3.12, departing at 18.50 (8897) and 19.30 (8899). Both were formed by an N Class loco and five-car N set, scheduled to arrive Warrnambool 22.06 and 22 50 respectively and stable, 8897 to form 8862 Mon.5.12 and 8899 to form 8862 Sun.4.12.

Sat.11.12: N468-N473 arrived and departed light engine. A test run for N 468?

Sat.17.12: P14-EV120-P16 arrived and departed on an infrastructure test train.

Warrnambool observations by Eddie White

Western standard gauge

Portland line occasional grain trains

A summary of rail traffic (or lack of it) on the Maroona–Portland Line was published in *Newsrail* November 2022, pp. 398–399.

PN Grain trains based at Murtoa tend to run to and from Portland for several weeks when a ship is due for loading, and then haul grain to North Geelong Grain Loop until the next shipment is due from Portland.

Train details for November and December are:

Tues.1.11: BL33-BL31-G527, 7741V empty grain Portland to Murtoa, Bolwarra 23.55.

Thurs.3.11. G527-BL31-BL33, 7940V grain Marmalake to Portland, Pyrenees Loop 19.37.

Fri.4.11: BL33-BL31-G527, 7741V empty grain Portland to Murtoa, Heywood 15.05.

Sat.5.11: G527-BL31-BL33, 7940V grain Marmalake to Portland, Dunkeld 21.40.

Sun.6.11: BL33-BL31-G527, 7741V empty grain Portland to Murtoa, Hamilton 16.36.

Mon.7.11: G527-BL31-BL33, 7940V grain Marmalake to Portland, Ararat 19.26.

Tues.8.11: BL31-G527- BL33, 7741V empty grain Portland to Murtoa, Heywood 15.18.

Wed.9.11: BL33-G527-BL31, 7940V grain Marmalake to Portland, Ararat 19.54.

Thurs.10.11: BL31-G527-BL33, 7741V empty grain Portland to Murtoa, Heywood 15.43.

That train then ran the following day from Murtoa to Warrackside, loaded and returned to Murtoa, then on Sat.12.11, ran to North Geelong Grain Loop, Stawell 09.38. No grain (nor other trains) ran to Portland for the rest of November.

Grain trains resumed running to Portland in late December with two rakes of wagons each with three locomotives and ran a few trips, then reverted to operating to and from North Geelong Grain Loop.

Sat.24.12: BL32-XR559-G525, 7731V empty grain Gheringhap to Murtoa, Wingeel Loop 11.23.

Mon.26.12: BL32-XR559-G525, 9785 empty grain Murtoa to Hopetoun, Warracknabeal 04.57. G525-XR559-BL32, 9786 grain Hopetoun to Murtoa, Warracknabeal 18.52, formed 7740V ex-Murtoa to Portland, Maroona 23.04.

Tues.27.12: BL32-XR559-G525, 7741V empty grain Portland to Woomelang, Dunkeld 19.45, renumbered 79397V after Ararat. BL33-G519-BL31, 7740V grain Marmalake to Portland, Stawell 22.17.

Wed.28.12: BL31-G519-BL33, 7741V empty grain Portland to Dimboola, Dunkeld 18.18. That train then ran to Jeparit Thurs.29.12 to load, then on Fri.23 and Sat.31 to North Geelong Grain Loop. G525-XR559-BL32, 7938V grain Woomelang to Portland, Birchip 19.31, renumbered 7742V after Ararat.

Thurs.29.12: BL321-XR559-G525, 7743V empty grain Portland to Murtoa, Hamilton 23.58.

Gheringhap Loop sightings – more busy weeks

A camera has been set up to record all rail movements at Gheringhap since 1991. Details of trains and data recorded since 1998 may be viewed at ghaploop.railpage.org.au

A summary of movements during November and December were:

Week ended Sat.5.11: 86 sightings for the week, ten more than the previous week. Six on broad gauge, including two PN and one SSR grain trains; 80 on standard gauge, including eight PN grain trains.

Week ended Sat.12.11: 83 sightings for the week. Ten on broad gauge, including six PN and one SSR grain trains; 73 on standard gauge, including eight PN grain trains.

Week ended Sat.19.11: 16* sightings for the week. One on broad gauge; 15* on standard gauge, including two PN grain trains.

Week ended Sat.26.11: 77 sightings for the week. Eight on broad gauge, including six PN grain trains; 69 on standard gauge, including eight PN grain trains.

Week ended Sat.3.12: 92 sightings for the week. Eight on broad gauge, including eight PN grain trains; 84 on standard gauge, including eight PN and two Qube grain trains.

Week ended Sat.10.12: 111 sightings for the week. Thirteen on broad gauge, including seven PN and one SSR grain trains; 98 on standard gauge, including 18 PN grain trains.

Week ended Sat.17.12: 115** sightings for the week. Nine on broad gauge, including six PN grain trains; 106 on standard gauge, including 15 PN and two Qube grain trains.

Week ended Sat.24.12: 113 sightings for the week. 15 on broad gauge, including 11 PN and two SSR grain trains; 98 on standard gauge, including 12 PN and two Qube grain trains.

Week ended Sat.31.12: 76 sightings for the week. Eight on broad gauge, including eight PN grain trains; 68 on standard gauge, including eight PN grain trains.

* A derailment near Inverleigh early on Mon.14.11 resulted in no standard gauge movements for a week and flooding halted many broad gauge trains.

** 115 trains is the highest weekly total recorded at Gheringhap since these observations began in 1998. They were boosted by standard gauge trains diverted due to flooding in western NSW.

For the year to 31.12.2022 there were a total of 4192 train sightings. Broad gauge total was 467 and standard gauge 3725. During 2021, there had been 4149 train sightings on both gauges, 43 less than this year. Broad gauge totals are 52 less and standard gauge 95 more this year. Total grain trains for the year are 759 (358 bg/401 sg), 102 less than in 2021. Daily averages for the year are 11.48 trains, 1.28 on broad gauge and 10.20 on standard gauge. In 2021, daily averages for the year were 11.37 trains, 1.42 on broad gauge and 9.95 on standard gauge.

The past five year's total figures (daily averages below):

Year	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018
Total number of trains	4192	4149	4467	3948	4451
(Total daily average)	11.48	11.37	12.20	10.82	12.20
Total broad gauge	467	519	250	115	499
(BG daily av)	1.28	1.42	0.68	0.32	1.37
Total standard gauge	3725	3630	4217	3833	3952
(SG daily av)	10.20	9.95	11.52	10.50	10.83
Total grain trains	759	861	1318	730	1258
(Grain av)	2.08	2.36	3.60	2.0	3.45
Total BG grain	358	363	162	25	368
(BG grain av)	0.98	1.00	0.44	0.07	1.01
Total SG grain	401	498	1156	705	890
(SG grain av)	1.10	1.36	3.16	1.93	2.44

The 2022 total of 4192 movements through Gheringhap was 43 more than in 2021, 275 less than in 2020, but 224 more than 2019 (the lowest this century). It is still one of the lowest

train totals over the past two decades. The figures do not reflect train size or gross loading, so total freight tonnage moved by rail through Gheringhap cannot be determined by just the number of trains. The number of wagons on each train is recorded. It would be possible to at least produce figure regarding total wagons moved each year. Anecdotal evidence is that some trains have become much longer over the two decades. ARTC in recent years have extended crossing loops lengths to permit longer trains to operate.

Annual train totals are:

2022: 4192	<u>2016</u> : 4030	2010: 5100	<u>2004</u> : 6034
2021: 4149	2015: 4235	2009: 4456	2003: 4338
<u>2020</u> : 4467	2014: 5086	<u>2008</u> : 5077	2002: 5893
2019: 3948	2013: 5773*	2007: 5350	2001: 6243
2018: 4451	<u>2012</u> : 5990	2006: 5973	<u>2000</u> : 6226
2017: 4990	2011: 5876	2005: 5275	

*some trains may have been missed
366-day years are underlined

SBR Dooen intermodal (7922V/9721V) – steady operation with mid-sized trains

This service is scheduled (as at 5 June 2022) to operate five days per week, at slightly varying times each day from the Wimmera Intermodal Freight Terminal (WIFT) at Dooen. 7922V: Dooen (WIFT) dep. 11.30 Sun, 11.15 Mon, 11.30 Tues and Thurs, and 18.20 Fri, Appleton Dock arr. 17.15 Sun, 17.20 Mon and Tues, 17.21 Thurs, 02.50 Sat. 9721V: Appleton Dock dep. 22.30 Sun, 22.50 Mon, 22.15 Tues and Thurs, 05.50 Sat, Dooen (WIFT) arr. 03.45 Mon, 03.55 Tues, 03.30 Wed and Fri, 10.45 Sat. Scheduled train length is 1000 metres, hauled by CSR locos.

During November and December, most trains ran with around 30–40 wagons but several were much larger. Many ran a few hours late, but a few were slightly early. A single CSR loco ran most trains, with two on some and three locos on one train. Some SCT Class locos also ran on a few trains.

Services operated in November and December (times at Gheringhap) were:

Tues.1.11: 7922V, CSR006, 34 wagons, 01.13. 9721V, CSR006, 34 wagons, 02.58 (Wed.2).
Thurs.3: 7992V, CSR001-CSR006, 55 wagons, 17.03. 9721V, CSR006, 56 wagons, 01.31 (Fri.4).

Mon.7: 7922V, CSR015-CSR006, 34 wagons, 15.04. 9721V, CSR006, 34 wagons, 23.33.
Tues.8: 7922V not run. 9721V not run. Thurs.10: 7922V, CSR006, 39 wagons, 16.35. 9721V, CSR006, 55 wagons (including SCT loading), 04.51 (Fri.11 – five hours late).

Mon.14–Fri.18: no trains due to track closed by the Inverleigh derailment.

Mon.21: 7922V, CSR006-CSR007-SCT003-CSR008, 99 wagons (including SCT and steel loading), Gheringhap 23.31 (eight hours late, but one of the first trains to run after the

Inverleigh derailment). 9721V not run. Tues.22: 7922V not run. 9721V not run. Wed.23: 7922V (extra train), SCT002-SCT011, 42 wagons (including 14 steel wagons and extra SCT loading), 22.25. Thurs.27: 7922V not run. 9721V not run.

Mon.28: 7922V, CSR019-CSR005-CSR009, 34 wagons, 22.52 (7½ hours late). 9721V, CSR019, 34 wagons, 05.07 (Tues.29 – 4½ hours late). Tues.29: 7922V, CSR019, 32 wagons, 21.42 (five hours late). 9721V, CSR019, 32 wagons, 05.52 (Wed.30 – six hours late). Thurs.1.12: 7922V, CSR019, 42 wagons, 15.24. 9721V, SCT005-CSR019, 69 wagons (including 15 steel wagons and extra SCT loading), 02.52 (Fri.2 – 2½ hours late).

Mon.5: 7922V, CSR001, 34 Wagons, 20.18 (five hours late). 9721V, CSR001, 32 wagons, 02.06 (Tues.6). Tues.6: 7922V, CSR001, 32 wagons, 20.42 (five hours late). 9721V, CSR001, 32 wagons, 04.53 (Wed.7 – five hours late). Thurs.8: 7922V, CSR001, 38 wagons, 16.20. 9721V, CSR001-CSR016, 58 wagons (including SCT loading), 04.32 (Fri.9 – 4½ hours late).

Mon.12: 7922V, CSR011, 38 wagons, 16.19. 9721V, CSR011, 38 wagons, 00.52 (Tues.13). Tues.13: 7922V, CSR006-CSR011, 30 wagons, 20.19 (4½ hours late). 9721V, CSR006, 30 wagons, 15.21 (Wed.14 – 15½ hours late). Thurs.15: 7922V, CSR005-CSR006, 82 wagons (including SCT loading), 18.12. 9721V, CSR006-CSR005, 82 wagons (including SCT loading), 10.59 (Fri.16 – 11 hours late).

Mon.19: 7922V, CSR012, 32 wagons, Gheringhap 15.37. 9721V, CSR012, 32 wagons, 23.52 (30 minutes early). Tues.20: 7922V, CSR012, 35 wagons, 20.39 (five hours late). 9721V, CSR012, 35 wagons, 07.40 (Wed.22 – eight hours late). Thurs.23: 7922V, CSR009-CSR012, 42 wagons, 14.48 (one hour early). 9721V, CSR011, 53 wagons, 13.22 (Fri.23 – 13 hours late).

Mon.26: 7922V no train. 9721V no train. Tues.27: 7922V no train. 9721V no train. Thurs.15: 7922V, SCT001-CSR011, 53 wagons, 16.44. 9721V, CSR011, 66 wagons, 03.59 (Fri.30 – four hours late).

PN Merbein freight (7901V/7902V/7903V/7904V) – few trains for two months

7901V/7902V is scheduled (as at 17 July 2022) to operate three nights per week, at slightly varying times. 7901V: Appleton Dock dep. 21.20 Mon, 22.05 Wed and 22.30 Fri, Merbein arr. 13.30 Tues, 14.15 Thurs and 15.25 Sat. 7902V: Merbein dep. 16.00 Sun, 23.00 Tues and Thurs, Appleton Dock arr. 07.50 Mon, 15.10 Wed and 15.30 Fri. A second service, 7904V, is scheduled to depart Merbein on Mon and Wed evenings and 7903V departs Appleton Dock on Tues and Thurs evening, but they have not run for about three years.

Due to Murray Basin Project upgrade works, no trains ran for six weeks after 7902V ex-Merbein on Tues.1.11 until 7901V ran ex-Melbourne Fri.9.12. Following a week of operation, trains ceased again (for reasons unknown to observers) after 7901V ran ex-Melbourne Fri.15.12. The service resumed with 7902V ex-Merbein on Tues.10.1.23. The trains that did run for one week were mainly half length trains, but all had two locos.

Services operated in November and December (times at Gheringhap) were:

Mon.31.10.22: 7901V, BL32-G540-BL27, 37 wagons (loaded with only five containers), 19.04 (four hours early).

Tues.1.11: 7902V, BL27-G540-BL32, 55 wagons, 05.02 (Wed.2).

This was the last train scheduled for six weeks due to Murray Basin track upgrade works and construction of extra tracks at the Seaway Merbein Terminal. Some loading was trucked from Merbein to Ultima to load on to the Qube intermodal service, but as it only operates twice weekly, it could not carry much of the usual thrice weekly *Fruit Flyer* loading.

Following the six week scheduled track closure, trains resumed for one week, commencing with 7901V from Melbourne on Fri. 9.12 and, after the same train on Fri.16.12, again ceased for more than three weeks. The service finally resumed with 7902V ex-Merbein on Tues.10.1.

Fri.9: 7901V, G520-BL30, 19 wagons, 14.47 (Sat.10 – 14 hours late, first Down train for six weeks).

Sun.11: 7902V, G539-BL30, 28 wagons, 09.27 (Mon.12 – three hours late, first Up train for six weeks).

Mon.12: 7901V, BL30-G539, 27 wagons, 00.11 (Tues.13).

Tues.13: 7902V, G539-BL30, 31 wagons, 13.43 (Wed.14).

Wed.14: 7901V, BL30-G539, 25 wagons, 01.48 (Thurs.15 – two hours late).

Thurs.15: 7902V, G539-BL30, 33 wagons, 13.54 (Fri.16).

Fri.16: 7901V, G539-BL30, 60 wagons, 01.49 (Sat.17).

Tues.10.1.23: 7902V, G539-BL30, 32 wagons, 13.36 (Wed.11.1.23).

North Western – Ballarat, Ararat, Maryborough and branches

North Geelong – Ballarat Line: busy

A total of 46 train movements ran on the line during December, up from 31 in November, and only 19 in October, but better than 37 in September and 40 in August. The October figures were badly affected by line closures due to floods.

There were 33 PN and three SSR grain trains in December, up from 18 PN and four SSR grain trains in November. There were 36 grain trains in December, compared to 22 in November, only 15 in October, 23 in September and 32 in August. Six Qube Ultima hay trains ran in December, and eight in November.

During November, no trains ran on eight days and only one in the third week. One train ran on most other days, two ran on eight days and three on one day. During December, no trains ran on eight days and only two in the first week. But the rest of the month was busy,

with one train on most days; two ran on seven days, three ran on four days, four on one day and six on Sat.10.12.

Train details, (times at Gheringhap) for November were:

Tues.1: PN 9154 grain ex-Boort, XR551-XR552-G541 (40 wagons) 01.26.

Wed.2: Qube 9175 intermodal to Ultima, G515-G512 (39 wagons) 22.45.

Thurs.3: SSR 9196 grain ex-Quambatook, S312-S317-P18 (27 wagons), 23.50.

Fri.4: Qube 9176 intermodal ex-Ultima, G512-G515 (37 wagons) 02.01. Qube 9175 intermodal to Ultima, G512-G515 (37 wagons) 22.52.

Sun.6: SSR 9198 grain ex-Nullawil, S312-P17-S317-P18 (27 wagons), 00.10. Qube 9176 intermodal ex-Ultima, G515-G512 (37 wagons) 03.49.

Tues.8: PN 9147 empty grain to Charlton, XR555-XR554-XR550 (40 wagons) 00.42. PN 9148 grain ex-Charlton, XR550-XR554-XR555 (40 wagons) 23.52.

Wed.9: Qube 9175 intermodal to Ultima, G515-G512 (30 wagons) 22.08.

Thurs.10: PN 9147 empty grain to Charlton, XR550-XR554-XR555 (40 wagons) 01.49. PN 9148 grain ex-Charlton, XR550-XR554-XR555 (40 wagons) 23.04.

Fri.11: PN 9149 empty grain to Wycheproof, XR553-XR551-G528 (40 wagons) 02.37.

Sat.12: PN 9150 grain ex-Wycheproof, G528-XR551-XR553 (40 wagons) 00.38. 707 Operations 8195 *Grainlander* Pass to Sea Lake, N451-S306 (11 vehicles), 01.35.

Wed.16: Qube 9175 intermodal to Ultima, G515-G532 (36 wagons) 23.48.

Sun.20: SSR 9198 grain ex-Nullawil, S312-B80-S317 (32 wagons), 00.28.

Mon.21: Qube 9171 intermodal to Ultima, G515-G532 (37 wagons) 22.50.

Wed.23: Qube 9171 intermodal to Ultima, G515-G521 (36 wagons) 21.33.

Thurs.24: PN 9149 empty grain to Charlton, XR554-G531-XR555 (40 wagons) 18.35.

Fri.25: SSR 9196 grain ex-Quambatook, S312-B80 (20 wagons), 22.01.

Sat.26: PN 9148 grain ex-Charlton, XR555-G531-XR554 (40 wagons) 01.04. PN 9147 empty grain to Charlton, G543-G528 (40 wagons) 02.02. PN 9157 empty grain to Manangatang, XR555-G531-XR554 (40 wagons) 18.33.

Sun.27: PN 9146 grain ex-Charlton, G528-G543 (40 wagons) 05.21. PN 9155 empty grain to Quambatook, XR550-XR552-XR551 (40 wagons) 16.14.

Mon.28: PN 9158 grain ex-Manangatang, XR554-G531-XR555 (40 wagons) 02.14.

Tues.29: PN 9156 grain ex-Quambatook, XR551-XR552-XR550 (40 wagons) 07.18. PN 9157 empty grain to Ultima, G543-G528 (40 wagons) 15.30.

Wed.30: PN 9147 empty grain to Sea Lake, XR551-XR552-XR550 (40 wagons) 00.43. PN 9148 grain ex-Sea Lake, XR550-XR551-XR552 (40 wagons) 23.48.

Train details, (times at Gheringhap) for December were:

Thurs.1: PN 9158 grain ex-Ultima, G528-G543 (40 wagons) 02.48.

Wed.7: Qube 9175 intermodal to Ultima, G512-G532 (41 wagons) 23.18.

Thurs.8: PN 9155 empty grain to Charlton, G528-G543, (40 wagons) 00.06. PN 9147 empty grain to Charlton, G531-G541, (36 wagons), 02.34. PN 9146 grain ex-Charlton, G541-G531, (36 wagons), 21.48. PN 9157 empty grain to Manangatang, XR553-XR554-XR555 (40 wagons) 23.13.

Fri.9: PN 9156 grain ex-Charlton, G543-G528, (40 wagons) 02.24. Qube 9176 intermodal ex-Ultima, G532-G512 (41 wagons) 03.20.

Sat.10: 707 Operations 8195 *Bluestone Express* Pass to Sea Lake, then Boort, R707-A66-S306-N471 (13 vehicles), 00.29. PN 9153 empty grain to Quambatook, XR550-XR551-XR552 (40 wagons) 02.15. SSR 9196 grain, S312-P17-P18-S317 (33 wagons), 05.05. Steamrail 8197 *2022 Members Train* Pass to Ballarat, N454-T395 (nine vehicles), 10.33. PN 9158 grain ex-Manangatang, XR555-XR554-XR553 (40 wagons) 14.17. Steamrail 8198 *2022 Members Train* Pass ex Ballarat, R707-N454-T395 (nine vehicles), 17.33.

Sun.11: PN 9154 grain ex-Quambatook, XR552-XR551-XR550, (40 wagons) 02.34.

Mon.12: 707 Operations 8196 *Bluestone Express* Pass ex-Boort, A66-S306-N471 (13 vehicles), 01.52. PN 9147 empty grain to Charlton, XR555-XR554-XR553 (40 wagons) 03.03

Wed.14: Qube 9175 intermodal to Ultima, G532-G521 (36 wagons) 23.51.

Thurs.15: PN 9148 grain ex-Charlton, XR553-XR554-XR555 (40 wagons) 22.30.

Fri.16: PN 9153 empty grain to Quambatook, XR552-XR551-XR550, (40 wagons) 01.35. Qube 9176 intermodal ex-Ultima, G521-G532 (36 wagons) 03.39. PN 9157 empty grain to Manangatang, G541-BL29, (40 wagons) 23.41.

Sat.17: PN 9154 grain ex-Quambatook, XR550-XR551-XR552 (40 wagons) 02.08.

Sun.18: SSR 9196 grain ex-Nullawil, S312-S317-P17 (29 wagons), 05.05. PN 9147 empty grain to Sea Lake, XR550-XR551-XR552 (40 wagons) 04.18. PN 9158 grain ex-Manangatang, BL29-G541 (40 wagons) 06.57.

Mon.19: PN 9157 empty grain to Manangatang, BL29-G541, (40 wagons) 01.44. PN 9146 grain ex-Sea Lake, XR552-XR551-XR550, (40 wagons) 04.15. PN 9147 empty grain to Charlton, XR554-XR553-XR555, (38 wagons) 21.31.

Tues.20: PN 9158 grain ex-Manangatang, G541-BL29, (40 wagons) 08.36. PN 9148 grain ex-Charlton, XR555-XR553-XR554, (38 wagons) 22.11.

Wed.21: Qube 9175 intermodal to Ultima, G515-G512 (33 wagons) 23.14.

Thurs.22: SSR 9196 grain, S312-P18-T381-S317 (28 wagons), 02.19.

Fri.23: PN 9153 empty grain to Quambatook, BL29-G541, (40 wagons) 01.41. Qube 9176 intermodal ex-Ultima, G515-G512 (36 wagons) 03.48.

Sat.24: PN 9149 empty grain to Nullawil/Berriwilllock, XR550-XR552-XR551 (29 wagons) 01.17. PN 9154 grain ex-Quambatook, BL29-G541 (40 wagons) 03.25. PN 9147 empty grain to Wycheproof, XR555-XR553-XR554 (40 wagons) 04.12.

Sun.25: PN 9148 grain ex-Wycheproof, XR553-XR554-XR555 (40 wagons) 01.33. PN 9150 grain ex Berriwilllock, XR551-XR552-XR550 (29 wagons) 06.37.

Wed.28: PN 9157 empty grain to Manangatang, XR553-XR554-XR555 (40 wagons) 00.22.

Thurs.29: PN 9158 grain ex-Manangatang, XR555-XR554-XR553, (40 wagons) 05.24. PN 9157 empty grain to Manangatang, XR555-XR554-XR553, (40 wagons) 23.28.

Fri.30: PN 9155 empty grain to Charlton, XR550-XR552-G522 (40 wagons) 22.29.

Sat.31: PN 9158 grain ex-Manangatang, XR553-XR554-XR555 (40 wagons) 07.56. PN 9156 grain ex-Charlton, G522-XR552-XR550 (40 wagons) 23.56.

Qube Ultima intermodal (9171/9172) – few sightings but should have been busy

This service is scheduled (as at 17 July 2022) to operate twice weekly. 9171: Mon and Thurs, WestGate Port Siding dep. 20.55, via Gheringhap 22.58, Ballarat 00.07 (next day), Dunolly Junction 01.50/55, Korong Vale Junction 03.46/48, Ultima arr. 07.35. 9172: Tues and Fri, Ultima dep. 18.05, Korong Vale Loop 21.50/55, Dunolly Junction 23.36/41, Ballarat 01.53 (next day), via Ballan, WestGate Port Siding arr. 04.50.

The service is usually operated by two G or VL Class locos and runs twice weekly. Occasionally, 9171 does not run on Thursdays, but runs on Wednesday or Friday, returning ex-Ultima the following day. Some trains to Ultima operate via Ballan when track work is being undertaken on the Geelong Line and from Ultima via Gheringhap when track work is being undertaken on the Ballarat Line via Ballan. Some return train services were not sighted but may have run. Some were sighted in one direction only but must have run the other leg.

Some loading normally on the *Fruit Flyer* service from Merbein is known to have been trucked to Ultima during November and December for forwarding on the Qube service ex-Ultima while the Ararat–Merbein Line was closed for most of the two months for track relaying and other repairs. That would indicate that most scheduled trains probably ran.

Trains and locomotives observed during November and December were:

Wed.2.11: 9175, G515-G512 (39 wagons), Gheringhap 22.45.

Thurs.3.11: 9176, G512-G515 (37 wagons), Clunes 23.59, Gheringhap 02.01 (Fri.4).

Fri.4.11: 9175, G512-G515 (37 wagons), Gheringhap 22.52.

Sat.5.11: 9176, G515-G512 (37 wagons), Gheringhap 03.49 (Sun.6).

Wed.9.11: 9175, G515-G512 (30 wagons), Gheringhap 22.08.

Thurs.10.11 (or Fri.11): 9172 must have run with G512-G515, but not observed.

Wed.16.11: 9175, G515-G532 (36 wagons), via RRL, Sunshine 21.07, Gheringhap 23.48.

Thurs.17.11 (or Fri.18): 9172 must have run with G532-G515, but not observed.

Mon.21.11: 9171, G515-G532 (37 wagons), Gheringhap 22.50.

Tues.22.11: 9172 must have run with G532-G515, but not observed.

Wed.23.11: 9171, G515-G521 (36 wagons), Gheringhap 21.33.

Thurs.24.11 (or Fri.25): 9172 must have run with G521-G515, but not observed.

Mon.28.11: 9171, G515-G521, Tottenham Junction 20.07, then via Ballan.

Tues.29.11: 9172 must have run with G521-G515, but not observed.

Wed.7.12: 9175, G512-G532 (41 wagons) Gheringhap 23.18.

Thurs.8.12: 9176, G532-G512 (41 wagons) Gheringhap 03.20 (Fri.9).

Wed.14.12: 9175, G532-G521 (36 wagons) Tottenham Yard 21.17, via RRL, Gheringhap 23.51.

Thurs.15.12: 9176, G521-G532 (36 wagons) Gheringhap 03.39 (Fri.16).

Wed.21.12: 9175, G515-G512 (33 wagons) Gheringhap 23.14.

Thurs.22.12: 9176, G515-G512 (36 wagons) Gheringhap 03.48 (Fri.23).

Northern – Bendigo, Swan Hill, Piangil, Echuca and Deniliquin

SSR/PN Bendigo Transfers (0081/0082/0083/0084)

SSR transfer PN broad gauge locomotive from South Dynon to and from the SSR Bendigo Workshops for servicing and also their own locomotives and wagons. Scheduled times (effective 17.7.2022) for 0081: South Dynon Loco dep. (as required) 22.10 (M–F), 21.40 (Sat. and Sun.), Bendigo Car Sidings arr. 01.35 (Tues–Sat), 00.12 (Sun and Mon). 0082: Bendigo Car sidings dep. (as required) 17.40 (M–F), 16.50 (Sat and Sun), South Dynon Loco arr. 21.00 (M–F), 20.10 (Sat and Sun).

Mon.7.11: T381-T386-B76-S312-G536, 9083 South Dynon Loco to North Bendigo Workshops, Albion 11.30. SSR had collected B76 and B80 from South Dynon Loco on Fri.4.11 after purchasing them from Rail First. B76 had not been used for several months and was transferred to Bendigo for repairs.

Sat.12.11: P14-T363-S312, 9086 light engines Bendigo Loco Depot to Tottenham Yard, Kangaroo Flat 18.54.

Sat.26.11: P16-P14, 9083 Tottenham Yard to North Bendigo Workshops, Riddles Creek 14.14 hauling Comeng EMU cars for scrapping.

Thurs.29.12: B80-B76-T386, 0098 light engines Bendigo Loco to Castlemaine, arrived 11.36, shunted then returned as 0099 light engines to Bendigo, presumably a test for B76 after its purchase and repairs.

Piangil: flood closure, then grain trains

Due to advancing flood waters, a sand bag barrier was constructed across the line just south of Kerang on Fri.21.10 to assist protect that town. The line remained closed beyond Bendigo until V/Line Swan Hill passenger services resumed from Sat.12.11 (and local Eaglehawk services from Mon.14.11).

Thurs.1.12: PN 9055 empty grain, G541-G531, Tottenham Yard to Piangil, Macedon 20.55.

Sat.3.12: PN 9056 grain, G531-G541, Piangil to North Geelong Grain Loop, Nyah West 15.09.

Sat.10.12: SSR (9093) empty grain, S317-S312, Tottenham Yard to Piangil.

Mon.12.12: SSR (9098) grain, S312-S317-P17 (P17 attached at Bendigo), Piangil to Tottenham Yard/Kensington.

Fri.30.12: SSR (9093) empty grain, S317-P18-T381-S312 (B80 attached at Bendigo early Sat.31.12), Tottenham Yard to Piangil, Sunshine 23.37.

Sat.31.12: SSR (9094) grain, S312-B80-T381-P18-S317, Piangil/Woorinen to Tottenham Yard/Appleton Dock, Lake Boga 00.15 (Sun.1.1).

Echuca: another Deniliquin rice train operates and plenty of grain trains

The line between Bendigo and Echuca was closed by floods for several weeks. Following no freight train movements at Echuca during October (and only two grain trains during September), one rice train ran during November, and then seven grain trains during December.

Despite it being reported recently that Qube rice trains from Deniliquin loaded with export containers have been cancelled, one ran during November. Why it ran is not known, but possibly flooded roads may have made another train load of containers an attractive alternative.

Trains other than V/Line Passenger services observed in November and December were:

Sat.5.11: SSR P14-EV120 (MTM Evaluation Vehicle)-P16 arrived and stabled overnight. It was noted running as 9011 through Elphinstone at 14.45 and returning as 9020 through Huntly at 13.42 Sun.6.11.

Thurs.17.11: N464 *City of Geelong* was stabled in No.3 Road and departed Fri.2.12.

Sat.19.11: Qube G532-G515, 38 loaded container flats, arrived via Bendigo (9073) at a time not observed and departed for Deniliquin. G532-G515, 38 loaded container flats, arrived ex-Deniliquin approx. 21.50 and departed via Bendigo (9072) shortly afterwards.

Sun.11.12: PN (9049) empty grain ex-North Geelong, G531-G541, 40 VHAF hoppers, (through Newport 23.43 Sat.10), departed for Deniliquin approx. 06.34. The return loaded train arrived ex-Deniliquin 23.06 (9048) and departed via Bendigo 23.14 to North Geelong Grain Loop.

Tues.13.12: SSR (9097) empty grain, P17-S317-S312, nine BGGX, one BHBF, 20 BGKF (30 wagons) departed for Deniliquin 05.16. The return loaded train arrived ex-Deniliquin 19.55 (9098) and departed via Bendigo 20.04.

Wed.14.12: PN (9049) empty grain ex-North Geelong, XR552-XR551-XR550, 40 VHAF hoppers, (through Werribee 22.42 Tues.13), departed for Deniliquin approx. 05.15. The return loaded train arrived ex-Deniliquin 20.20 (9048) and departure via Bendigo to North Geelong Grain Loop not observed.

Thurs.15.12: SSR (9097) empty grain, P17-S317-S312, nine BGGX, one BHBF, 17 BGKF (27 wagons) departed for Deniliquin 05.10. S312-S317-P17, 14 BGKF, one BHBF, nine BGGX, three BGKF (27 wagons) arrived ex-Deniliquin 20.26 (9098) and departed via Bendigo 20.28.

Fri.16.12–Sun.18.12: Seven-O-Seven Operations *Bluestone Express* (9099) passenger, A66-N473, 35CP, *Kuldalai*, *Tantini*, BRS224, *Dorai*, Club1, Dining Car, 1VAM, NAM2336, BK708, LAN2352, LAN 2354, PCP294, arrived ex-Swan Hill via Bendigo 05.38 Fri. and stabled for the day. Sat.17.12, it departed for Deniliquin approx. 02.40. Sun.18.12 arrived ex-Deniliquin 02.30 (8096) and was scheduled to depart via Bendigo 03.50 to Southern Cross.

Mon.19.12: SSR (9097) empty grain, P18-T381-S317-S317, ten BGKF, one BHBF, nine BGGX, 13 BGKF (33 wagons) arrived ex-Bendigo 05.04 and departed for Deniliquin 05.08. S312-S317-T381-P18, 19 BGKF, nine BGGX, one BHBF, four BGKF (33 wagons) arrived ex-Deniliquin 20.43 (9098), slowing to roll through for an immediate departure for Bendigo.

Wed.21.12: PN (9047) empty grain ex-North Geelong, BL29-XR551-XR550, 40 VHAF hoppers, arrived via Bendigo 05.04 and departed for Deniliquin 05.13. The return loaded train arrived ex-Deniliquin 20.07 (9048) and departed via Bendigo 20.09 to North Geelong Grain Loop, Rochester 20.38.

Mon.26.12: SSR (9097) empty grain, S317-S312, Tottenham Yard to Elmore, Sunshine 20.26, loaded at Elmore Tues.27.12 morning, formed (9098) grain, S312-S317, Goornong 12.55,

stabled at Bendigo for the afternoon, departed approx. 22.15 to Kensington, Kangaroo Flat 22.36. (Elmore train observation via Peter Sweetten).

Tues.27.12: PN (9049) empty grain ex-North Geelong, BL29-G541, 40 VHAF hoppers, arrived via Bendigo 05.24, (through Macedon 23.47 Mon.26) and departed for Deniliquin 05.27. The return loaded train BL29-G540, 40 VHAF hoppers, arrived ex-Deniliquin 22.01 (9048) and departed via Bendigo 22.04 to North Geelong Grain Loop.

Some freight trains passing through Echuca may not be observed or reported.

Echuca observations by Laurie Sutton

North Eastern broad gauge – Seymour, Shepparton, Tocumwal

Tocumwal intermodal (9305/9306) and grain trains

This service is scheduled (as at 17 July 2022) to operate three days per week. 9305: Sun, Appleton Dock dep. 21.40, Sunshine 22.15, Seymour 00.08/13 (Mon) Shepparton 01.27/32, Tocumwal arr. 03.35. Tues and Thurs, Appleton Dock dep. 19.30, Sunshine 20.05, Seymour 22.04/09, Shepparton 23.23/28, Tocumwal arr. 01.30 (next day). 9306: Mon–Wed–Fri, Tocumwal dep. 16.55, Shepparton 19.00/05, Seymour 20.25/36, Sunshine 22.22, Appleton Dock arr. 23.00.

Services observed in November and December were:

Wed.2.11: G529-BL29, 9306, Numurkah 18.00. XR550-XR551-XR554, PN 9359 empty grain Nth Geelong to Tocumwal, Lara 23.37.

Thurs.3.11: XR554-XR551-XR550, PN 9360 grain Tocumwal to North Geelong Grain Loop, Shepparton 19.11. BL29-G529, 9305, Craigieburn 20.40.

Fri.3.11: G529-BL29, 9306, Numurkah 17.44.

Sat.5.11: XR554-XR551-XR550, PN 9359 empty grain North Geelong to Tocumwal, Sunshine 22.41.

Sun.6.11: XR550-XR551-XR554, PN 9360 grain Tocumwal to North Geelong Grain Loop, Numurkah 20.22. BL29-G529, 9305, Albion 22.42. P18-S317-P17-B80, SSR 9391 empty grain Tottenham Yard to Tocumwal.

Mon.7.11: G529-BL29, 9306, Wunghnu 18.10. B80-P17-S317-P18, SSR 9392 grain Tocumwal to Kensington, Craigieburn 01.09 (Tues.8.11).

Tues.8.11: P17-B80-S317, SSR 9391 empty grain Kensington to Tocumwal, Broadmeadows 23.55.

Wed.9.11: G529-BL29, 9306, Numurkah 17.44. P17-B80-S317, SSR 9392 grain Tocumwal to Tottenham Yard, Sunshine 02.08 (Thurs.10.11), then formed 9594 to Appleton Dock.

Thurs.10.11: BL29-G529, 9305, Albion 20.17.

Fri.11.11: S317-P17-B80-P18, SSR 9391 empty grain Tottenham Yard to Tocumwal, Albion 00.16. G529-BL29, 9306, Shepparton 19.00. P18-B80-P17-S317, SSR 9394 grain Tocumwal to Tottenham Yard/Kensington, Broadmeadows 01.24 (Sat.12.11).

Sun.12.11: G529-BL29, 9305, Wallan 23.27.

Mon.14.11: BL29-G529, 9306, Numurkah 17.37.

Tues.15.11: BL29-G529, 9305, Donnybrook 20.30.

Wed.16.11: BL29-G529, 9306, Murchison East 19.35.

Sat.26.11: P17-S317-S312, SSR 9391 empty grain Tottenham Yard to Tocumwal, Tottenham Yard 20.15.

Mon.28.11: S312-S317-P17, SSR 9392 grain Tocumwal to Kensington.

Tues.29.11: BL34-G522, 9305, Broadmeadows 19.53.

Wed.30.11: G522-BL34, 9306, Murchison East 19.31.

Thurs.1.12: BL34-G522, 9305, Albion 20.39. S312-S317-P17, SSR 9392 grain Tocumwal to Kensington, Albion 22.58.

Fri.2.12: G522-BL34, 9306, Numurkah 17.17.

Mon.5.12: G522-BL34, 9306, Numurkah 17.36.

Tues.6.12: S317-P18-P17-S312, SSR 9391 empty grain Tottenham Yard to Tocumwal.

Wed.7.12: S312-P17-P18-S317, SSR 9392 grain Tocumwal to Kensington.

Thurs.8.12: BL34-G522, 9305, Albion 19.55.

Sun.11.12: BL34-G522, 9305, Wallan 23.29.

Mon.12.12: G522-BL34, 9306, Shepparton 19.04.

Tues.13.12: BL34-G522, 9305, West Footscray 19.36.

Wed.14.12: G522-BL34, 9306, Numurkah 17.42. G541-G531, PN 9359 empty grain North Geelong to Tocumwal, Werribee 21.20 (G531 replaced by G528-BL29 ex-Melbourne – see below).

Thurs.15.12: G522-BL34, 9305, Tottenham Yard 21.54. G528-BL29-G541, PN 9360 grain Tocumwal to North Geelong Grain Loop, Grahamvale 21.55.

Fri.16.12: BL34-G522, 9306, Shepparton 19.05, then failed between Dysart and Tallarook.

Sat.17.12: G531 0305 light engine ex-South Dynon Loco, Essendon 01.39, to assist 9306 ex-Tallarook. G531-BL34-G522, 9306, Broadford 05.23.

Tues.20.12: G528-G543-G531, 9305, Tottenham Junction 19.56.

Wed.21.12: G531-G543, 9306, Seymour 20.39. G528 detached at Tocumwal, defective.

Fri.23.12: BL34-G536-G528-G543 (G528 dead attached), 9306, Murchison East 19.36.

Mon.26.12: BL34-G536, 9308, Numurkah 19.52.

Wed.28.12: G536-XR551-BL34, 9307, Wallan 02.38. BL34-XR551-G536, 9306, Shepparton 19.22.

Thurs.29.12: G536-XR551-G543, 9307, Jacana Loop 23.52.

Fri.30.12: G543-XR551-G536, 9306, Strathmerton 16.53. T363-P17, SSR 0591 light engines, South Dynon Loco to Seymour, attached ten BGKF grain wagons transferred from standard gauge to broad gauge since 12.12 at Seymour Rail Heritage Centre, formed 9392 empty grain wagons, Seymour to Tottenham Yard, Craigieburn 00.44 (Sat.31.12).