

This newsletter covers the World outside the British Isles from information supplied by members.

**Opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the Compilers or of the Society.**

International Editor: Pete Skelton, 1 rue Traversière, 16450 BEAULIEU SUR SONNETTE, France to whom all email contributions should be sent. Email: [peterskelton1952@gmail.com](mailto:peterskelton1952@gmail.com)

Postal Contributions should be sent to: Paul Stewart, 4 Clarence Close, MALVERN, WR14 3HX  
Deputy International Editor: Derek Woodward, 68 Church Street, MATLOCK, DE4 3BY

Email: [dw.woodward@btinternet.com](mailto:dw.woodward@btinternet.com)



## [077] India – हरियाणा (Haryana) State approves दिल्ली – पानीपत (Delhi – Panipat) RRTS

The government of the Indian state of Haryana has approved plans for the 103 km, ₹216bn (€2.44bn) Delhi – Panipat Regional Rapid Transit System (RRTS) commuter rail corridor, alongside a contribution of ₹47bn (€530m) for the project. The project will now be considered by the government of the Delhi National Capital Territory (NCT) before submission to the Indian government for final approval.

Following approval, the project is expected to take around six years to complete, and will be carried out in two stages:

- Sarai Kale Khan – Murthal (58 km)
- Murthal – Panipat (45 km).

The 1435 mm-gauge, mostly elevated line will serve 17 stations, and will have an operating speed of 160 km/h, enabling end-to-end journey times of 65 minutes. The line will be electrified at 25kV 50Hz AC.

The Delhi – Panipat RRTS is one of three commuter lines planned to radiate out from Delhi. The 82 km Delhi – Meerut RRTS and 164 km Delhi – Alwar RRTS are already under construction.

## [078] Namibia – China Gezhouba Group starts Upgrade of 107.5 km Railway

On 01 December 2020 Namibian government officials witnessed the start of a project by China Gezhouba Group Corporation (CGGC) to upgrade the 107.5 km railway between Walvis Bay and Arandis in the west of the country. The N\$1.1bn (€60m) railway upgrade, called A1S1, is part of the Namibian government's plan to become a transport and logistics hub for southern Africa since Namibia shares borders with Angola, South Africa, Botswana and Zambia.

## [079] Nigeria/Niger – Nigerian Government awards Contract for Kano - Maradi Line

The Nigerian government has awarded a design, construction and financing contract for the ₦744.8 (€1.62bn) 284 km cross-border Kano – Katsina – Jibia – Maradi line to Portuguese construction firm Mota-Engil.

The single-track standard-gauge line will have 12 stations and will provide a coastal connection between landlocked Niger and the southern Nigerian ports of Lagos and Lekki. The line will also include a 93 km branch from Kano to Dutse, the capital of Jigawa state. The line will run through the Nigerian states of Kano, Jigawa and Katsina, and the Maradi region in Niger. Construction is due to take two years and eight months.

It is also part of wider efforts to revitalise rail infrastructure. Other projects include the 156 km Lagos – Ibadan line, which began trial operation in late December although opening has been delayed by the coronavirus pandemic. The double-track line is part of a planned 2733 km Lagos – Kano standard-gauge north-south railway. The first 186.5 km section of the project, between Abuja and Kaduna, opened in July 2016.

## [080] The Philippines – China to fund Philippines' P\$45.2bn (€775.5m) Subic - Clark Railway

The Chinese government has signed a contract with the government of the Philippines to fund the construction of the 71 km single-track Subic – Clark freight line, with loan negotiations expected to begin shortly.

The announcement follows the award of a design-procurement-construction contract for the project by the Philippine Department of Transportation (DoT) to the China Harbour Engineering Company on 29 December 2020. The contract also includes the provision of locomotives. Construction will be carried out over 42 months. A further extension to New Clark City's special economic zone is also planned.

The line will connect Subic Bay Freeport Zone and Clark International Airport, running parallel to the Subic – Clark – Tarlac Expressway, and will interchange with the 148 km North-South Commuter Railway (NSCR).

## EUROPE

### [058] Belgium – Trams to serve Brussels Airport from 2026

The long-planned extension of the capital's tram network to Brussels National Airport is set to open in 2026, under an agreement between public transport operator STIB-MIVB and the Vlaanderen regional government's major projects organisation De Werkvennootschap.

The accord clears the way for construction of a 6 km extension of MIVB-STIB route 62, which currently runs from Cimetièrre de Jette-Jette Begraafplaats in the northwest to terminate at the Eurocontrol offices, close to the boundary between the Brussel Hoofdstedelijk Gewest-Région de Bruxelles-Capitale and Vlaanderen, where the airport is located northeast of Zaventem village.

As the extension runs outside the capital, a provisional agreement had been reached in 2018 that the Vlaanderen government would be responsible for financing and construction, but the line would be operated by STIB-MIVB as an integral part of its network.

As with the 3 km extension of route 62 from Da Vinci to Eurocontrol which opened in 2019, the prolongation to the airport will largely run in the central reservation of Leopold III Laan-Boulevard Léopold III. There will be four intermediate stops serving industrial developments before the line passes under the R0 orbital ring motorway and three stops beyond to serve the airport's hotels and technical zone. A segregated cycleway is to be built alongside the line as part of the project. Construction is expected to begin in 2023 for opening three years later. According to STIB-MIVB, journey time between Bruxelles Nord-Brussel Noord station and the airport would be around 30 min.

### [059] Belgium/France/The Netherlands/UK – Eurostar risks Collapse as Covid-19 Restrictions bite

Eurostar is in crisis and reported to be near collapse, after months of very low passenger figures caused by the Covid-19 pandemic and the resulting travel restrictions between Britain and the continent which have now been tightened again.

The operator is running just a couple of trains a day and is thought to be facing losses which could amount to as much as €1bn by the end of this financial year. Unlike the formerly franchised passenger operators in Britain, whose businesses have been taken under government control, Eurostar has so far received no financial support from the UK government.

Just over half of Eurostar is owned by the French state railway SNCF, but France has also been slow to react. Another 40% is owned by private investment houses, which bought the original British stake in 2015. The last 5% is owned by Belgian Railways.

The Department for Transport has repeated previous statements that it is in talks with Eurostar, adding: 'We will continue to work closely with them as we support the safe recovery of international travel.' Eurostar has confirmed that it has held similar talks with the French government, but so far apparently without result. Eurostar said access charges are 'considerably higher' on HS1 between the Folkestone Channel Tunnel portal and London, 'hence that being more of a focus'.

## **[060] Czech Republic – High-Speed Projects move forward**

A number of projects that will form the cornerstone of a future high-speed network in the Czech Republic have made progress, including a line north to the German border, projects within Praha, and to the southeast.

### **Praha – Dresden feasibility study approved**

The central commission of the Czech Ministry of Transport has approved a feasibility study conducted by Czech infrastructure manager SŽ for the Czech section of a line to connect Praha with the German city of Dresden, 125 km to the north. The first section will run from Praha to Litoměřice, at the southern point of the so-called Porta Bohemica section of the Elbe river valley. The line, which will be restricted to passenger services, will have a maximum speed of 320 km/h. A new station is expected to be built on the outskirts of Roudnice nad Labem.

The section between Litoměřice and Ústí nad Labem, which crosses the Bohemian Central Mountains and that from Ústí nad Labem to the German border, will be open for freight services in order to reduce congestion on the existing main line along the Elbe River.

A tunnel under the Bohemian Central Mountains will have a maximum line speed of 250 km/h. A 26 km-long tunnel with a maximum speed of 200 km/h under the Iron Ore Mountains is envisaged, including 11.7 km in the Czech Republic.

The line will reduce Praha – Dresden travel times from 2 hours 12 minutes to less than an hour.

### **Consortium selected to plan Eastern Praha Section**

SŽ has selected a consortium of Sudop Praha, Egis Rail and Mott MacDonald to produce documentation for the construction of a high-speed line between Praha Běchovice and Poříčany, which forms part of the line from Praha to Pardubice, Brno and Ostrava. The Czech-French-British consortium won the Kč186.4m (€7.2m) contract against three other bidders. The contract includes drafting the design of the line, preparing the spatial planning process including proceedings and permits, and incorporating all required environmental measures, including permits.

The section, dubbed High Speed Line Polabim, will form part of the high-speed line to Brno, the second biggest city in the Czech Republic, as well as part of the proposed high-speed line to Hradec Králové and Wrocław, Poland. The contract is due to be completed by mid-2022, with work on the line due to begin in 2025 and be completed in 2028.

### **Praha East High-Speed Terminal Design**

SŽ has also completed a competition to develop an architectural design for a new terminal station for the future high-speed line in the eastern suburbs of Praha, which received 21 designs from both national and international architectural offices. A jury of six independent architects, two SŽ employees and the mayor of Nehvizd has selected a design created by Mr Jiří Opočenský and Mr Štěpán Valouch as the winning submission. The station has the working name Praha Východní.

## **[061] Czech Republic – Track Doubling Project nets EC Funds**

The European Commission has allocated €160m from the Cohesion Fund to support track doubling of the 17 km Sdoměřice u Tábora – Votice line.

Work includes the construction of the new 660m-long Deboreč Hill Tunnel, which was broken through in February 2020, and the 840m Mezno Tunnel, which was bored through in August. The new line will largely deviate from the existing alignment, reducing the length by 2 km and will help to reduce journey times between Praha and České Budějovice to around an hour. The total cost of the project is Kč7.16bn (€270m) of which the EC is contributing Kč4.2bn (€160m). The EC says improvements on the corridor will promote modal shift from road to rail for traffic travelling between Praha and Southern Bohemia. Work is expected to be completed in 2023.

The corridor improvement project began in 2005 with improvements between Ševětín – Soběslav, Doubí u Tábora – Sdoměřice u Tábora, Votice – Praha-Hostivař and improvements to track at České

in China. The underground Qingdao North Station was built 120m away from the operational Line 3, at a depth of 16m. The elevated section of the line runs parallel to the Jinan – Qingdao high-speed line, coming within 12m of the line at one point. The developers of the commuter line collaborated with the team constructing the high-speed line in order to speed up the construction of both projects.

The Ningbo Line 4 runs 35.95 km from Cicheng to Dongqian Lake, including 25.1 km underground, with 25 stations including interchanges with lines 1, 2 and 3 and the future Line 5. The line takes the city's network to 155 km following the opening of the second section of Line 2 in May 2020 and the third section of Line 3 in September. The line also connects with Zhuangqiao station, Ningbo station, Ningbo East station, and Dongqian Lake Tourism Transport Centre.

## **[075] Egypt – Agreement signed for 1000 Kilometre High Speed Network**

Egypt has signed an agreement for a 1000 kilometre high-speed rail network with Siemens Mobility and local companies. Work on the first section of 460 km will start immediately and will take two years, according to a statement by the spokesman for Egypt's president. The entire high-speed rail network has a value of €19bn.

The agreement between Egypt and Siemens comprises the design, installation and commissioning of Egypt's first ever high-speed rail transportation system. The National Authority for Tunnels, a governmental authority under the Ministry of Transport of Egypt, and Siemens Mobility signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) together with local companies Orascom Construction and The Arab Contractors on 14 January. Additionally, Siemens Mobility will provide the high-speed and regional trains, locomotives, rail infrastructure, system integration and 15 years of services.

The initial 460 km phase will include 15 stations and is to be completed in two years connecting the developing cities of El-Alamein on the Mediterranean Sea to Ain Sokhna on the Red Sea, while also passing through the New Administrative Capital that is under construction. The line will also be operable for freight transport, which will further foster economic growth in the region.

## **[076] Egypt – EIB agrees Loan for Egyptian Transport Projects**

The Egyptian government and the European Investment Bank (EIB) have signed a €1.13bn agreement to rehabilitate and expand metro and light rail lines in the cities of Cairo and Alexandria.

The EIB funding will support the development of three projects in the two cities:

- The €138m refurbishment and extension of Alexandria's 13.8 km Raml light rail line
- The €750m Phase 1 of the Abu Qir project, which will convert an existing 22 km urban railway in Alexandria into a full metro line, including the creation of additional stops and the removal of at-grade crossings
- The €240m refurbishment of the 23 km Cairo Metro Line 2, including upgrades to electrical and mechanical systems.

Cairo Metro is currently undergoing a programme of overhauls and expansion. This includes the 7 km extension to Line 3, inaugurated in August 2020, and construction of the new 19 km Line 4 Phase 1, due to open in 2024. The metro is also carrying out refurbishments of Lines 1 and 2 including the renewal of signalling, the replacement of rail and new rolling stock. The EIB approved a €350m loan for the Line 1 refurbishment in August 2018.

The 43 km Abu-Qir metro project, announced last August, will connect the Alexandria's eastern Abu-Qir district with Burg al-Arab in the west. The project is expected to be delivered in three phases:

- Phase 1 (22 km), which converts the existing urban rail line between Abu Qir and Misr
- Phase 2 (8 km), a new line which will connect Misr to al-Max
- Phase 3 (15.5 km), which will connect al-Max, via Alkyl, to the Cairo-Alexandria desert road.

The line will include 6 km of viaduct and will offer a maximum speed of 120 km/h.

- Building a new, short passing loop at Rowsley, approximately 55 km from Melbourne. This was opened in 2016
- Installing a new passing loop from Ballan (80 km) approximately four kilometres to Bostock
- Installing a new passing loop at Millbrook, approximately 97 km from Melbourne
- New stations have been built at:
  - Caroline Springs (adjacent to Deer Park West Junction), opened in January 2017, an island platform
  - Cobblebank, 34 km from Melbourne, opened in December 2019
- Second platforms have been built at Bacchus Marsh, Ballan and Wendouree (a suburb four kilometres beyond Ballarat to where all 'Ballarat' trains run)
- A much-improved station has been built at Rockbank, 30 km from Melbourne.

In addition, the original line between Bungaree East and West Junctions via Bungaree was taken out of service with the new timetable and all trains now travel on the direct line which is five kilometres shorter. The original line had effectively been a geographically separated passing loop since 2005 when the direct line was built.

Given that there were already passing loops approximately two-three kilometres long at Parwan (between Melton and Bacchus Marsh) and Bank Box (between Bacchus Marsh and Ballan), now, of the 113 km to Ballarat, approximately 53 kilometres are either double track or passing loops. Given the additional hassle of passing loops with approach control signals and the like, I can't help but wonder whether it wouldn't have been better just to have double-tracked the whole line giving significantly greater timetable flexibility and service reliability.

All trains will continue to be operated by powerful VLocity three-car DMUs which reach 160 km/h over quite long stretches. The design dates from 2005 and new sets are still being built by Bombardier, albeit with detailed changes.

The Ballarat line is interesting. It climbs almost continuously for the first 25 kilometres and then undulates to Bacchus Marsh from where a fearsome climb ensues for 20 kilometres up Ingliston bank, almost all at 2.08% and which includes a horseshoe bend. Less severe climbing continues past Ballan and the line culminates in a four kilometre descent at 1.92% down into to Ballarat.

Links: [Ballarat Line Newsletter Spring \(regionalrailrevival.vic.gov.au\)](http://regionalrailrevival.vic.gov.au)

*[With thanks to Malcolm Simister]*

#### **[074] China – Three Urban Rail Lines Opened**

Two new urban rail lines have opened in Qingdao and another in Ningbo with a total length of more than 100 km.

The Qingdao Metro Line 1 and Line 8 both begin at Jiaozhou North station, with Line 1 running 21.3 km north to Dongguozhuang station while Line 8 runs west to Wusi Square station.

The first section of Line 1 has 15 stations. The full line will be 60 km long, running from Wangjiagang Station to Dongguozhuang Station, and will have 41 underground stations. When completed, the line will connect the West Coast Bus station, Qingdao station, Qingdao North station, North Bus station, Liuting Airport and other transport hubs. Construction of the line began in March 2016, with tunnelling completed in February 2020. The line was completed in April and a trial operation concluded in August, allowing the acceptance and expert review to be finished at the beginning of December.

The first section of the Line 8 commuter line is 48.3 km long, including 6.4 km of elevated line and 41.9 km underground, with 11 stations and a design speed of 120 km/h. The line provides a connection between Qingdao North station, Hongdao station, Jiaodong International Airport and Jiaozhou. When completed, the full 61.4 km line will serve 18 stations. The line, which runs underneath the harbour and passes through difficult mountainous terrain, was completed in three-and-a-half years. This includes a 5.4 km undersea tunnel at up to 56m below sea level, the longest underwater metro tunnel

Budějovice Junction already completed. Work continues on introducing a four-track section between Praha-Hostivař and Praha-Vršovice along with modernisation of the section from Soběslav to Doubí near Tábor. Work is also planned to upgrade the Nemanice – Ševětín section.

#### **[062] Czech Republic/Germany – Test Train runs into Seifhennersdorf Station**

The cross-border section of KSB236 [Liberec –] Varnsdorf – Senfhenndorf (and formerly on to Eibau) between Varnsdorf Pivovar Kocour (CZ) and Seifhennersdorf (DE) has been without train service since February 2015 because of some sort of cross-border bureaucratic issues. These were apparently resolved last year but the service is still shown as a replacement minibus in the current Trilex and ČD timetables. The service prior to its ceasing was to a temporary wooden platform in Seifhennersdorf.

However, on the morning of 12 January 2021 a Trilex Class 650 RegioShuttle railcar made a couple of test runs to Seifhennersdorf station and back, a resumption of scheduled services to the actual station is expected from 13 June 2021.

#### **[063] Denmark/Germany – Work starts on Fehmarn Belt Tunnel**

The start of construction of the Fehmarn Belt Tunnel between Denmark and Germany was marked with a digital ground breaking on 01 January 2021, with a physical ceremony in Rødbyhavn originally planned to be held on 04 January postponed due to the coronavirus pandemic.

The 18 km tunnel will run from Puttgarden on the German island of Fehmarn to Rødby on the Danish island of Lolland carrying a four-lane road, a double-track electrified railway line and a maintenance and evacuation corridor. The tunnel will be up to 47m-wide and 13m-high, and will be built using prefabricated sections that will be sunk into a channel dug into the sea bed.

Initial works include the construction of a tunnel element factory at Rødby and the tunnel portal on Lolland. This will be followed by the production of the tunnel elements and their installation under the sea floor. Work began on the construction of the working harbour at Rødby in the spring of 2020 and this year will begin on the construction of a working harbour at Puttgarden and excavation of the channel for the tunnel elements. Completion of the project is expected by 2029.

#### **[064] Finland – First Phase of Tampere Tramway System to open in August**

The 18 km 2-line first phase of the standard gauge Tramway/Light Rail system in Tampere is scheduled to open on 09 August 2021 with services between Pynikintori and Hervantajärvi Lake and from the University Hospital to Sori Square. Track-laying was completed in October 2020 and test running with empty cars began in November. The operator has advertised for volunteer 'passengers' to take part in trials with loaded vehicles during April 2021.

#### **[065] France – Bordeaux RER**

On 13 December 2020, the Libourne – Arcachon line became the first cross Bordeaux service. It is also the first important step towards the promised metropolitan RER, which will connect towns in the area without changing trains in Bordeaux. Initially, eight TERs, four in each direction, during the week and three at weekends, do not terminate at Bordeaux-Saint-Jean.

#### **[066] Germany – Berlin Tram Extension approved**

Final planning approval has been granted for a 2.1 km extension of Berlin tram route M10 from the Hauptbahnhof to Turmstraße U-Bahn station on Line U9. According to the Berlin Senate's transport department, construction is expected to get underway this year for opening in the first half of 2023. Total cost of the project is put at €29m.

Starting from the current turning loop in Invalidenstraße and Lüneberger Straße, the extension will run westwards along Alt-Moabit through the capital's Mitte district, turning north up Rathenowerstraße and then west along Turmstraße. The line will largely be laid on a segregated alignment, serving four accessible stops.

M10 services would run through from Warschauerstraße to Turmstraße every 5 minutes at peak times or 10 minutes off-peak. The route will serve the densely populated residential areas in the Europacity urban development zone and the extension is expected to be used by around 16,000 passengers/day. Planning is already underway for a further 4 km extension to the S-Bahn interchange at Jungfernheide at an estimated cost of €53.7m.

### **[067] Slovenia – Passenger services return to Kočevje**

Passenger services have resumed on the Ljubljana – Kočevje line after a gap of nearly 50 years, following the completion of a €100m rehabilitation project to facilitate the operation of services to and from the capital.

The first Kočevje-bound passenger train since 1971 departed from Ljubljana station at 12:08 on 03 January 2021. The 68 km Ljubljana – Grosuplje – Kočevje line was opened in 1893 to provide access to coal mines in the Bela Krajina region. Passenger traffic began to decline sharply after the modernisation of the Ljubljana – Kočevje road and passenger trains were cut back to Veliko Lašče from July 1968, Dobropolje in 1969 and discontinued after 1970. Modernisation began in 2008, and the first freight train arrived in Kočevje over the upgraded route on 12 April 2019.

### **[068] Spain – ADIF to electrify Galician Link**

In mid-January ADIF invited tenders for the electrification of the 73 km between Monforte de Lemos and Lugo as the infrastructure manager continues its gradual modernisation of the single track railway running north-south between Monforte and A Coruña. The budget for the electrification work is €21.2m with ADIF expecting completion within 18 months (Spanish estimate!). The route will be energised at 25 kV 50 Hz AC which aligns with the power supply on the high speed network.

Monforte is an important junction with the east-west main line between León and Ourense. At present, this route is energised at Spain's legacy 3 kV DC, but conversion to 25 kV 50 Hz AC is envisaged to integrate it with the A Coruña – Ourense – Olmedo high speed line.

ADIF has started to specify AC electrification for a number of upcoming projects on conventional lines, partly to ensure integration with the high speed network but also to facilitate potential through running into Portugal, where 25 kV 50 Hz AC is the national standard. It now seems unlikely that ADIF will undertake much more wiring at 3 kV DC.

The initial section of catenary from the dry port at Monforte to Lugo Mercancías will be designed for operation at up to 200 km/h. In addition to the electrification, various cut-offs and realignments are planned between Monforte and A Coruña to enable journey times to the north-western city to be further reduced.

### **[069] Spain – More Electrification - Tenders invited for Work between Bobadilla and Ronda**

In late January, the transport ministry called tenders for a feasibility study for electrification of the 74 km between Bobadilla and Ronda, which would cover approximately half of the single-track route from Bobadilla to the southern port of Algeciras. The route would be electrified at 25 kV 50 Hz AC. The existing broad gauge line is currently being converted to dual gauge for completion by the end of 2022.

### **[070] Spain – And yet more Electrification! ADIF to electrify Zaragoza - Teruel - València Route**

ADIF has invited tenders for electrification of the single-track route from Zaragoza to Sagunt which forms part of the Mediterranean Corridor linking ports near València with the industrial hinterlands of the north.

The budgeted cost of electrification is €42.6m and the work is expected to take 24 months(!) to complete. Related civil works will include improving clearances at 13 stations and altering 85 bridges and 10 tunnels. To ensure compatibility with sections of the national high speed network currently being built for mixed traffic, such as the 'Basque Y', ADIF has opted to energise the line at 25 kV 50 Hz

AC. This should permit express passenger services to run at up to 200 km/h on those sections of the line which have been realigned.

The rural route through Teruel had been threatened with closure in 2000, after a spate of derailments, but an initial reprieve prompted the realignment of two sections of the route at the northern end between Teruel and Zaragoza. A further government review in 2012 led to further doubts but the line's future was secured when General Motors asked to run automotive trains over the direct route from València to Zaragoza, rather than via Tarragona. This eventually led to the launch in 2017 of a modernisation programme, worth €385m, focused on enhancing rail freight access between València and the north. The renewal of the infrastructure to date has already raised the capacity of the line, which now carries around 30 freight trains per day, a 10-fold increase on the number seen prior to the upgrading project. ADIF says the electrification should offer a further boost to traffic and facilitate the operation of 750 metre-long trains.

### **[071] Switzerland – Fahrplancenter - Shop Closed Permanently**

There have been various reports of the closure of Fahrplancenter. To clarify, the definitive closure refers to the shop in Winterthur which used to open on Friday afternoons. The Fahrplancenter mail order sales activities are expected to continue until 31 December 2022. No new stock will be ordered and much of the existing stock is expected to sell at a discount; any existing magazine subscriptions will be honoured until their expiry.

### **[072] Turkey (European) – İstanbul opens First LRT Line with Ground Power Supply**

İstanbul officially opened Line T5, the city's first light rail line equipped with Alstom's APS ground-power-supply system, on 01 January 2021.

Passenger services on Line T5 started on 04 January and were free of charge for the first 10 days. The first 8.8 km section of Line T5 runs from Cibali north alongside the Golden Horn to Alibeyköy Cep bus station and has 12 stations. The remaining 1.2 km two-station section from Cibali to Eminönü is under construction.

LRVs are operating at six-minute headways and take 30 minutes to complete the trip. The line has the capacity to transport 12,000 passengers per hour per direction.

Line T5 interchanges with metro Line M7 at Alibeyköy and will connect with metro Line M2 at Küçükpazar and LRT Line T1 at Eminönü when the extension opens.

## **REST OF THE WORLD**

### **[073] Australia – From Three a Day to Three an Hour**

From 31 January 2021, three passenger trains an hour in weekday peaks run on Victoria's 113 km-long Melbourne – Ballarat line, as many trains as the line saw in *a day* as recently as about the early 1980s. Admittedly, the improvement in service hasn't happened all at once and immediately before the new timetable, trains ran hourly between Melbourne and Ballarat, a frequency which continues on weekends. However, on weekdays, trains now run every 20 minutes throughout the day between Melbourne and Melton, a fast-growing outer suburb 37 km from Melbourne, and every 40 minutes to Ballarat. Four weekday and three weekend Ballarat trains continue daily to Ararat (211 km), while two on weekdays and one on weekends continue to Maryborough (182 km).

Significant infrastructure improvements on the mostly single line have been necessary to enable the new timetable:

- Extending the double track from Deer Park West Junction (21 km from Melbourne) approximately 19 km to Melton Weir Junction
- Extending the passing loop at Bacchus Marsh (51 km) approximately three kilometres to new car sidings at Maddingley