

Good afternoon folks,

As a moderately frequent user of trams, I have wondered if these "free" zones are common in other cities where such a significant network is in operation. Are FTZs common overseas? How do we compare with other cities around the world?

A few points I assume are also in others' submissions have occurred to me as I use our trams.

I will use Route 6 as my example because I use it frequently travelling from Glen Iris to Southbank or La Trobe St in the city. What I have noticed in these trams in the FTZ is that there is very little activation of the myki readers while in the FTZ, and this rate of activation hardly changes when the automated announcement is made near the end of the FTZ. I would be surprised if more than 50% of travellers are actually logged on.

As well as the city "free tram zone", on route 6 there is also another widely used FTZ once the tram turns east along High St., particularly anywhere after Chapel St. It is also common on inbound services for those passengers travelling to Chapel St or thereabouts. How does our rate of fare evasion compare to other world cities, especially for these shorter trips?

There is one exception to these situations, and, as you may guess, it is when travellers board a tram which has some inspectors/transport police already on board.

It is also certainly true that the FTZ encourages much greater usage of trams for very short trips of just a couple of stops. This must slow down the tram journeys, and must also create queues of trams along the major streets, most notably Swanston St.

Thanks for this review, and I hope that you arrive at a solution which is fair and effective for our much valued fleet of trams.

Yours sincerely,

Mark Learmonth [REDACTED]