

Inquiry into Expanding Melbourne's Free Tram Zone

Submission by Ruchira Abeyratna

In this submission, I will address two points listed in the terms of reference.

(2) providing free fares for all full-time students

As a full-time student myself, a considerable amount of money (upwards of \$300 annually) is spent on the commute to my university classes. I believe that free fares should be provided to all full-time students as many students work minimum wage jobs and may not have sufficient funds to have a valid ticket (as food and rent will likely take priority). Despite \$4.40 (the cap for metropolitan daily travel) appearing miniscule *prima facie*, such a saving can make a substantial difference to those struggling to make ends meet.

(5) the effects and benefits of dynamic public transport pricing

An obvious benefit of dynamic pricing would be an incentive for commuters to travel off-peak, supposedly reducing the congestion on peak hour services (which is a frequent frustration in my personal experience). However, I believe that most commuters would have a somewhat fixed schedule and may not have the flexibility to travel off-peak, which not only fails to address the overcrowding on public transport during peak hours but unfairly overcharges those who do not have much of an option in the first place. Therefore, public transport pricing should be certain and predictable rather than being variable. It avoids unnecessary stress and burden on commuters around how much they will have to pay for travel.

-END OF SUBMISSION-