


Executive Officer
Economy and Infrastructure Committee
Parliament House
Spring Street
East Melbourne VIC 3002

Submission on the extension of the free tram system:

To the Economy and Infrastructure Committee,

The following submission is made on behalf of the University of Melbourne Student Union's Southbank Department (herein UMSU Southbank). The submission will address part (1)(e) and (2) of the inquiry on Melbourne's Public Transport system. UMSU Southbank represents students studying at the Southbank campus of the University of Melbourne. This campus is located between the tram stops Grant Street (Police Memorial) on St Kilda Rd and the Sturt St/Southbank Boulevard stop. Both are outside the free tram zone.

The Southbank campus is the academic centre of Melbourne's renowned arts precinct. Students study into academic programs in the fields of music, visual and performing arts and production. These academic programs are incredibly intensive, often requiring students to commit five days a week to their studies. The effect of such a commitment is that students are often unable to study and work concurrently, an otherwise common requisite for the financial viability of students. As a result, a large cohort of students rely on meagre government student payments to survive. A large portion of these payments are likely to be consumed by costs associated with housing. The increasing financial burden of students, coupled with an inability to work due to time-constraints, is likely to



have the effect of making education, particularly arts education, inaccessible for those from low socio-economic and disadvantaged backgrounds.

If the City of Melbourne is to remain a vibrant and world-class cultural destination, decision-makers must ensure that public policy facilitates an arts sector that is diverse and representative. One such way to do this is by improving the material conditions of early-career artists, musicians and creatives. The extension of the free tram zone to encompass the two tram stops nearby to the University of Melbourne's Southbank campus is likely to be of some material consequence. The provision of free fares for all full-time students will have a significant, equitable impact on a group of primarily young people, whose financial livelihood falls below an acceptable standard.

UMSU Southbank commends the provision of free fares for all full-time students to the inquiry. And in lieu of it, supports the extension of the free tram zone to encompass the tram stops Grant Street (Police Memorial) and Sturt St/Southbank Boulevard.

Kind regards,

Hayden Williams

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