

The Hon. Melissa Horne, Minister for Public Transport
The Hon. Jacinta Allan, Minister for Transport Infrastructure
The Hon. Daniel Andrews, Premier of Victoria
Lord Mayor Sally Capp, City of Melbourne
cc: Rod Barton MP, Transport Matters Party

17 December 2019 - via email

Re: Extend Melbourne's Free Tram Zone

Dear Premier Andrews, Honourable Ministers' and Lord Mayor,

APSAA (Asia-Pacific Student Accommodation Association) supports the call by Rod Barton MP from the Transport Matters Party to extend the free tram zone to include our universities, hospitals, major attractions and sporting precincts making public transport the best option to move around Melbourne.

APSAA members provide student accommodation to a largely international student cohort. These members include Scape, Atira, Urbanest, Iglu, UniLodge, Journal Student Living, Melbourne University and their on-campus colleges, RMIT, Swinburne University and Victoria University.

As an industry that has grown exponentially in the last ten years and in Melbourne will *double in size with the number of student accommodation beds on offer by 2023**, we believe it is imperative to extend the free tram zone to include our universities, hospitals, major attractions and sporting precincts.

Currently, Melbourne has 12,012 beds in the pipeline to 2023 – with an existing 21,204 beds that amounts to a 56.6% growth from 2018-2023. That's over 33,000 students living in Melbourne – contributing to our bottom line – our tourism, our entertainment, attending our major events, taking in our arts and culture, our services and ensuring Melbourne enjoys growth through a fluid economy.

Australia's international education offering is Australia's 3rd largest export. As Study Melbourne notes, "*Melbourne is the best student city in Australia and the third best student city in the world*", according to the prestigious [QS Best Student Cities 2018](#). Let's continue this good form, support growth and extend the free tram zone.

Melbourne University is just a few stops beyond the free tram zone and fare inspectors anecdotally have a field day fining students who are trying to keep costs low. As our city grows, we need to change behaviour so that public transport is the first choice for young people – getting them around the network for free when they're studying encourages generational change in attitudes to public transport and reduces congestion.

Thank you for your time. We also extend an invitation to you to visit any of the Melbourne purpose-built student accommodation buildings provided by our members.

Kind regards

Marion Bayley

*JLL Report 2017.