

Submission: to Victorian Parliament Economy and Infrastructure Committee

Subject: 1. Expansion of the Free Tram Zone

From: Rail Futures Institute Inc. [REDACTED]

This submission addresses Terms of Reference Item – 1 of the Economy and Infrastructure Committee on the funding of Melbourne’s public transport announced on 6 June 2019.

Term of Reference – item 1 :

“Expansion of the free tram system to include –

- (a) Wellington Parade to Powlett Street, East Melbourne*
- (b) Swanston Street to Elgin Street, Carlton*
- (c) Royal Parade to College Crescent, Carlton*
- (d) Flemington Road to Abbotsford Street, North Melbourne*
- (e) St Kilda Road to Commercial Road, Prahran”*

Submission :

- All current holders of MYKI including V/Line regional travellers already receive included CBD tram travel on an un-restricted basis, (including the current defined free CBD travel zone.)
 - The main beneficiaries of the current Free Tram Travel Zone are therefore people who access the CBD or CBD fringe by car and then use trams within the Free Tram Zone, and workers in the CBD who do not hold Myki cards plus Interstate and Overseas visitors.
 - The current free CBD tram zone arrangements introduced in 2015 have resulted in :
 - Gross peak CBD overcrowding of trams resulting in increased dwell times at CBD stops, extended tram travel times and slower overall tram speeds (already amongst the slowest trams in the world).
 - Overcrowd situations on many routes result in successive trams passing through stops before there is actually space from alighting passengers , allowing waiting passengers to board.
 - The free tram travel has induced people to take the tram whereby previously they would have walked a few blocks, which is not logical when we should be encouraging healthy short walks.
 - Inner suburban densification has seen added pressure placed on the tram network both to and from the CBD. In the outbound direction free travellers generating no revenue are denying fare paying passengers travelling to the Inner suburbs seats, and even denying these paying passenger standing space in peak periods.
 - The current focus needs to be on acquiring large capacity trams at an accelerated rate to cater for the current CBD traffic task and surging demand for travel between the CBD and the Inner suburbs from fare paying passengers served by the tram network.
 - Travellers in wheelchairs have been severely impacted by the extra crowding induced from free travellers.
 - The existing free tram travel zone should NOT be extended as the current existing unsatisfactory situation will only be exacerbated in that :
 - CBD overcrowding will only get worse and become totally un-manageable
 - any extensions will inevitably result in yet further requests to extend the free travel zone even further
 - scarce capital funds will be spent ultimately acquiring new trams to accommodate a swelling number of free CBD travellers who contribute no revenue at all - which is totally illogical.
 - the available capex should be spent acquiring more high capacity trams to cater for the booming demand for tram travel between the CBD and Inner suburbs, and relieving the current CBD tram overcrowding catering for the current restricted free CBD tram travel zone.
 - With the City of Melbourne projections of a million CBD visitations on Weekdays in the medium term, the combination of increased CBD visitations coupled with inner suburban densification, even with a bigger large capacity tram fleet operating at increased service frequencies will be under real pressure to handle the projected traffic task whilst retaining even the existing free tram travel zone.
- * Rail Futures therefore strongly advises against any extension of the free CBD tram travel zone as it would in reality benefit a few but dis-benefit the increasing majority of fare paying MYKI card holders.**

Submission: to Victorian Parliament Economy and Infrastructure Committee

**Subjects : 2. Provision of Free fares to all Fulltime students
& 3. Removing fares for all Seniors Card Holders**

From: Rail Futures Institute Inc. [REDACTED]

This submission addresses Terms of Reference items – 2 & 3 of the Economy and Infrastructure Committee on the funding of Melbourne’s public transport announced on 6 June 2019.

Term of Reference – Item 2 :

“Provision of Free fares to all Full Time students”,

Term of Reference – Item 3 :

“Removing fares for all Seniors Card Holders.”

Submission :

- Full time students and Seniors Card holders already enjoy half fares for all travel, and on V/Line enjoy at all Off Peak and Weekend times further discounted Off Peak fares. (Effectively receiving a discount on a discount all year round !)
- These discounted Off Peak fares already available to full time students and Seniors Card holders are already heavily subsidized by ALL Victorian taxpayers whether they use public transport or not.
- Further all Pensioners and Seniors Card holders are already entitled to apply for 4 return Metro trips, or 4 V/Line return Off Peak trips to anywhere on the V/line passenger regional network, per annum.
- Overseas students not entitled to travel concessions should not be subsidized by Victorian taxpayers through extension of travel concessions to those students also, especially as Victorians studying Overseas do not receive travel concessions in other countries. As privately funded students in Melbourne the aforesaid Overseas students can also afford fares on what is already a heavily subsidized system by World standards.
- **Any further extension of free travel is not recommended as it will cost Victoria lost revenue, whilst only exacerbating current overcrowd situations on public transport disadvantaging existing fare paying passengers and squeezing out potential passengers quite prepared to pay their way .**
- **Further the existing travel concessions given to Pensioners, Seniors Card holders and Students as a direction of Government policy should be re-imbursed by Government to the respective transport operators so that the annual financial performance of each mode is more accurately reported. The end cost to Government is the same, whether as now met by deficit funding, or as a direct declared social subsidy to operators.**

Submission: to Victorian Parliament Economy and Infrastructure Committee

**Subject: 4. New Technology that enables intelligent transport systems
that improve the performance of the networks**

From: Rail Futures Institute Inc. [REDACTED]

This submission addresses Terms of Reference item – 4 of the Economy and Infrastructure Committee on the funding of Melbourne’s public transport announced on 6 June 2019.

Term of Reference – item 4 :

“ New technologies that enables intelligent transport systems that improve the performance of the networks

Submission :

- The initial steps to improve public transport delivery and performance and passenger satisfaction using technology and intelligent transport systems coupled with available modern communications should extend to :
 - Improved real time passenger information at Tram Stops. The current tram control management system and its interfaced passenger information at stops needs total replacement to enable more efficient real time supervision of the world’s largest tram network, especially in times of service disruption.
 - A new tram traffic management and monitoring system should measure service reliability based on tram services maintaining the advertised headway (scheduled time between successive trams) rather than at specific points and the termini as now. What is important to passengers is that the timetable shows for example a 10 minute frequency and that is what the traveller expects to be delivered.
 - The interfaced PIDS displays at tram stops can then provide improved real time information to passengers displayed in passenger friendly order of tram departure by actual time.
- Melbourne’s existing public transport operators currently each operate their own operational control centres . To obtain the most effective overall operational management of the whole network Rail Futures advocates strongly for an over arching Public Transport Control Centre incorporating the existing individual control centres. Then on a daily basis and especially at times of service disruption the overall network can be better managed in making best use of alternative resources and with modern technology communicating real time information and alternative travel arrangements to both staff and passengers.

Submission: to Victorian Parliament Economy and Infrastructure Committee

Subject: 5. The effects and benefits of Dynamic public transport Pricing

From: Rail Futures Institute Inc. 

This submission addresses Terms of Reference item – 5 of the Economy and Infrastructure Committee on the funding of Melbourne’s public transport announced on 6 June 2019.

Term of Reference – item 5 :

“ The effects and benefits of Dynamic public transport Pricing.”

Submission :

- In an ideal world the whole transport system both public transport, and road transport (cars and trucks) would operate more smoothly and make a much better use of transport infrastructure if dynamic pricing operated across both the entire road network and public transport system.
- However we are far from that situation now with V/Line the only Victorian operator really offering any sort of differential fare pricing policy. At Off Peak times fares are discounted around 30 % to direct discretionary trips away from heavily loaded peak services. This policy has applied for many decades and has been successful in meeting it’s objectives. However to date there is no Off Peak pricing in metropolitan Melbourne on the public transport network.
- Dynamic pricing takes the differential pricing several leaps forward to price the travel relative to real time demand and is readily practicable today with available technology and is widely used Overseas especially in road access pricing.
- There has so far been a strong kick back by Governments of all persuasions to any proposals of such dynamic user pay by time of use for road access (to replace current car registration in Victoria).
- Public transport and rail freight is already at a distinct disadvantage in competing with cars and trucks as the playing field is distinctly favoured to road with hidden subsidies and road usage not charged adequately for weight / type of vehicle and damage done to roads especially by ever larger road trucks.
- Before any type of dynamic pricing could be introduced on public transport the network would need to be upgraded to a high quality grid network of public transport services operating to turn up and go frequencies. This network of modern high capacity trains, trams and light rail would be supported by a totally revamped bus network and cycling and walking operating to “turn up and go” frequencies.
- The vision of such a network is laid out in our recently released Rail Futures – Melbourne Rail Plan – a public transport plan for Melbourne with a population of 8 million by 2050. (To download copies of this plan visit www.railfutures.org.au)
- At the same time the road network would need to transition to a more equitable user pays by type of vehicle and time of usage model , through use of existingly available dynamic real time technologies.
- Further the Melbourne metropolitan rail network does have considerable off peak and overnight capacity to handle the operation of additional freight trains, and container shuttles between outer metropolitan depots and the Port of Melbourne. Early introduction of dynamic pricing for road freight vehicles would ensure a more equitable playing field and more freight moving from road onto rail utilizing the available off peak and overnight freight capacity as outlined above.