


Inquiry Name: Inquiry into Expanding Melbourne's Free Tram Zone

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## **SUBMISSION CONTENT:**

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As a Melbourne University student, I've taken both Elizabeth st and Swanston St trams almost every day for 3 years at various times. I've observed that at least 80% of users (particularly students) do not touch on - they can't all be myki pass holders.

I understand the plight of students who want to extend the free tram zone. The high cost of a daily pass (\$8.80 per day for a Full fare) is viewed as too expensive relative to the service provided - transport for 2 stops. I agree.

However, the solution should not be to extend the free tram zone for the following reasons:

1. It encourages inefficient behaviour such as taking a tram for 1 stop which only saves a few minutes at most. This situation always occurs between QV and Melbourne Central where walking is almost always faster due to traffic lights and tram pile ups.
2. Diminished service. Trams become crowded with 1 stop users such that the elderly and children who are the most in need of public transport either cannot get on a tram or struggle hold on.
3. And let's be honest: most of the students who are calling for the free tram zone already don't pay as the savings from fare evasion for 3 months (\$600ish) exceed the fine amount (\$223 or \$75). I've only seen two groups of AO's out of the 1000+ trips I've taken.

Now that I've established why the free tram zone should not be extended, I'll propose alternative solutions:

1. \$0.50-\$1.00 fee for traveling between QVM and the Monash University Parkville Campus. Lowering the cost would reduce the benefit derived from fare evasion, which would encourage touching on while forcing users to decide whether saving a few minutes is worth \$1. The decision should be: "should I walk for 5-10 mins or pay \$1?" rather than "it's free anyways so I'll just take the tram for 1 stop".
2. As a middle ground: only charging a fare during peak hours e.g. 7-9am and 5-7pm and making travel to Unimelb free during off-peak hours. This would leverage excess tram capacity during off-peak hours and encourage students to plan travel during off-peak hours which would reduce overcrowding in peak hours.

I hope that consideration is given to the above points and that whatever decision is made takes the interests of all

stakeholders into account - not just some students who (looking at the current submissions) just want a free handout.

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File1:

File2:

File3: