

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

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SUBMISSION CONTENT:

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The free tram zone should not be extended.

The free tram zone has made Route 48 to North Balwyn not viable as a daily commuter route. 'A' class trams which came into service in 1983 no longer carry an adequate passenger load to support the free tram zone. As a fare paying passenger, I am often pushed out of a service I need due to non-fare paying passengers. As a result I no longer use the tram, despite it being more convenient. 'C' class trams are now around 19 years old and reaching end of service life and considerably smaller than D2 and E class services on other routes.

Dwell times have increased due to overcrowding, if the free tram zone is extended this will make already unacceptable travel times more so. Trams are not adequate for distances longer than about 5km. Train services from Croydon or Bayswater have equivalent travel times to North Balwyn. Despite North Balwyn being within 10km of the city.

If budgetary constraints are an issue, the cost of the free tram zone has robbed the tram network of investment it badly needs. Broken rails and trams between 19 and 37 years old are evidence of the continued under-investment.

The inevitable question must be raised regarding the fairness of allowing non-fare paying customers to compete with fare paying customers for the same service. If the free tram zone is extended, charging fares will become untenable.

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File1:

File2:

File3: