

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

roma guerin
[REDACTED]

SUBMISSION CONTENT:

--

The Free Trams have been the main cause of my not visiting Melbourne any more. I am 79 and use a walking stick. I have been a theatre goer and gallery visitor for my whole life, but in the last two years, these pleasures have had to cease because of the sheer number of people cramming into the trams. Living in regional Victoria, I have travelled to the city by VLine bus for many years, and on reaching Southern Cross bus terminal, caught a tram, or most times two trams, to my destination. I was delighted when the low-step trams came on line just as I started to find the high steps were becoming a problem. My delight was short-lived. The low-step trams seemed to be few and far between. But trying to get on a tram, any tram, that is packed to the gunnels with people eventually made me feel insecure and uneasy. I persevered for a couple of years, trying not to be judgmental of all these younger and fitter people taking advantage of a free ride when they really would have been even fitter if they walked more, but I couldn't keep that up, sadly. I began to feel resentful, and my enjoyment of my outings was spoiled. So I gave up.

I do not feel that the Free Tram has lived up to its original brief, to make Melbourne a more liveable city, full of happy and mobile people going about their days. It takes so long for the dozens and dozens of passengers to get off the tram, and then so long for all the others to get on, that the trip drags on interminably stop by stop. I have watched the faces, grim, bored, just putting up with it. I am not sure that this is how we should be presenting to the tourists who visit us on the understanding that Melbourne really is Australia's most liveable city.

Far from extending the Free Tram zones, I suggest that a more positive reform would be to cease operating the system as Free, and use the income from fares to contribute to providing more low-step trams. I would accompany the re-introduction of fares with a Health Department campaign to encourage people to consider their health and wellbeing by walking more (without mentioning the obesity statistics).

Thank you.

--

File1:

File2:

File3: