



30 January 2020

Executive Officer
Legislative Council, Economy and Infrastructure Committee
Parliament of Victoria, Spring Street
Melbourne VIC 3002



Dear Executive Officer and Committee Members

Re: Inquiry into the extension of Melbourne's free tram zone

On behalf of the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre (MCEC), I would like to make this formal submission in response to the Parliamentary Inquiry into the proposed expansion of Melbourne's free tram zone.

While this Inquiry deals with a broad range of matters pertaining to public transport, it is specifically the question of whether the free tram zone warrants expansion that I write to you regarding; in particular, to show our support for any expansion that considers including MCEC in the free tram zone's footprint.

Currently, the terms of reference outlined in the Inquiry only specify the expansion of the free tram zone to include key corridors along Wellington Parade, Swanston Street, Royal Parade, Flemington Road and St Kilda Road. However, I would like to make the case that an expansion of the free tram zone along Spencer Street toward Clarendon Street be considered in earnest.

MCEC is situated on this corridor, and makes a significant contribution to not just Melbourne's visitor economy, but also its liveability through support of broader community initiatives. Every year, over 2.5 million people from across Victoria, Australia and the world travel to MCEC to host events, participate in conferences and exhibitions, attend performances or utilise our onsite facilities. More than 1.1 million of these people arrived via the Clarendon Street entrance, which is the closest in proximity to tram stop 124A MCEC/Casino.

By working closely with government and industry stakeholders, MCEC has helped ensure Melbourne remains one of the world's leading business events cities. Last financial year alone, MCEC contributed more than \$1.1 billion in economic impact (up from \$984.3 million



the year prior). For the same year, the exhibition and conference centre hosted nearly 1,400 events attracting 1,034,000 delegates, with 27,850 of those coming from overseas.

MCEC also plays an important role in the wider community, through partnerships such as with the Royal Children's Hospital Good Friday Appeal, which is held at MCEC annually and is one of the city's largest public events.

For both our international and local visitors to the venue, trams provide a crucial way of accessing MCEC. Being the closest form of public transport, they are one of the safest and most direct ways to reach this iconic venue from the CBD, but regrettably, the paid myki ticketing system provides an added barrier. This is especially the case for our delegates from overseas, many of whom may not speak English as their first language, but are required to purchase a myki pass and navigate unilingual wayfinding and transport information.

For exhibitors to be able to provide these delegates with a simple message to access MCEC through free public transport, with no need for a physical ticket, is a powerful tool that only helps to further establish Melbourne's reputation around the world as an attractive, modern and accessible city.

Further to this, sustainability remains at the core of MCEC's business practices. As one of the largest pieces of public infrastructure in Victoria, we have a responsibility to support sustainable practices and partnerships in the community. The promotion of an effective free transport option, with its carbon footprint largely offset by the State Government's solar tram initiative, will help to reduce the need for visitors to rely on private cars to access the centre.

By expanding the free tram zone to include destinations like MCEC, along with other key attractions such as Melbourne Museum, National Gallery Victoria, and the broader arts, culture, shopping and events precinct of South Wharf, Melbourne will become a better connected and more accessible destination for visitors from around the world.

Therefore, I respectfully ask that the Parliamentary Inquiry committee consider the benefits of extending the free tram zone, and that the extension include Melbourne's premier business events destination, MCEC.

Yours sincerely,

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Peter King

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