

# Trail Neighbourhood System

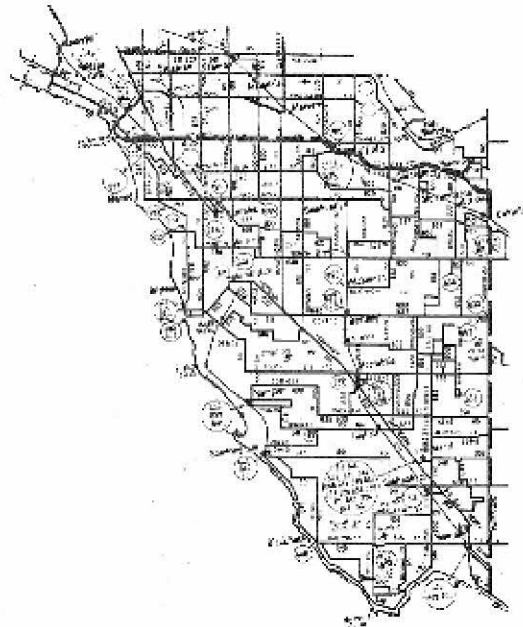
## Caulfield Moorabbin Sandringham Neighbourhood

Page last modified/checked: Friday, 4 October 2002

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### Summary

**Reviewed in this section was a trial to assess a time based, flat fare ticket system. It was implemented on all transport modes within a region of Melbourne - known for the purpose of the trial as the "Caulfield Moorabbin Sandringham Neighbourhood". This area was chosen because it was the first in Melbourne where a detailed review of the bus network had been completed.**



Click [here](#) for larger (88k) image

**The trial tickets were all issued and validated using existing procedures and had an intended effect on the issue of existing "day of issue" ticket types within the trial area (except Travelcard). The principals of the trial eventually became the basis for a replacement fare structure for Melbourne known, not surprisingly, as the Neighbourhood fare system. This arrived in November 1983, bringing an end to the zones and, of course, the trial area itself. Both of those systems, however, helped firmly establish that the future direction of Melbourne's public transport ticketing would be both multi-modal and time based. Future installments to this site will follow the course these ideas took.**

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### Background to the Trial

**The Cain Labor Government had called for simplification of the metropolitan fare structure as part of their election campaign. Some idea of their intentions could be**

gauged from an article in *The Sun* newspaper of 4th August 1982 - a mere 4 months since gaining office. Here, Transport Minister Steve Crabb advised of a study into the concern over declining patronage on Geelong region bus services. The Government was already seriously looking at a "*flat or single fare system*" and it was only a matter of time before this idea and Government subsidised arrangements between bus operators resulted in the Geelong Transit System in February 1983.

This same newspaper article also hinted that a flat fare scheme might also work in Melbourne, but the sheer size of the metropolitan area meant it "*would be impossible to introduce a single fare for a system that stretches from Frankston to Werribee*" (for example). The reality was that planning for a flat fare experiment in Melbourne was, in fact, much closer to realization than Mr. Crabb was probably allowed to reveal.

Our description of that trial follows and is drawn from four sources:

1. Rail staff training package dated 8th November 1982 (comprehensive)
2. [Suburban Tickets of the Victorian Railways](#) by Keith Atkinson, 1991
3. [Ministry of Transport leaflet](#) introducing the trial
4. system Examples of the trial tickets

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## Explaining the Tickets

The trial neighbourhood system commenced on Monday 15th November 1982. It was based around four different flat fares which were common to rail, tram and bus travel and issued at a peak and off peak rate. These were as follows:

Peak Full fare = 60c, Peak Concession fare = 30c (both cerise)

Off Peak Full fare = 50c, Off Peak Concession fare = 25c (both pale green).

The peak fare was charged prior to 9am and between 3pm and 6pm Monday to Friday. Outside these times and all day on Saturdays, Sundays and public holidays, the off peak fare was charged. The off peak conditions varied from those applicable to the rest of the metropolitan rail system and were even more unusual when it is considered that for the purpose of the trial they also applied to trams and buses.

All neighbourhood tickets were available for between 2 and 3 hours travel depending on when they were issued. The passenger gaining more when the ticket was purchased just after the hour. The expiry time was fixed 2 hours from the next full hour and the final journey had to commence prior to this time. This was also indicated on the ticket.

It will be seen that the neighbourhood fares were a bargain when calculated against many journey possibilities especially involving change of mode (and therefore the purchase of another ticket) or simply even a rail journey that crossed a zone boundary. It was stressed, however, that neighbourhood tickets were not to be substituted for the sale of daily Travelcards. There were other examples where the neighbourhood fares could not account for the existence of cheaper single journey tickets such as Rail+Two, some of the lower MMTB cash section fares and the private bus 1, 2 and 3 section cash fares. Realistically, tram and bus staff must have only issued a neighbourhood ticket if

specifically asked, whereas rail staff had much more opportunity, and this would explain why it was only stations that received dedicated stocks of each neighbourhood fare type.

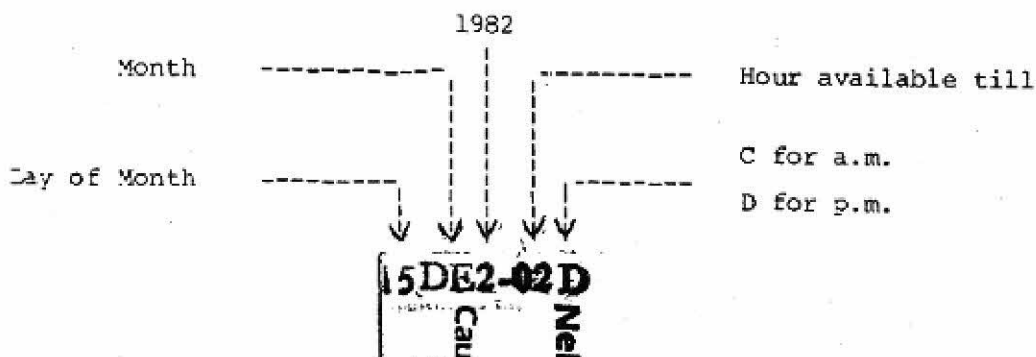
Whatever the case, the passenger was entitled to the benefit of the cheaper neighbourhood fare even if they did not use the ticket to its full advantage.

### Station Issues

Four Edmondson tickets were held, coloured cerise for Peak fare and pale green for Off Peak fare.



These tickets were dated in the Edmondson dating press but in addition to the normal day month and year, the hour of expiry and whether a.m. or p.m. also had to be indicated. The correct method was shown in the staff circular as follows:



Staff had to remember to advance the expiry time every hour with due consideration to the train schedule through their station.

This ticket is valid for 2 hours in the Caulfield, Moorabbin and Sandringham neighbourhood. If you wish to use another vehicle or return in that time ask for a Transfer Ticket. For use of purchaser only.

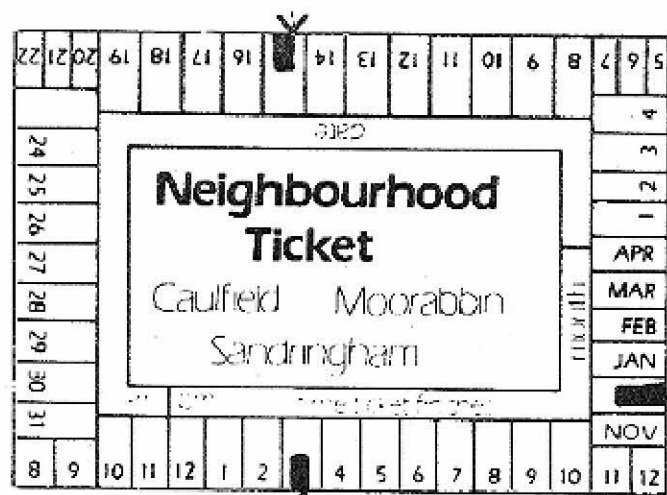
A standard set of conditions appeared on the back of all four station issues. Note the

reference to the transfer ticket. Perhaps this was originally proposed, but based on the information we have describing the working of the trial system, there was no such requirement. Either way, what would the transfer ticket have done that the original ticket could not?

An amusing twist involving the station issued neighbourhood tickets should be recalled. There was no identification of the station of issue, totally at odds with normal railway practice. Barely 5 months earlier (July 1982), stations had received a rousing circular identifying, among other irregularities, that many locations exchanging ticket stock or receiving non-dedicated stock were failing to apply their station stamp to such tickets!

### Tram Issued Neighbourhood tickets

From our reckoning, this paper ticket was a most unusual invention (based on our understanding of it). Tram conductors held only this single neighbourhood ticket (i.e: cash fare issue) which also acted equally as a transfer (i.e: non-cash issue). The date and expiry time were punched but the original idea of punching the month was discarded in favour of supplying monthly stocks. There was no method of identifying whether the ticket had been sold at full or concession fare.



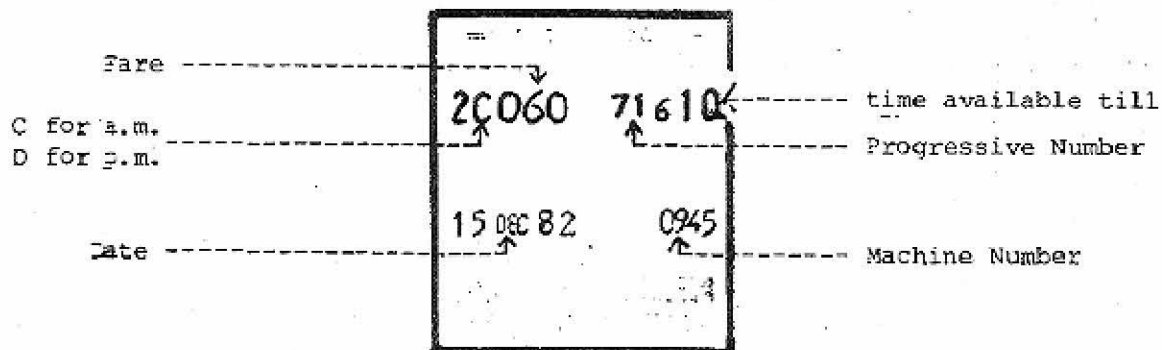
The above illustration taken from the rail staff circular shows what would have been a running 6-monthly stock.

The wording "TRANSFER" has been found in dark and light print. Later, during the

trial, when booklet type neighbourhood tickets were introduced, these had to be exchanged by the tram conductor for the neighbourhood ticket - this, in effect, made it a non-cash transfer. All booklet tickets must have had to be submitted at the end of the conductors shift to be credited against the issue of the neighbourhood tickets.

### Bus Issue Neighbourhood tickets

Not surprisingly, the lowest esteem of the trial was the simple modification to Almex bus issues to indicate an expiry time and a.m. or p.m. This is shown by the example in the rail staff instructions.



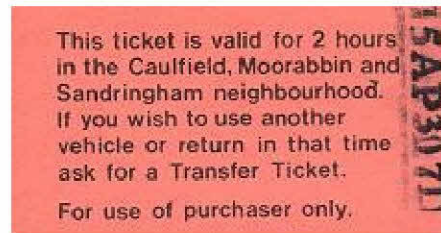
This ticket is available till 10.00 a.m. on 15 December, 1982

To give the ticket credit, it was the most cost effective part of the trial system to implement!

### Booklet Issue Neighbourhood tickets

All information indicates that booklets containing 10 of the neighbourhood tickets were to be made available as part of the trial. Why they were not introduced at its commencement is unclear - in fact, they did not appear until 9th April 1983. It is also unknown what percentage the discount was on their sale (probably 10%?). The leaflet introducing the trial neighbourhood advises that the booklet would *initially* be sold from railway stations, bus depots and tram depots (probably only Glenhuntly Depot). We are not aware of any off-system outlets being co-erced into selling the booklets.





These tickets were thin card and closely emulated the station issue tickets right down to the conditions on the rear. Here, the reference to the transfer ticket made absolute sense since the tram conductors had no means of dating a booklet ticket when presented, so it was exchanged for their transfer ticket. When booklet tickets were presented at a station, they were dated in the Edmondson press with the aid of a card ticket to provide thickness. On buses, they were exchanged for an Almex ticket and retained by the driver to be credited against this procedure.

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### Conclusion

The trial neighbourhood ticket system was somewhat grafted over existing arrangements and therefore less than ideal from the ticket issuing point of view and also customer understanding of the trial. The means of accounting for the sale/issue of the tram tickets/transfer was probably neither welcomed nor, it would seem, foolproof.

Nonetheless, it showed that with improvisation, something hitherto though of as probably unworkable, could be achieved.

How the scheme could be standardised between all modes, implemented across the entire metropolitan area and structured to cover a much wider range of tickets will be the subject of the next installment to our website...

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