

'Time bomb': Caught out with an expired myki

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Transport reporter

Just seconds after he touched on his myki and discovered the card had expired, Mike Smith was slapped with a \$237 fine.

"Who even knows that myki cards expire?" he said.

Mr Smith had not used his myki card in a while when he stepped on the 57 tram at Newmarket in May last year. When he touched on, a message flashed up on the myki reader saying the card had expired.

There was no expiry date on the card itself and Mr Smith had not received any alerts.

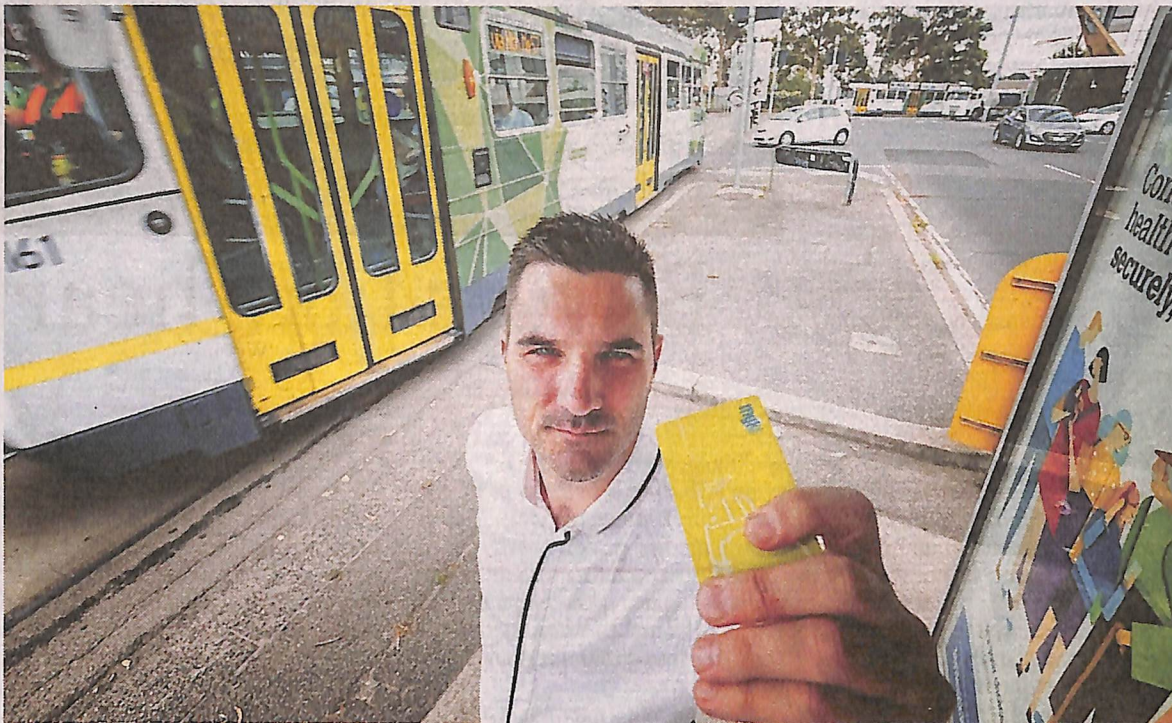
Before he got a chance to get off the tram, plain-clothes ticket inspectors nabbed Mr Smith, fining him \$237 for using an expired myki.

This was despite there being more than \$9 on his card.

"They [inspectors] heard that the machine didn't click right ... within seconds I got asked a question. "There was no real opportunity to get off the tram."

Mr Smith is now taking Public Transport Victoria to court to fight the fine, arguing that he was unfairly punished.

Had Mr Smith's card been registered, he would have received two emails warning about the card's expiry, but like many commuters,



Mike Smith is contesting the fine: "Who even knows that myki cards expire?" Photo: Luis Ascuí

Mr Smith didn't register his card.

"There needs to be some level of empathy in the system ... the card itself gives no warning that it will expire," he said.

"Credit cards have an expiry date on them plainly and simply so you can see it."

Public Transport Users Associ-

ation's spokesman Tony Morton said this was a case of a person "doing all the right things but getting caught out on an administrative detail".

He questioned how anyone could think it appropriate to fine someone who has money on their myki card and tried to touch on, therefore

"signalling their full intent to pay".

"What we now have is this situation where your myki is a ticking time bomb because it can catch you, and when it does you are liable to a fine," Mr Morton said.

Four years was a short lifespan for a card, Mr Morton said, especially in comparison with the 10-year

lifespan of Queensland's Go Card and Melbourne's old Metcard, which had no expiry date.

"It's hard to see that four years is a reasonable estimate for the lifespan of these things ... it should be closer to 10 years like we see in other systems."

A Public Transport Victoria spokesman declined to comment on Mr Smith's case, but said authorised officers, conductors and other ticketing staff can provide information to passengers about expiry dates, which can also be viewed on myki vending machines and at ticket office terminals.

"Just like everyday items including passports, drivers licences and bank cards, myki cards need to be replaced after a certain period of time to ensure maximum security," a spokesman said.

"Expired mykis are replaced free of charge when they expire - we encourage passengers to speak to staff at a premium or staffed station or get in touch with the public transport call centre to arrange a replacement."

NTT Data, the company that developed myki, won a seven-year contract worth \$700 million in 2016 to continue running the ticket system.

The Victorian government is currently carrying out trials of contactless technology for myki.