

Nick Neos gives the myki mobile trial a thumbs up. Photo: Joe Armao



# The tap-on taps into some new tech

**Tom Cowie**

It has all the makings of a public transport miracle: a rollout of new myki technology that isn't plagued by huge problems. At least not yet.

Commuters taking part in a smartphone myki payment trial have given the beta test a cautious thumbs up, heaping praise on the convenience of topping up remotely and the system's decent touch-on speed. Android users started using their mobile phones to pay for fares on Victoria's trains, buses and trams after Public Transport Victoria invited 4000 people to take part in the test last month.

There is still work to be done to ensure everyone can benefit: iPhone users remain locked out of the trial, with the state government yet to announce a deal with Apple to allow access to its cardless technology.

But those who have been accepted into the trial are pleased with the technology's performance so far, despite the odd hiccup. Derrimut IT worker Nick Neos, 35, said he had been using Google Pay as a digital wallet for a couple of years and that adding a myki had been straightforward. "For me, the more cards I can eliminate from my wallet, the better," he said.

He catches the train to the city two or three times a week and said he had only had one myki reader not recognise his phone.

"There's probably a slight delay compared to the myki card but it's an extra half a second, if that," he said. "It's enough to notice it, but not enough to be a problem."

So how does it work?

Eligible testers must have a compatible Android phone with NFC (Near-Field Communication)

capability. Once given access to the trial, they then have the option to add a myki in the passes section of the Google Pay app. That creates a new virtual myki, which can be topped up instantly via a linked credit card.

A new myki must be set up, so existing funds on a daily/weekly/monthly/yearly pass cannot be transferred over.

James Sash, a 24-year-old software engineer from Taylors Hill, said some of the older myki readers on the Sunbury line were a bit slow to recognise his phone.

"If you move too quickly or just a little bit it fails to read. If you get it properly in the one spot, it's OK," he said. "The newer readers at places like Richmond work much better."

Cristina Spizzica, 27, said she had been using the digital payment option for a couple of days only but

was already enjoying the convenience of ditching her myki card. "In summer, if you're a person who has to wear clothes without pockets, it's great," she said.

"Paying with a phone has become one of my habits, I've been going out to lunch without a wallet."

She said the technology was well overdue, with other public transport systems around the world already enjoying cardless payments.

Essendon student Michael, 19, said he was still carrying his physical myki as a back-up but so far the phone technology hadn't failed. He said the myki readers had no problems recognising his phone even when inside a case. "If they were to roll it out as a full thing I would definitely use it."

To apply to be part of the myki program visit: [ptv.vic.gov.au/mobilemyki](http://ptv.vic.gov.au/mobilemyki).