

on

# Free tram expansion attacked

**Benjamin Preiss**

A leading public transport advocate says Melbourne's free tram zone creates overcrowding, robs the system of revenue and should not be extended.

It comes as the merits of extending the free tram zone have been discussed in State Parliament, where upper house Transport Matters MP Rod Barton put forward a motion to investigate expanding the zone and making travel free for full-time students and senior citizens. Under Mr Barton's plan, the MCG, National Gallery of Victoria, Shrine of Remembrance and the Melbourne Zoo would be included in the zone. It would also be expanded to take in the Royal Children's Hospital in Parkville.

The upper house passed the motion, meaning the economy and infrastructure committee will now examine the proposal, which also includes varied travel prices, with cheaper fares during off-peak periods.

But Public Transport Users Association spokesman Daniel Bowen said building more accessible stops and trams would better enhance the network - particularly for passengers going to hospitals.

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