

A Fair Ride

An Investigation into the Fare Anomalies
of the myki Ticketing System in the
Latrobe City LGA

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Executive Summary

Equal access to affordable public transport is an important indicator of an equitable society. The fare structure that a public transport network utilises can have a significant impact on the amount commuters are paying to access their public transport network. Moreover, fare structures can create inequitable outcomes for commuters.

This report examines the case of the Latrobe City Local Government Area (LGA) and its residents' access to the myki public transport system. Fare anomalies in Latrobe's myki ticketing system have been reported, with the result being that local commuters are paying more to utilise their public transport network. This report uses publicly available data to analyse the extent to which these anomalies exist and to assess the impact that these anomalies are having on local commuters.

Based on the findings of this report, it is clear that there are some fare anomalies in Latrobe that are the result of the zone-based fare structure of the myki ticketing system. To assist Latrobe commuters in getting more equitable public transport outcomes, this report recommends the following:

1. The Department of Transport conduct an inquiry into fare anomalies in the myki ticketing system. This inquiry would provide a comprehensive analysis of the extent to which fare anomalies exist across the entire myki public transport system, while also providing costed recommendations about how to alleviate these anomalies.
2. Public Transport Victoria (PTV) conduct cost analyses of implementing changes to the myki ticketing system in Latrobe. These changes would include student access to the Regional Student Pass and free weekend travel for eligible commuters across the entire myki network.

Implementation of both of these recommendations would assist in alleviating poor public transport outcomes in Latrobe while addressing wider fare anomalies across the myki ticketing system.

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Glossary

Local Government Area (LGA) - Defined by the Victorian Electoral Commission and refers to the boundaries of the 79 local councils in Victoria.¹ Each LGA is governed by a local council which provides administrative functions to the local population. The LGA that represents residents of the Latrobe region is the Latrobe City LGA.²

Department of Transport - Created on July 1 2019 under relevant statutory instruments under the Transport Integration Act 2010 and the Public Administration Act 2004.³ The ticketing and fare conditions of Victoria's public transport system are set by the Department of Transport under the brand name of Public Transport Victoria.⁴

Public Transport Victoria (PTV) - Public Transport Victoria is the brand name for public transport operated in Victoria. It was previously a statutory authority that was responsible for providing, coordinating and promoting public transport across the state. However, as of July 1 2019, the statutory functions of PTV were transferred to the Department of Transport.⁵

myki - The ticketing system that PTV utilises to collect fares across Victoria's public transport network. myki also refers to the smart-card that allows users to access this network by paying a monetary amount that has been loaded onto their smart-card.⁶

¹ "Local Council Profiles," Victorian Electoral Commission, 2019, <https://www.vec.vic.gov.au/ElectoralBoundaries/CouncilProfiles.html>.

² "Latrobe Profile," Victorian Electoral Commission, 2014, <https://www.vec.vic.gov.au/ElectoralBoundaries/LatrobeProfile.html>.

³ "Governance," Department of Transport, 2020, <https://transport.vic.gov.au/about/governance>.

⁴ "Fees, Fines and Charges," Department of Transport, 2020, <https://transport.vic.gov.au/about/fees-fines-and-charges>.

⁵ "Our Role," Public Transport Victoria, 2020, <https://www.ptv.vic.gov.au/footer/about-ptv/our-role-and-governance/>.

⁶ "myki," Public Transport Victoria, 2020, <https://www.ptv.vic.gov.au/tickets/myki/>.

1. Introduction

Affordable public transport provides economic and social benefits to society.⁷ These benefits include: access to employment and services, increased social cohesion and improved health outcomes.⁸ However, access to affordable public transport is not distributed evenly across Victoria.

This is particularly the case in Latrobe, where a number of fare anomalies result in local commuters paying more than their regional and metropolitan counterparts to travel similar or higher distances. These inequitable outcomes are a result of the zone-based fare structure of PTV network.

1.1 Aim of Report

This report will provide an overview of the fare anomalies in the cost structure of the myki ticketing system in Latrobe. In outlining these anomalies, this report will evaluate:

- The benefits of access to affordable public transport.
- The zone-based fare structure of the myki ticketing system.
- How fares are calculated in the myki ticketing system.
- The cost of utilising the myki public transport system in Latrobe.
- The impact of this system on Latrobe commuters.

1.2 Method and Structure

This report primarily utilises publicly available data from PTV to outline how the myki ticketing system operates. In particular, this report utilises PTV's online fare calculator, fare information from the PTV website and PTV's Victorian Ticketing Conditions to compare fares

⁷ Tourism and Transport Forum, *The Benefits of Public Transport* (Sydney, Australia: Tourism and Transport Forum, 2010), 1, <https://www.ttf.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/TTF-The-Benefits-Of-Public-Transport-2010.pdf>.

⁸ Tourism and Transport Forum, *The Benefits of Public Transport*, 2-4.

across different localities in Victoria. Comparisons will primarily be made to the regional LGAs of Ballarat City, Greater Bendigo and Greater Geelong. Public transport literature is also examined to provide background context to and analysis of the issues raised in this report.

Various sets of data have been utilised to construct a community profile of Latrobe, with levels of disadvantage and public transport outcomes being key indicators. Interviews have also been conducted with Latrobe residents to provide a community perspective on the issues outlined in this report.

1.3 Limitations

The primary limitation of this report was a lack of community awareness about the fare anomalies in Latrobe. Therefore, assessing the impact of these anomalies on Latrobe commuters was difficult.

There is also a gap in the available PTV data and public transport literature regarding how fare anomalies in zone-based fare structures can create inequitable outcomes for commuters. This is particularly the case where micro-data of specific localities is unavailable.

COVID-19 restrictions on movement prevented this data from being collected via survey. These restrictions also prevented a first-hand assessment of the myki public transport system in Latrobe. Therefore, this report is based on publicly available data.

2. Latrobe Community Profile

Latrobe constitutes a regional hub made up of the population centres of Traralgon, Moe, Morwell and several other towns. It is the principle service centre for the Gippsland region and includes the regional headquarters for significant government and private organisations, and educational and health services.⁹ Latrobe is the primary generator of Victoria’s electricity, with other major industries being coal mining, timber processing, paper manufacturing and the provision of services to the Gippsland region.

2.1 Level of Disadvantage in Latrobe

When compared to other regional hubs such as Ballarat, Bendigo and Geelong, economic and social indicators are less consistent in Latrobe. In particular, Latrobe has relatively poor economic and social outcomes compared to the Victorian average.¹⁰ For example, Latrobe is the seventh most disadvantaged LGA in Victoria according to the SEIFA ISRAD indicator, with high disadvantage being present at the SA1 level in Moe, Morwell and Traralgon.¹¹ The ‘Dropping Off The Edge’ Index also considers these three towns as among the most disadvantaged locations in Victoria, with Morwell being within the Band 1 of locations that experience the most severe disadvantage.¹² This level of disadvantage correlates with Latrobe having poor youth engagement, population health and economic outcomes.¹³

The higher relative disadvantage in Latrobe is partly driven by longer term structural adjustment associated with the decline of key industries in the region, including mining, electricity and gas services.¹⁴ The structure of the economy in Latrobe and its reliance on

⁹ “Latrobe City,” Know Your Council, 2015, <https://knowyourcouncil.vic.gov.au/councils/latrobe>.

¹⁰ Aither, *Gippsland Regional Profile : An Analysis of Regional Strengths and Challenges* (Melbourne, Australia: Aither Pty Ltd., 2019), 16, <https://www.infrastructurevictoria.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Aither-Gippsland-Regional-Profile-March-2019.pdf>.

¹¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Census of Population and Housing: Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA), Australia*, Cat. no. 2033.0.55.001 (Canberra, ACT, 2018), <https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/DetailsPage/2033.0.55.0012016?OpenDocument>.

¹² “Dropping off the Edge 2015,” Jesuit Social Services and Catholic Services Australia, 2015, <https://dote.org.au/findings/victoria/>.

¹³ Aither, *Gippsland Regional Profile*, 17.

¹⁴ *Ibid*, 56-57.

coal mining and electricity generation means it is exposed to drivers of change affecting these key industries.¹⁵ There are a number of poor social outcomes in the region, such as high levels of unemployment, which may worsen as a result of these structural changes.¹⁶

These drivers of change have also contributed to out-migration in and around Latrobe.¹⁷ Despite Victoria's population set to increase by approximately 1.5% per annum until 2056, Latrobe is only set to experience an average growth rate of 0.6% per annum.¹⁸ When compared to other regional hubs such as Ballarat, Bendigo and Geelong, the rate of growth in Latrobe is significantly less.¹⁹ These factors suggest that Latrobe is not experiencing the economic development and population growth that other regional hubs are. Furthermore, many residents of Latrobe are facing higher levels of disadvantage than their counterparts in these regional hubs.

2.2 Access to and Use of Public Transport in Latrobe

Access to public transport across the Gippsland region is substantially lower than the State average.²⁰ When referring to access to public transport in Victoria, it is generally defined as the percentage of the population that lives within 400 metres of a bus and/or tram stop and/or 800 metres of a train station.²¹ While Latrobe has the highest levels of access across the region, it is still below the Victorian average. Figure 1 highlights the relative lack of

¹⁵ ABC Gippsland, "Hazelwood closure: Morwell residents nervous about a future without power plant," *ABC News*, November 3, 2016. <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2016-11-03/hazelwood-closure-morwell-community-reaction/7942220>.

¹⁶ "Economy Profile," Latrobe City Council, 2019, <https://app.remplan.com.au/latrobe/economy/trends/unemployment>. Unemployment in Latrobe has varied between 11.2% and 5.1% over the past four years.

¹⁷ Aither, *Gippsland Regional Profile*, 25.

¹⁸ The Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning, *Victoria in the Future 2019 : Population Projections 2016 to 2056* (Melbourne, Victoria, 2019), 13-14, https://www.planning.vic.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0032/332996/Victoria_in_Future_2019.pdf.

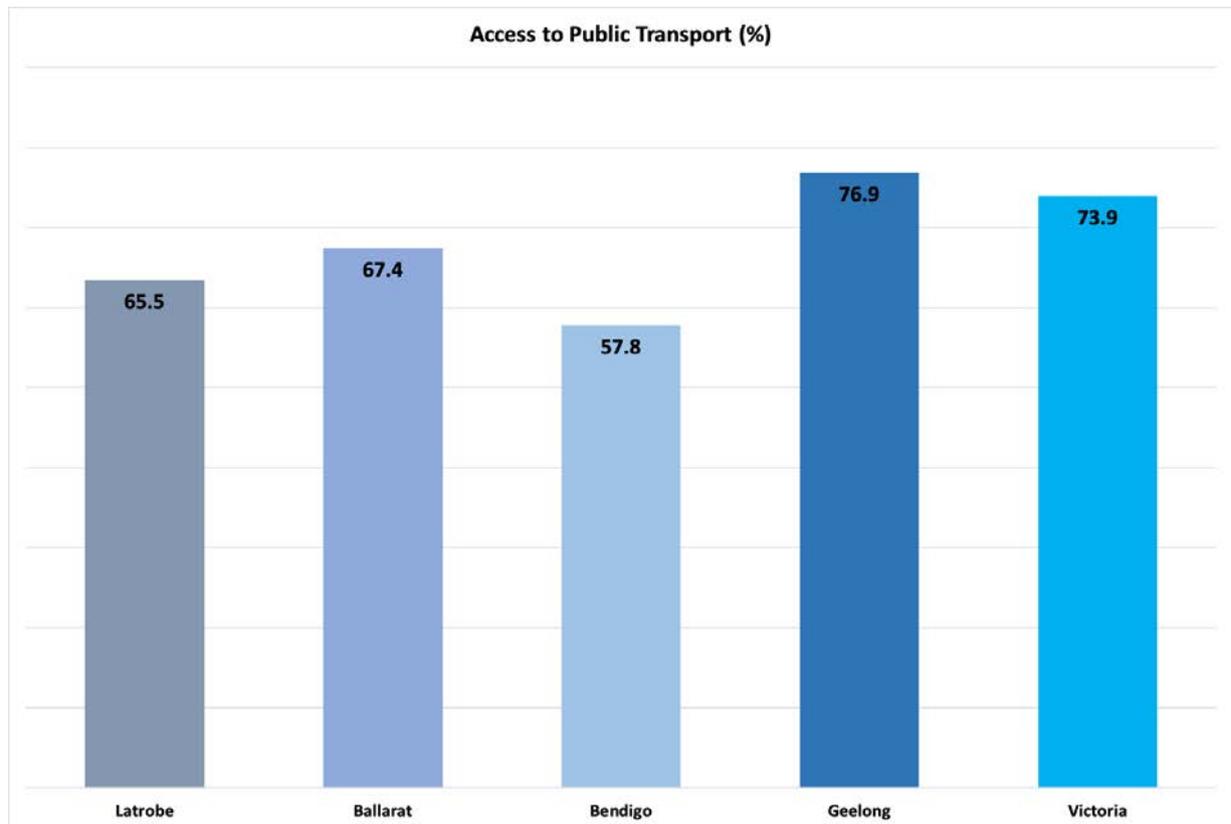
¹⁹ *Victoria in the Future 2019*, 13-14. Ballarat is set to experience 1.7% growth per annum, Bendigo 1.6% per annum and Geelong 2% per annum.

²⁰ Department of Health and Human Services, *Geographical Profiles and Planning Products* (Melbourne, Victoria, 2015) <https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/about/reporting-planning-data/gis-and-planning-products/geographical-profiles>.

²¹ Infrastructure Australia, *Urban Transport Strategy: December 2013* (Canberra, ACT, 2013), 29, https://www.infrastructureaustralia.gov.au/sites/default/files/2019-06/infrastructureaus_rep_urbanstrategy.pdf.

access to public transport that Latrobe residents have when compared to other regional LGAs and Victoria at large.

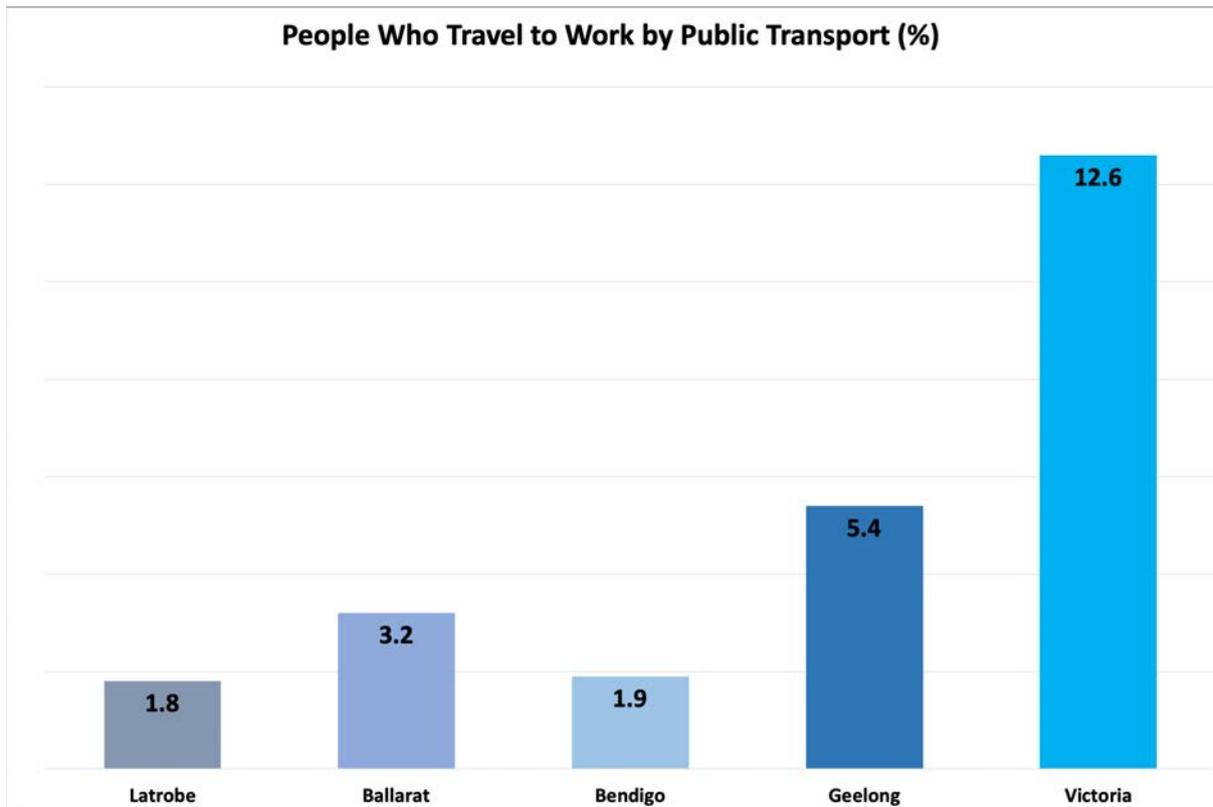
Figure 1: Access to Public Transport Across Regional LGAs²²



Rates of use of public transport are also lower in Latrobe and other regional LGAs than across Victoria at large. Figure 2 highlights the lower relative use of public transport to travel to work in Latrobe.

²² *Geographical Profiles and Planning Products*. Compiled by author.

Figure 2: Percentage of People Who Travel to Work by Public Transport Across Regional LGAs²³



These figures demonstrate that Latrobe has low rates of access to and usage of public transport when compared to similar regional centres and the Victorian average. However, these figures also suggest that these indicators are generally lower across regional Victoria.

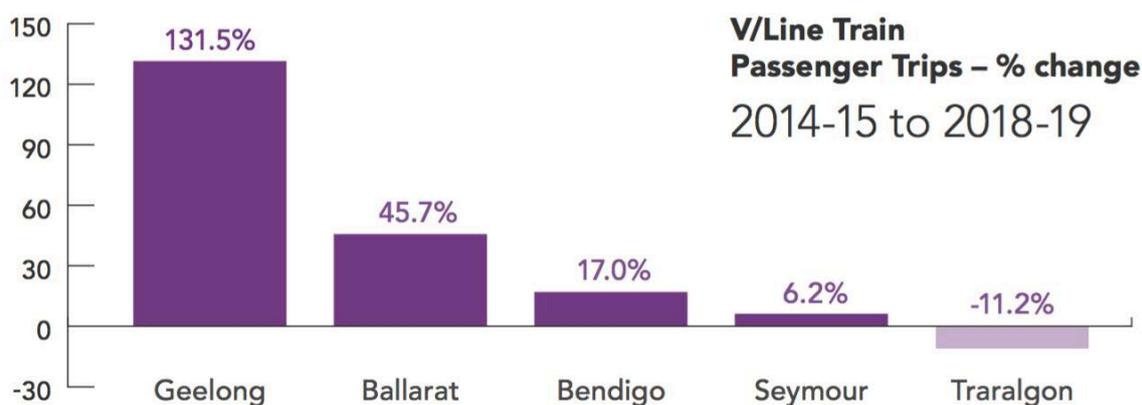
Despite these relatively low rates of public transport access and usage across regional Victoria, V/line patronage has more than doubled in the last decade.²⁴ However, according to the most recent V/Line Annual Report, significant patronage was recorded across all major regional lines except for the Gippsland line, which recorded a significant decrease in

²³ Australian Bureau of Statistics, *2016 Census Quickstats* (Canberra, ACT, 2019), <https://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/D3310114.nsf/Home/2016%20QuickStats>. Compiled by author.

²⁴ Rail Futures Institute, *Introducing InterCity: How Regional Rail Can Re-Balance Population Growth and Create a "State of Cities" in Victoria* (Melbourne, Victoria, 2016), 6, <https://cur.org.au/cms/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/160804-regional-rail-paper-v14-1-11-final-for-printing-1.pdf>.

patronage.²⁵ Figure 3 outlines the percentage increase of patronage across the Geelong, Ballarat, Bendigo and Seymour lines, and the decrease in patronage on the Gippsland line - referred to here as Traralgon.

Figure 3: Change in Patronage Across V/Line Train Passenger Trips 2014-15 to 2018-19²⁶



When considered alongside Figures 1 and 2, Figure 3 suggests that not only are rates of access to and use of public transport lower in Latrobe, but that V/Line use is decreasing in Latrobe.²⁷ The combination of these statistics outline how Latrobe has poorer public transport outcomes than other regional hubs and Victoria at large. This can contribute to the existing levels of disadvantage in areas like Latrobe that have poor social and economic indicators.

²⁵ V/Line Corporation, *Annual Report 2018-2019* (Melbourne, Victoria, 2019), 12, <https://corporate.vline.com.au/getattachment/78d7f8ef-8892-4a48-93ef-df296f7c749a/Annual-Report-2018-19>.

²⁶ V/Line Corporation, *Annual Report 2018-2019*, 12.

²⁷ *Ibid*, 13.

3. The Benefits of Affordable Public Transport

Modern economic and social life is dependent upon the availability of reliable, accessible and affordable forms of transport.²⁸ This availability extends to public transport, with access to affordable public transport having economic and health benefits for regional centres such as Latrobe.

3.1 The Benefits of Public Transport on Regional Development

Infrastructure Victoria describes the transport system as being about connectivity, with education, health and essential services being reliant on Victoria's transport network.²⁹ The connectivity that transport networks foster has a limited but important role in alleviating regional disadvantage by improving access to economic resources and services, to education and health resources, and to social capital building resources.³⁰

Geographic disadvantage is particularly pronounced in regional centres such as Latrobe, with many in regional Victoria lacking access to services and resources because of distance.³¹ This geographic disadvantage compounds poor outcomes for those already living in poverty, and some regional areas may remain disadvantaged because of their lack of access to resources and increasing rates of out-migration.³²

Access to affordable public transport can help to alleviate this by offering access to services and resources that would otherwise be inaccessible.³³ Rail in particular provides an effective

²⁸ Centre for Primary Health Care and Equity, *A Review of the Evidence of the Impact of Public Transport on Population Health in Australia* (Sydney, New South Wales, 2009), 4, http://hiaconnect.edu.au/old/files/Impact_of_Public_Transport_on%20Health_in_Australia.pdf.

²⁹ Infrastructure Australia, *Victoria's 30-Year Infrastructure Strategy* (Victoria, Melbourne, 2016), 42, https://www.infrastructurevictoria.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/IV_30_Year_Strategy_WEB_V2.pdf.

³⁰ Freelance Strategy, *The Role of Infrastructure in Addressing Regional Disadvantage* (Victoria, Melbourne, 2019), 4-5, https://www.infrastructurevictoria.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Background-paper_The-role-of-infrastructure-in-addressing-regional-disadvantage.pdf.

³¹ Freelance Strategy, *The Role of Infrastructure*, 9.

³² *Ibid*, 14.

³³ Christoffel Venter, "Transport Expenditure and Affordability: The Cost of Being Mobile," *Development Southern Africa* 28, no. 1 (2011): 5, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/0376835X.2011.545174>.

tool for redirecting population growth and services to regional centres.³⁴ Access to a regional rail network that is affordable and reliable can provide access to affordable housing and jobs and help to distribute economic and social benefits across regional Victoria.³⁵

The role of public transport becomes very important for regional centres experiencing economic transition such as Latrobe, with people moving to jobs that may be in different locations.³⁶ As jobs in the energy sector decline in Latrobe, employees may need to secure jobs in other industries in the broader Gippsland region or in metropolitan Melbourne. To gain access to these jobs, an affordable and reliable public transport service is essential.³⁷

3.2 The Benefits of Public Transport on Health and Well-Being

Access to affordable public transport is also vital in enabling people and communities to build and maintain social networks, with this being especially important in regional centres such as Latrobe.³⁸ The potential health benefits of public transport are created through the access it provides to the resources and services needed for good health.³⁹ Public transport is also a key factor in social inclusion, with this being defined as the ability of an individual to access economic and employment opportunities; education and healthcare services; and leisure, sporting and social activities.⁴⁰

Most public transport is provided in central business district areas and generally benefits higher income earners more than lower income earners.⁴¹ In contrast, low-income earners, the unemployed, the elderly and people with a disability are particularly at risk of social

³⁴ Rail Futures Institute, *Introducing InterCity*, 6.

³⁵ *Ibid*, 6.

³⁶ Committee for Gippsland, *Our Region Our Future : Securing an Economic Future for Gippsland and Latrobe Valley*, (Warragul, Victoria, 2016), 82, <https://www.committeeforgippsland.com.au/policy-and-research/>.

³⁷ *Ibid*.

³⁸ Centre for Primary Health Care and Equity, *A Review of the Evidence of the Impact of Public Transport*, 4.

³⁹ *Ibid*, 11.

⁴⁰ Tourism and Transport Forum, *The Benefits of Public Transport*, 3.

⁴¹ John B. Cox, "Public Transport Trends - Efficiency and Equity Considerations," *Road and Transport Research* 16, no.3 (2007): 41-55.

isolation as a result of poor transport options.⁴² Because they are more likely to live in regional areas, many of these groups have limited access to affordable public transport.⁴³

Unequal access to public transport services thus exacerbates social exclusion.⁴⁴ Improving access to affordable public transport is necessary to achieve social equality, as this access ultimately leads to increased access to employment, education, health and community services.⁴⁵

These sentiments were reflected in an interview conducted with the Latrobe City Health Advocate, Jane Anderson.⁴⁶ Regarding how public transport and determinants of health are related, Ms Anderson suggested that there is a very strong link between accessing affordable public transport and health and well-being outcomes.⁴⁷ According to Ms Anderson, access to affordable public transport is 'vitally important for people to be active participants in society' and that this is especially the case in a disadvantaged area such as Latrobe.⁴⁸

'Public transport gives people the opportunity to be involved in society.'

Jane Anderson.⁴⁹

⁴² Tourism and Transport Forum, *The Benefits of Public Transport*, 3.

⁴³ James S. Corcoran, E.L. James and J.M. Ellis, "Do Elderly Victorians in Rural Areas Have Access to Public Transport?" *Road and Transport Research* 14, no. 1 (2005): 38-43.

⁴⁴ Tourism and Transport Forum, *The Benefits of Public Transport*, 4.

⁴⁵ Christoffel Venter, "Transport Expenditure and Affordability: The Cost of Being Mobile," *Development Southern Africa* 28, no. 1 (2011): 2, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/0376835X.2011.545174>.

⁴⁶ Jane Anderson, interviewed by Jack Hunt (Melbourne, Victoria, 01 May, 2020). Ms Anderson's role is to act as an advocate to the Victorian Government for the health and well-being of Latrobe residents. She conducts various meetings with community members and has produced a variety of reports about the determinants of health in Latrobe.

⁴⁷ Anderson, Interview.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

Therefore, economic and health determinants are both dependent on public transport networks in regional Victoria. When considering that Latrobe is a regional area with lower social and economic indicators, it is clear that any discrepancies in the cost of public transport will generally disadvantage Latrobe commuters more than commuters in other parts of the State.

4. The Cost Structure of the myki Public Transport System

An explanation of the general myki ticketing system will be provided before discussing the cost structure of the myki public transport system in Latrobe.

4.1 Origin of the myki Ticketing System

In 2005, the Victorian Government entered into a contract to develop a smartcard public transport ticketing system to replace the Metcard system. This resulted in the creation of the myki ticketing system.⁵⁰ Figure 4 shows the myki smart card that is used when accessing the public transport network.

Figure 4: myki Smart Card⁵¹



The myki ticketing system uses smart-card technology for network access. These myki cards are used to pay for travel on public transport, with the smart-card technology enabling a money value to be stored on the card. Public transport users ‘top up’ with myki money, with

⁵⁰ Victorian Auditor General, *Operational Effectiveness of the myki Ticketing System* (Melbourne, Victoria, 2015), 2, <https://www.audit.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/20150610-myki.pdf>.

⁵¹ “myki,” Metro Trains Melbourne, 2020, <https://www.metrotrains.com.au/tickets-2/>.

a topped-up myki providing users with a valid ticket that allows them to travel around the network.⁵²

After a user has ‘touched on’ and ‘touched off’ at the beginning and end of their journey, the myki system automatically calculates the cost of the user’s trip and deducts the lowest fare for the travel taken.⁵³ This fare validation is done by a device at a station, stop or onboard a bus or tram. These devices read and translate information stored on smart cards and transmit information to and from the myki office.⁵⁴

4.2 The Cost Structure of the myki Ticketing System

To calculate the cost of a myki fare, the myki ticketing system calculates both the number of zones travelled through by the user and the time taken to complete the journey. The amount a customer will be charged also depends on the type of myki used and whether any concessions or entitlements have been applied.⁵⁵

4.2.1 Zone-Based Fare Structures

The global trend for fare structures is toward simplification, with an increasing number of public transport networks moving towards zone-based structures, flat fare structures and free fare structures.⁵⁶ Victoria is no exception to this trend, with the myki ticketing system utilising a zone-based fare structure, while incorporating some flat fares and free fares.⁵⁷

⁵² Public Transport Victoria, *Annual Report 2018-2019* (Melbourne, Victoria, 2019), 22, https://www.ptv.vic.gov.au/assets/default-site/footer/data-and-reporting/annual-report/6b8c2cff5a/PTVH4043-Annual_Report_2019-A4-v1_ONLINE.pdf.

⁵³ Ibid, 22.

⁵⁴ Victorian Auditor General, *Operational Effectiveness of the myki Ticketing System*, 2.

⁵⁵ Public Transport Victoria, *Victorian Fares and Ticketing Conditions 2020* (Melbourne, Victoria, 2020), <https://www.ptv.vic.gov.au/footer/legal-and-policies/victorian-fares-and-ticketing-manual/>.

⁵⁶ Tourism and Transport Forum, *Ticket to Ride: Reforming Fares and Ticketing for Sustainable Public Transport* (Sydney, Australia: Tourism and Transport Forum, 2016), 16, <https://www.ttf.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/TTF-Ticket-to-Ride-Fare-and-ticketing-Paper.pdf>.

⁵⁷ Tourism and Transport Forum, *Ticket to Ride*, 58.

Zone-based ticketing systems charge commuters based on the number of geographical zones traversed.⁵⁸ These structures impose a progressively stronger relationship between distance travelled and fare levels, with travel across a larger number of zones resulting in a higher fare.⁵⁹ Each train station, bus stop and tram stop exist within a particular zone.

There are 13 zones throughout the myki network. Metropolitan train, bus and tram services all run within Zones 1 and 2, with PTV defining the metropolitan area as Melbourne and its suburbs.⁶⁰ The radius of Zone 1 covers approximately 10-15km, while the radius of Zone 2 is approximately 50km.⁶¹ Within these metropolitan zones, there are three fare groups: Free Tram Zone, Zone 1+2 and Zone 2 only.⁶²

Regional train and bus services run between Zones 3 and 13, with each subsequent zone between Zones 3 and 13 being approximately 10km apart.⁶³ Figure 5 shows the regional train network and the corresponding zones of each train station.

⁵⁸ "Zones," Public Transport Victoria, 2020, <https://www.ptv.vic.gov.au/tickets/fares/zones/>.

⁵⁹ Tourism and Transport Forum, *Ticket to Ride*, 13.

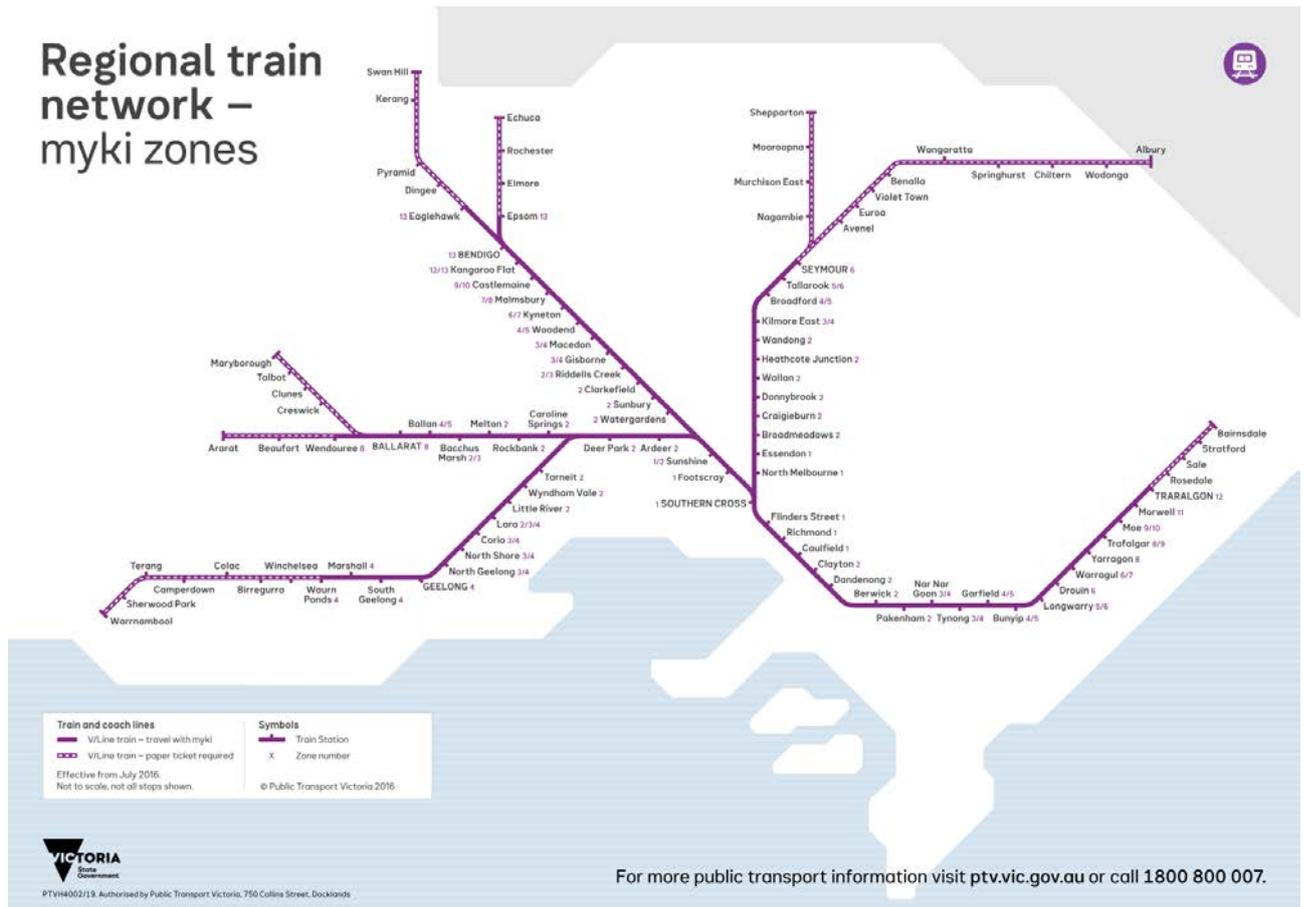
⁶⁰ "Zones."

⁶¹ Metrolinx, *Approach to Fares Around the World* (Toronto, Ontario, 2015), 15, http://www.metrolinx.com/en/regionalplanning/fareintegration/20150302_Approach_to_Fares_EN.pdf.

⁶² "Metropolitan Fares," Public Transport Victoria, 2020, <https://www.ptv.vic.gov.au/tickets/fares/metropolitan-fares/>.

⁶³ "Regional Fares," Public Transport Victoria, 2020, <https://www.ptv.vic.gov.au/tickets/fares/regional-fares/>.

Figure 5: Regional Train Network – myki Zones⁶⁴



Zone-based structures are often chosen for their simplicity, with commuters being able to easily understand exactly how much their commute is going to cost them.⁶⁵ Confusion around fare structure can be a barrier to public transport use, and a simplified zone-based fare structure can create a greater willingness to travel and thus increase public transport patronage.⁶⁶

However, zone-based fare structures can create anomalies that result in higher fares depending on the geographical area in which a commuter completes their journey.⁶⁷ For

⁶⁴ “Regional Myki Zones,” Public Transport Victoria, 2020, <https://www.ptv.vic.gov.au/tickets/fares/zones/regional-myki-zones/>.

⁶⁵ “Policies: Fare Reform,” Public Transport Users Association, 2017, <https://www.ptua.org.au/policy/fares/>.

⁶⁶ Tourism and Transport Forum, *Ticket to Ride*, 17.

⁶⁷ Infrastructure Australia, *Five-Year Focus : Immediate Actions to Tackle Congestion* (Victoria, Melbourne, 2018), 44, <https://www.infrastructurevictoria.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Five-year-focus-Immediate-actions-to-tackle-congestion-April-2018.pdf>.

example, within the current zone-based fare structure, regional commuters pay for more per kilometre than metropolitan commuters.⁶⁸

This trend is exacerbated in LGAs such as Latrobe which cover a large geographical distance and are subject to multiple zoning boundaries. Zone-based structures can also create anomalies where travelling a set distance through some zones is cheaper or more expensive than travelling the same distance through other zones.⁶⁹ The result is a system that is user friendly, but that can create inequitable outcomes depending on where the commuter begins and ends their journey.

4.2.2 myki Money

In addition to the zones travelled through, the type of myki ticket used by a commuter will affect the cost of their fare. There are two fare types that determine the amount a user will be charged: a single trip and a daily fare cap. The maximum fare for a single trip is the default 2-hour fare for the zones that have been travelled in. When a user has made multiple trips in one day, a daily fare cap is introduced at a fixed price.⁷⁰

Both of these costs have been predetermined by PTV and are automatically applied when touching off at the user's destination. Figure 6 provides an example of the costs for a single trip and a daily fare cap on V/Line services during peak travel times.

⁶⁸ "Policies: Fare Reform."; Public Transport Users Association, email correspondence with author, 22 May, 2020.

⁶⁹ Infrastructure Victoria, *Good Move : Fixing Transport Congestion* (Melbourne, Victoria, 2020), 20, <https://www.infrastructurevictoria.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Good-Move-fixing-transport-congestion-Infrastructure-Victoria.pdf>.

⁷⁰ "Metropolitan Fares."

Figure 6: V/Line Commuter Train Fares for Travel To/From Zone 1 (Peak Fare)⁷¹

Travel between Zone 1 and	myki 2 hour PEAK		myki Daily PEAK	
	Full Fare	Concession	Full Fare	Concession
Zone 2	\$4.50	\$2.25	\$9.00	\$4.40
Zone 3	\$12.20	\$6.10	\$24.40	\$12.20
Zone 4	\$13.60	\$6.60	\$27.20	\$13.60
Zone 5	\$16.00	\$8.00	\$32.00	\$16.00
Zone 6	\$18.20	\$9.10	\$36.40	\$18.20
Zone 7	\$19.80	\$9.90	\$39.60	\$19.80
Zone 8	\$22.60	\$11.30	\$45.20	\$22.60
Zone 9	\$24.80	\$12.40	\$49.60	\$24.80
Zone 10	\$26.80	\$13.40	\$53.60	\$26.80
Zone 11	\$29.40	\$14.70	\$58.80	\$29.40
Zone 12	\$31.80	\$15.90	\$63.60	\$31.80
Zone 13	\$34.00	\$17.00	\$68.00	\$34.00

4.2.3 myki Pass

For commuters who travel regularly, a myki Pass can be purchased. While myki Money will automatically be deducted based on the user’s journey, a myki Pass is preloaded with a set number of days’ worth of travel within a specified set of zones. Figure 7 provides an example of the myki Pass cost options for commuters using a V/Line service.

⁷¹ “Regional Fares.”

Figure 7: myki Pass V/Line Fares for Travel To/From Zone 1⁷²

Travel between Zone 1 and	7 Day myki Pass		28-325* Day myki Pass (per day)	
	Full Fare	Concession	Full Fare	Concession
Zone 2	\$45.00	\$22.50	\$5.40	\$2.70
Zone 3	\$81.40	\$40.70	\$9.62	\$4.81
Zone 4	\$90.60	\$45.30	\$10.68	\$5.34
Zone 5	\$98.80	\$49.40	\$11.14	\$5.57
Zone 6	\$106.60	\$53.30	\$11.70	\$5.85
Zone 7	\$113.60	\$56.80	\$12.00	\$6.00
Zone 8	\$124.60	\$62.30	\$12.66	\$6.33
Zone 9	\$134.40	\$67.20	\$12.86	\$6.43
Zone 10	\$143.20	\$71.60	\$13.38	\$6.69
Zone 11	\$152.40	\$76.20	\$13.84	\$6.92
Zone 12	\$161.80	\$80.90	\$14.28	\$7.14
Zone 13	\$170.20	\$85.10	\$14.64	\$7.32

4.2.4 Bus Fares

The above calculations also extend to the metropolitan and regional bus networks. However, bus fares are generally cheaper than equivalent train services in metropolitan Melbourne and regional Victoria. Figure 8 shows the default 2-hour fare and daily pass fare for regional buses travelling across within or across two zones.

⁷² Ibid.

Figure 8: myki Pass Regional Bus Fares for Travel Within 1 or 2 Zones⁷³

Zones	myki 2 Hour		myki Daily	
	Full Fare	Concession	Full Fare	Concession
Single Zone	\$2.40	\$1.20	\$4.80	\$2.40
Two Zones	\$3.60	\$1.80	\$7.20	\$3.60

4.2.5 Concessions and Entitlements

There are also a variety of concessions available which allow eligible customers to travel on public transport in Victoria at a decreased fare. Categories relevant to this report include students, seniors and people on a disability pension. While the above calculations still apply, concession myki holders pay only 50 per cent of the full fare.⁷⁴

There are also other benefits available to some commuters. PTV provides free weekend travel entitlements for Victorian Seniors Card holders, Disability Support Pensioners, Carer Payment recipients and Victorian Carer Card holders.⁷⁵ No fares are charged for journeys made by eligible customers travelling in one or two consecutive zones. However, if a commuter is entitled to free weekend travel in two consecutive zones and travels in more than two zones, the fare for the entire journey will be charged.⁷⁶

A Victorian Student Pass and Regional Student Pass is also available for primary and secondary school students who use the myki network to get to and from school. These student passes provide unlimited travel for eligible students on all public transport services within the zones of validity until the expiry of the pass.⁷⁷ Figure 9 outlines the student

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Public Transport Victoria, *Victorian Fares and Ticketing Conditions*, 15.

⁷⁵ Ibid, 27-28.

⁷⁶ Ibid, 28.

⁷⁷ Ibid, 46-47.

passes that are available to metropolitan students and students from certain regional centres.

Figure 9: Victorian and Regional Student Pass Prices and Zones⁷⁸

Metro and Regional city transit student passes	Half-year	Year
Victorian Student Pass	322.00	617.00
Ballarat Student Pass (Zones 8/9)	177.00	353.00
Bendigo Student Pass (Zone 13)	118.00	235.00
Geelong Student Pass (Zones 4/5)	177.00	353.00

⁷⁸ Ibid, 106.

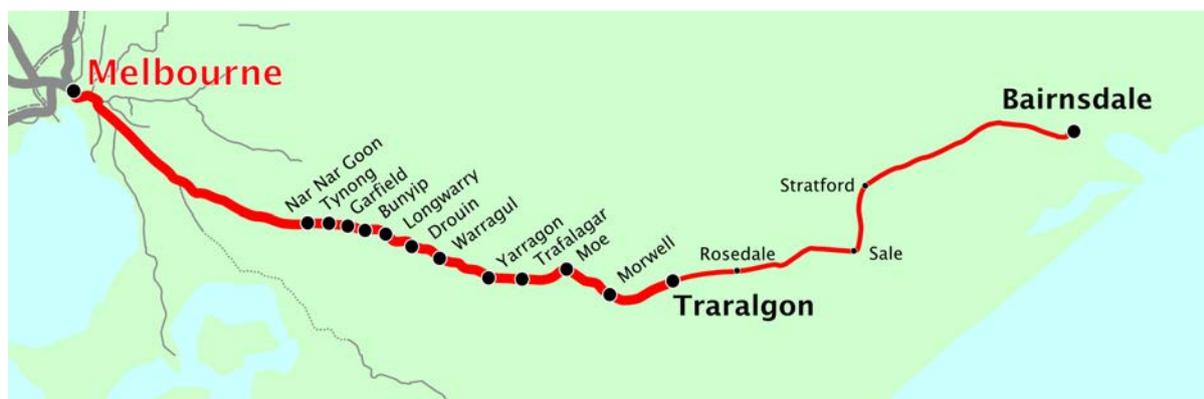
5. The Cost Structure of myki in the Latrobe City LGA

The fare structure described in the above section applies throughout Latrobe. However, there are some anomalies in the zone-based structure of this system that results in Latrobe commuters paying more per kilometre travelled than their regional counterparts in Ballarat, Bendigo and Geelong. Latrobe commuters also face some exemptions of benefits that are otherwise available to commuters from these regional centres.

5.1 The Gippsland Line

Latrobe is serviced by the Gippsland train line. The Gippsland train line is a regional passenger service operated by V/Line which connects the wider Gippsland region with metropolitan Melbourne. Figure 10 shows the regional stations on the Gippsland train line in relation to Melbourne.

Figure 10: Regional Stations on the Gippsland Line⁷⁹



Of the 12 regional train stations on the Gippsland line, three are located within Latrobe: Traralgon station in Zone 12, Morwell station in Zone 11 and Moe station in Zones 9 and 10. Figure 6 shows the costs for travelling to and from these stations and their respective zones

⁷⁹ "Gippsland V/Line Rail Service," Wikipedia, 2019, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gippsland_V/Line_rail_service.

during peak times, while Figure 11 shows the costs for travelling to and from these stations and their respective zones during off-peak times.

Figure 11: V/Line Commuter Train Fares for Travel To/From Zone 1 (Off-Peak Fare)⁸⁰

Travel between Zone 1 and	myki 2 hour OFF-PEAK		myki Daily OFF-PEAK	
	Full Fare	Concession	Full Fare	Concession
Zone 2	\$4.50	\$2.25	\$9.00	\$4.50
Zone 3	\$8.54	\$4.27	\$17.08	\$8.54
Zone 4	\$9.52	\$4.76	\$19.04	\$9.52
Zone 5	\$11.20	\$5.60	\$22.40	\$11.20
Zone 6	\$12.74	\$6.37	\$25.48	\$12.74
Zone 7	\$13.86	\$6.93	\$27.72	\$13.86
Zone 8	\$15.82	\$7.91	\$31.64	\$15.82
Zone 9	\$17.36	\$8.68	\$34.72	\$17.36
Zone 10	\$18.76	\$9.38	\$37.52	\$18.76
Zone 11	\$20.58	\$10.29	\$41.16	\$20.58
Zone 12	\$22.26	\$11.13	\$44.52	\$22.26
Zone 13	\$23.80	\$11.90	\$47.60	\$23.80

5.2 Anomalies of myki’s Zone-Based Fare Structure in Latrobe

While the fare structure of the myki ticketing system in Latrobe appears consistent with other regional centres in Victoria, there are anomalies in how much Latrobe commuters are being charged compared to commuters in other regional centres. These anomalies relate to the distance travelled compared to the cost of the journey. There are instances of Gippsland line commuters from Latrobe travelling a similar or lesser distance than their counterparts on the Ballarat, Bendigo, Geelong and Seymour lines, but being charged a higher fare.

⁸⁰ “Regional Fares.”

Table 1 outlines various journeys on the aforementioned services, with the distance travelled and the cost of the journey compared across each service. These calculations are based on the daily rate of a commuter using a full fare myki Pass.

Table 1: Journey Distance and Accompanying Fares on Gippsland, Ballarat, Bendigo, Seymour and Geelong V/Line Train Services.⁸¹

Journey From	Journey To	Km's	Cost
Traralgon (Zone 12)	Moe (Zone 10)	27.8	\$5.30 per day
Ballan (Zone 4)	Sunshine (Zone 2)	67.2	\$5.30 per day
Kangaroo Flat (Zone 12)	Castlemaine (Zone 10)	31.9	\$5.30 per day
Seymour (Zone 6)	Kilmore East (Zone 4)	35.3	\$5.30 per day
Waurin Ponds (Zone 4)	Lara (Zone 4)	27.4	\$3.12 per day

These comparisons outline how the current zone-based ticketing system is disadvantaging Latrobe commuters. As demonstrated above, travel between Traralgon and Moe costs the same as travel between Ballan and Sunshine, Kangaroo Flat and Castlemaine, and Seymour and Kilmore East. When travelling between these respective stations, a commuter will travel across three zones and be subject to a fare. However, the distance between these stations is not consistent, and it is clear that Latrobe commuters travel a shorter distance while paying the same fare.

These discrepancies range from minimal to extreme. When compared to the aforementioned journeys on the Bendigo and Seymour lines, Latrobe commuters travel only

⁸¹ "Regional Fares.," "Line Guides," VICSIG, 2020, <https://vicsig.net/index.php?page=infrastructure§ion=lineguide>; Table 1 compiled by author using PTV's fare calculator and detailed Line Guide information.

marginally less distance and pay the same fare. Zone-based ticketing systems are imperfect in their zoning structure.⁸² This means that there will inevitably be some variation between journey distance across the same number of zones, as stations will not be the same distance between each other.

However, the fact that commuters on the Ballarat line can travel more than double the distance as commuters on the Gippsland line, yet pay the same fare, demonstrates how Latrobe commuters are being disadvantaged by the zone-based ticketing system that myki utilises.

Table 1 also demonstrates how Latrobe commuters pay more to travel almost the same distance as commuters in Geelong. This is evident as commuters on the Geelong line can travel approximately 27 kilometres within only one zone between Waurin Ponds and Lara, while commuters on the Gippsland line must travel across three zones to travel a similar distance between Traralgon and Moe. In both of these instances, commuters are travelling within a single LGA. This results in Latrobe commuters paying approximately \$2.18 more than Geelong commuters when travelling a similar distance of approximately 27 kilometres.

5.3 Anomalies in Free Weekend Travel Entitlements in Latrobe

These anomalies also apply to Latrobe commuters who utilise the free weekend travel entitlement.⁸³ The distance Latrobe commuters can travel for free is less than those in other regional LGAs and metropolitan Melbourne. Table 2 and 3 outline how far a commuter eligible for free weekend travel can travel for free compared to equivalent commuters from Ballarat, Bendigo, Geelong and metropolitan Melbourne. Table 2 refers to journeys made by train, while Table 3 refers to journeys made by bus.

⁸² Metrolinx, *Approach to Fares Around the World*, 15.

⁸³ Public Transport Victoria, *Victorian Fares and Ticketing Conditions*, 27-28.

Table 2: Free Weekend Travel Entitlements for Single Train Trip⁸⁴

Journey From	Journey To	Km's	Weekend Rate
Traralgon (Zone 12)	Morwell (Zone 11)	13.7	Free
Traralgon (Zone 12)	Moe (Zone 10)	27.8	\$1.89
Stony Point (Zone 2)	Bell (Zone 1)	85.8	Free
Waurm Ponds (Zone 4)	Lara (Zone 4)	27.4	Free

Table 3: Free Weekend Travel Entitlements for Single Bus Trip in LGA⁸⁵

Journey From	Journey To	Km's	Weekend Rate
Traralgon (Zone 12)	Morwell (Zone 11)	14	Free
Traralgon (Zone 12)	Moe (Zone 11)	28	\$1.89
Buningyong (Zone 8)	Creswick (Zone 9)	35	Free
Kangaroo Flat (Zone 12)	Huntly (Zone 13)	20	Free
Lara (Zone 4)	Torquay (Zone 5)	49	Free

Table 2 and 3 highlight the disparity between the distance eligible commuters from Latrobe can travel for free compared to commuters in other regional LGAs and metropolitan Melbourne. For example, Table 2 demonstrates that it is possible for an eligible commuter to travel over 85km for free on the metropolitan train network, while equivalent commuters in Latrobe can only travel approximately 14km for free before being charged for travelling over two consecutive zones.

⁸⁴ "Regional Fares."; "Line Guides."; Table 2 compiled by author using PTV's fare calculator and detailed Line Guide information.

⁸⁵ Public Transport Victoria, *Victorian Regional Bus Fares Supplement* (Melbourne, Victoria, 2020), <https://www.ptv.vic.gov.au/assets/default-site/footer/legal-and-policies/victorian-fares-and-ticketing-manual/cacf598a94/2020-Regional-Bus-Fares-Supplement-A4-v02-FA-WEB.pdf>; Table 3 compiled by author using the Regional Bus Fare Supplement and approximate route distance.

Table 2 also demonstrates how, despite travelling an almost identical distance as their Geelong counterparts, eligible Latrobe commuters cannot access the free travel entitlement as the distance they travel is across three consecutive zones. In contrast, the distance eligible commuters from Geelong travel is only across one zone. Table 3 also demonstrates how an eligible commuter in Geelong is able to travel over three times further than an equivalent commuter in Latrobe on their inter-town bus network before being charged for travelling over two consecutive zones.

These examples underscore the disparity between eligible commuters in Latrobe compared to commuters in Geelong and metropolitan Melbourne. While less pronounced, eligible commuters in Latrobe also travel a lesser distance before being charged for travelling over two consecutive zones compared to commuters in Bendigo and Ballarat.

These disparities result from the zone-based ticketing system that myki utilises. While this system is intended to benefit all Victorian commuters, there are anomalies in Latrobe that are resulting in commuters from this region paying more to travel a lesser distance. These anomalies are also preventing eligible Latrobe commuters from receiving entitlements for as much of their journey as equivalent commuters from other regional LGAs and metropolitan Melbourne.

5.4 Anomalies in Access to Regional Student Passes in Latrobe

Latrobe students are also impacted by the zone-based fare structure of the myki network. This disadvantage stems from a lack of access to the Regional Student Pass that primary and secondary school students can access in Ballarat, Bendigo, Geelong and some Southwestern regions. The regional student pass is only available in LGAs that encompass one or two consecutive zones. Given that Latrobe covers four zones, Latrobe students do not have the same access to the Regional Student Pass and must purchase a Victorian Student Pass.⁸⁶

⁸⁶ "School Students," Public Transport Victoria, 2020, <https://www.ptv.vic.gov.au/tickets/myki/concessions-and-free-travel/children-and-students/school-students/>.

Table 4 below outlines the distance between the furthest apart V/Line stations that users of the regional student pass can access. It also includes the equivalent distance for journeys made within Latrobe. Table 4 only considers the LGAs of Ballarat, Bendigo, Geelong and Latrobe, and not those in the Southwestern region in Victoria.

Table 4: Distance Between Stations Accessible as Part of Regional Student Pass⁸⁷

Journey From	Journey To	Km's	Yearly Cost
Ballarat (Zone 8)	Wendouree (Zone 8)	4.3	\$353
Eaglehawk (Zone 13)	Kangaroo Flat (Zone 12)	12.7	\$235
Waurin Ponds (Zone 4)	Lara (Zone 4)	27.4	\$353
Traralgon (Zone 12)	Morwell (Zone 11)	13.7	\$617
Traralgon (Zone 12)	Moe (Zone 10)	27.8	\$617

Table 4 highlights how the families of Latrobe students using the Victorian Student Pass are paying significantly more to travel a similar or lesser distance. This is especially the case when travel between Traralgon and Morwell is compared to travel between Waurin Ponds and Lara. While the journey between Traralgon and Morwell covers two consecutive zones and is approximately 13.7km in length, the journey between Waurin Ponds and Lara covers only one zone and is approximately 27.3km in length. Despite this difference, the families of Latrobe students are paying \$264 more for their students to travel half the distance.

Further disadvantage is found when comparing the journey between Traralgon and Morwell to the journey between Eaglehawk and Kangaroo Flat, which covers only one zone and is approximately 12.7km. While there is only a difference of one kilometre between these two journeys, families of Latrobe students are paying \$382 more than their Bendigo

⁸⁷ Public Transport Victoria, *Victorian Regional Bus Fares Supplement*, 14; "Line Guides."; Table 4 compiled by author using Regional Bus Fares Supplement and detailed Line Guides.

counterparts to allow their children to access the public transport network. The only exception to this trend is when journeys made by students in Latrobe are compared to journeys made by students in Ballarat.

These disparities demonstrate that Latrobe students and their families are paying more as a result of the zone-based fare structure of the myki ticketing system. This reflects the aforementioned fare anomalies that have been identified throughout the Latrobe public transport network. The combination of these disparities suggest that fare anomalies are affecting Latrobe commuters of every demographic, with the myki ticketing system producing inequitable outcomes across the entire LGA.

5.5 Impact of These Anomalies on Latrobe Commuters

Several interviews were conducted with various local stakeholders and commuters to hear their perspective on the cost of the myki public transport system in Latrobe.

However, when asked about the described fare anomalies, several Latrobe commuters expressed that they were not aware that these discrepancies existed. Alan McFarlane, a local councillor for the Latrobe City Council representing the City's Central Ward, explained that he had received few complaints about the cost of the myki public transport services in his electorate.⁸⁸ A similar sentiment was expressed by local commuter Jack Huxtable, who believed the service was 'reasonably priced' and was unaware of the price differentials outlined above.⁸⁹

Jon Dalton, a local commuter, argued that public transport in Latrobe is generally a 'cost effective service', but that they had a well-paying job and could afford a yearly myki Pass to and from metropolitan Melbourne.⁹⁰ According to Mr Dalton, the current cost

⁸⁸ Alan McFarlane, interviewed by Jack Hunt (Melbourne, Victoria, 01 May, 2020).

⁸⁹ Jack Huxtable, interviewed by Jack Hunt (Melbourne, Victoria, 03 June, 2020).

⁹⁰ Jon Dalton, interviewed by Jack Hunt (Melbourne, Victoria, 27 May, 2020).

arrangements may be more unfair for economically disadvantaged users of the network, who may find the cost of commuting to and from metropolitan Melbourne ‘a big issue’.⁹¹

While interviews conducted for this report indicated that the cost of the myki ticketing system was not a primary issue for Latrobe commuters, constituent emails addressed to Russell Northe MP, the Member of Parliament for Morwell, expressed frustration with being unable to access the Regional Student Pass.⁹² Two anonymous constituents expressed dissatisfaction with the lack of access to this pass, describing the current system as ‘not fair’.⁹³ While acknowledging it was their choice to send their children to school via public transport, these constituents felt that Latrobe families were being disadvantaged compared to other regional centres. These emails reflected broader community sentiment on this issue.⁹⁴

Despite a lack of awareness about fare anomalies in Latrobe, almost all of those interviewed expressed significant dissatisfaction with Latrobe’s public transport network. Issues identified included:

- The poor performance of the Gippsland V/Line service.⁹⁵
- Lack of a direct line to and from the Melbourne CBD.⁹⁶
- Overcrowding on peak-hour services.⁹⁷
- Frequent disruptions due to shared tracks, signal problems and congestion.⁹⁸

⁹¹ Dalton, Interview.

⁹² Anonymous, email correspondence with Russell Northe MP, 2019.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Bryce Eishold, “Unfair Student Fare,” *Latrobe Valley Express*, April 29, 2019.

<https://www.latrobevalleyexpress.com.au/story/6095921/unfair-student-fare/>.

⁹⁵ Dalton, Interview; Rob Mariano, interviewed by Jack Hunt (Melbourne, Victoria, 25 May, 2020); Public Transport Victoria, *Regional Train Operational Performance* (May 2020)

<https://app.powerbi.com/view?r=eyJrIjoiMzE2ZDlyN2YtODY1Yy00ZGY0LWE4YTktNDcxOTcwYWQyMjM5IiwidCI6I6ljcyMmVhMGJLTNlMWMtNGIxMS1hZDZmLTk0MDFkNjg1NmUyNCJ9>). PTV’s performance statistics outline that the Gippsland Line frequently underperforms compared to other regional V/Line services, with the percentage of on time services on the Gippsland Line averaging at only 80.6% so far this year, compared to between 88.5% and 93.1% across the Ballarat, Bendigo and Geelong Lines.

⁹⁶ Sharon Gibson, interviewed by Jack Hunt (Melbourne, Victoria, 30 April, 2020); The Gippsland Line shares a significant portion of its line with the Pakenham and Cranbourne Lines. This contrasts with the Ballarat, Bendigo and Geelong lines, which all have dedicated V/Line services that do not overlap with the metropolitan train network to the same extent as the Gippsland line.

⁹⁷ Huxtable, Interview; Dalton, Interview.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

- Timetabling issues for students attending university in the Melbourne CBD.⁹⁹
- Limited car park spaces at Moe, Morwell and Traralgon train stations.¹⁰⁰
- Difficulties accessing services such as the Latrobe Regional Hospital.¹⁰¹

Sharon Gibson, a local councillor for the Latrobe City Council representing the City’s West Ward, cited the aforementioned issues when explaining that Latrobe experiences significant disadvantage in its public transport network, especially when compared to other regional centres in Victoria.¹⁰² According to Ms Gibson, many residents in the region feel that Latrobe is ‘treated as the poor relation’ when it comes to public transport services.¹⁰³ For Ms Gibson, these issues act as a disincentive for local residents to utilise the public transport network.¹⁰⁴

*‘We want to have a really good service.
Other places have this – why can’t we?’*
Sharon Gibson.¹⁰⁵

Therefore, it is apparent that many Latrobe commuters have issues with their local myki public transport network that extend beyond fare anomalies. It is unclear whether the lack of community feedback about fare anomalies resulted from a lack of knowledge about them or contentment with the current myki ticketing system.

⁹⁹ Mariano, Interview. According to this anonymous resident, his son has often arrived late for university classes in the city despite arriving at his local train station early, with the biggest issue with the myki public transport system “being able to get there on time”.

¹⁰⁰ Gibson, Interview.

¹⁰¹ Anderson, Interview.

¹⁰² Gibson, Interview.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

6. Recommendations and Conclusion

This report's evaluation of fare anomalies in Latrobe demonstrate that while fares across the myki network are generally considered to be affordable by international standards, they are not always equitable.¹⁰⁶ Despite the lack of knowledge about these cost discrepancies, it is clear that the zone-based fare structure of the myki ticketing system is creating inequitable outcomes for Latrobe residents. There are two possible routes the Victorian Government can take to address these anomalies that will be discussed below.

6.1 Exploring Alternative Fare Structures for the myki Ticketing System

The first is a restructure of the myki ticketing system. As has been established throughout this report, zone-based structures can create anomalies that disadvantage certain commuters. This is a fundamental flaw of zone-based pricing schemes and a means of addressing these inequitable outcomes is to utilise a different fare structure throughout the myki system. The following fare structures are commonly used across Australia and internationally:

- **Flat Fare Structure** – passengers are charged identical fares regardless of route, distance travelled, or type of passenger. This system works well in situations where a majority of passengers travel a similar distance.¹⁰⁷ However, flat fares have been found to most negatively impact passengers who make short commutes, as they are paying more per kilometre than passengers travelling a longer distance.¹⁰⁸ Given that the myki ticketing system encompasses both metropolitan Melbourne and regional Victoria, it is unlikely that a flat fare system would create equitable outcomes for all commuters.

¹⁰⁶ Nine-Squared, *2015 Fare Benchmarking Report* (Brisbane, Queensland, 2015), <https://ninesquared.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/2015-Fare-Benchmarking-Final-Report.pdf>.

¹⁰⁷ Mohamed Mezghani, "Study on Electronic Ticketing in Public Transport," *European Metropolitan Transport Authorities (EMTA)* 56 (2008): 5, <https://emta.com/IMG/pdf/EMTA-Ticketing.pdf>.

¹⁰⁸ Steven Farber, Keith Bartholomew, Xiao Li, Antonio Páez, and Khandker M. Nurul Habib, "Assessing Social Equity in Distance Based Transit Fares Using a Model of Travel Behavior," *Transportation Research Part A: Policy and Practice* 67 (2014): 293.

- **Distance Based Fare Structure** – passengers are charged depending on the amount of kilometres they have travelled. In some respects, distance-based fares are the most equitable fare structure as they provide the most accurate fare based on how far a commuter has travelled.¹⁰⁹ Distance based fare structures also have the capacity to address some of the anomalies between fare and distance identified in this report, as commuters will be charged for the amount of kilometres they have travelled rather than the number of zones they have travelled through.

However, distance-based fare structures also have the capacity to create inequitable outcomes and tend to be more complex than zone-based structures.¹¹⁰ The PTUA has expressed concerns that commuters would be unable to know how much their journey is going to cost prior to their commute, with this potentially acting as a disincentive to use public transport use.¹¹¹ A distance based fare structure would also create inequitable outcomes for passengers who do not have a direct route to their destination.¹¹² Commuters who have a direct route to their destination would effectively pay less than commuters who have to transfer across multiple modes of transport. In this respect, distance-based fare structures can increase fares for commuters who regularly make long-distance trips.¹¹³

- **Free Fare Structure** – free fare structures also have the capacity to create equitable outcomes for commuters by reducing cost barriers to travel.¹¹⁴ Free fare structures can result in a simplification of ticketing systems by removing commuters’ need to comprehend fare rules. Some studies have also found evidence that free fare structures can improve mobility and accessibility for low income users.¹¹⁵

¹⁰⁹ Infrastructure Victoria, *Good Move*, 23.

¹¹⁰ Tourism and Transport Forum, *Ticket to Ride*, 16.

¹¹¹ “Myth: Multimodal Zone-Based Fares are Unfair; We Should be Charged by Distance,” Public Transport Users Association, 2020, <https://www.ptua.org.au/myths/zones/>.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Farber, “Assessing Social Equity in Distance Based Transit Fares,” 293.

¹¹⁴ Tourism and Transport Forum, *Ticket to Ride*, 21.

¹¹⁵ Oded Cats, Yusak O. Susilo, and Triin Reimal, “The Prospects of Fare-Free Public Transport: Evidence from Tallinn,” *Transportation* 44, no. 5 (2017): 1102, <https://link.springer.com/content/pdf/10.1007/s11116-016-9695-5.pdf>.

However, the potential disadvantage of free fare structures is the negative effect it can have on revenue and thus on the amount of money that can be invested into improving public transport networks.¹¹⁶ As has been demonstrated in this report, the primary issue that commuters have with the myki ticketing system is not the fares, but rather the service quality.¹¹⁷ There is evidence that suggests that free fare structures can ultimately make a public transport system's existing problems worse by starving it of revenue.¹¹⁸ There are also arguments that the elimination of fares actually results in a more expensive service due to higher tax revenues needing to be raised to accommodate a free fare public transport network.¹¹⁹

Ultimately, when compared to other fare structures across Australia and internationally, zone-based fare structures occupy a middle-ground that keeps the fare system simple while offering fares that have a general relationship between distance travelled and fare price.¹²⁰ Furthermore, while cost calculations for the implementation of a new ticketing system is outside the scope of this report, it is possible that the cost of any significant transformation of the network's fare structure would outweigh the potential economic benefits for Latrobe commuters. Therefore, this report does not recommend that the Department of Transport restructure the fare structure of the myki ticketing system.

6.2 Inquiry into Fare Anomalies in the myki Ticketing System

While a restructure of the myki ticketing system is not recommended, this report does recommend that the Department of Transport conduct an inquiry into fare anomalies in the zone-based fare structure of the myki ticketing system. Pricing anomalies based on distance have been reported throughout the myki network for years and it is outside the scope of

¹¹⁶ Tourism and Transport Forum, *Ticket to Ride*, 21.

¹¹⁷ Daniel Bowen, "We need better public transport, not free public transport," *Daniel Bowen* (blog), June 14, 2018, <https://www.danielbowen.com/2018/06/14/pt-better-not-free/>.

¹¹⁸ Constance Carr, "Luxembourg's Free Public Transport Sounds Great. It Isn't," *City Metric*, March 1, 2019. <https://www.citymetric.com/transport/luxembourg-s-free-public-transport-sounds-great-it-isn-t-4458>.

¹¹⁹ "Myth: Making Public Transport Free Will Encourage Use and Political Support," Public Transport Users Association, 2020, <https://www.ptua.org.au/myths/free/>.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*

this report to account for all of them.¹²¹ However, it is clear that these anomalies exist and are creating inequitable outcomes for residents in Latrobe that are already facing higher levels of disadvantage.

This inquiry would present the Victorian Government with a comprehensive list of pricing anomalies throughout the myki network, and provide recommendations about how to address these anomalies to maximise equitable pricing outcomes within the system's zone-based fare structure. The report recommends that this inquiry address the following specific issues:

- Anomalies in distance travelled versus the number of zones travelled through versus fare price.
- Identification of where these anomalies are located across the myki network, with an emphasis on metropolitan versus regional areas.
- The extent to which these discrepancies are charging affected commuters higher fares per kilometre travelled.
- A comprehensive list of cost analyses and recommendations to address these discrepancies across the myki network.
- The provision of long-term strategies to prevent the creation of new pricing anomalies within the myki ticketing system.

Social equity is an integral goal of public transport systems and a system's aim should be to share benefits equally across all income levels and communities.¹²² To uphold this equity in the myki ticketing system, it is imperative that commuters feel that their public transport network is not only affordable, but fair. Conducting an inquiry into the system's pricing anomalies would not only improve outcomes for commuters in Latrobe but would help to address inequitable outcomes across the myki public transport system.

¹²¹ Infrastructure Australia, *Five-Year Focus*, 44.

¹²² Thomas Sanchez, *The Right to Transportation: Moving to Equity* (Routledge, 2018), 8.

6.3 Reforms to the myki Ticketing System in Latrobe

In addition to the commission of an inquiry, this report also recommends the following immediate initiatives that would address some of the specific inequities found in Latrobe:

- Provide access to the Regional Student Pass for Latrobe students across two consecutive zones.
 - The Victorian Government should provide a Regional Student Pass across two zones for students in Traralgon and Morwell, and Morwell and Moe. This Pass would be costed at the \$353 fare that equivalent two zone Passes cost in Ballarat and Geelong. As discussed throughout this report, the distance travelled across the two zones between Traralgon and Morwell, and Morwell and Moe, are of a similar or lesser distance than the equivalent journeys available in Bendigo and Geelong. These passes would not add additional complexity to the current ticketing system and would assist in addressing the inequitable outcomes that Latrobe students are facing.
- Conduct a cost analysis of providing access to the Regional Student Pass across the entire Latrobe LGA.
 - The Victorian Government should also conduct a cost analysis of providing access to a Regional Student Pass that would cover the entire Latrobe LGA. While Latrobe covers up to four zones, it has been established that the distance across these zones is comparable to the Geelong LGA. While a cost analysis is outside the scope of this report, it is clear that the cost per kilometre of providing this pass would be similar to the current cost per kilometre of providing the pass in Geelong. Should access to the Regional Student Pass across the entire LGA prove to be cost effective, it should be implemented as soon as possible.

- Conduct a cost analysis of making public transport free across all zones for commuters entitled to free weekend travel.
 - The Victorian Government should also conduct a cost analysis of providing free travel across all zones of the myki network for commuters entitled to free weekend travel. This would provide more equitable outcomes for seniors and other equivalent commuters who travel predominantly on regional lines that have a higher number of zones than metropolitan lines. This initiative would also avoid adding complexity into the myki ticketing system that may result from the implementation of LGA-based free weekend travel zones. Providing free weekend travel across all zones for eligible commuters would assist in providing equitable outcomes for commuters who are most likely to have difficulty paying fares.

6.4 Conclusion

The combination of this inquiry and these initiatives would help to alleviate some of the inequitable public transport outcomes that Latrobe commuters face. These changes would also help to foster good will with the Latrobe community, who have often felt that they are experiencing worse public transport outcomes compared to the rest of Victoria.¹²³ Access to affordable public transport is a key indicator of an equitable society. As such, the Victorian Government should seek to maximise equitable public transport outcomes across the State and implement the findings of this report.

¹²³ Bryce Eishold, "More Transport Anger," *Latrobe Valley Express*, July 14, 2017. <https://www.latrobevalleyexpress.com.au/story/4790203/moe-transport-anger/>.

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