

Free Public Transport In Tasmania

Evidence suggests that making public transport free increases patronage,¹ reduces traffic congestion, lowers the subsidy per passenger,² creates more efficient and punctual services,³ and reduces conflict between drivers and passengers.^{4,5}

Generating economic benefits far in excess of the costs,⁶ free public transport makes sense in a cost of living and scheduling crisis.

A study of public transit systems in the United States found that out of 39 systems, when fare-free travel was introduced the smallest increase in ridership was 21%.⁷

The study found that in almost every location where fare-free policies exist, bus operators are supportive, and express pride in their contributions to liveability, cleaner air, reduced carbon emissions, and reduced traffic congestion.⁸

Public transport can also be a significant schooling cost. Unless a school has a free bus service, a year's worth of public transport will cost at least \$600 per child.⁹

Although the cost to the Government would be higher – the benefits per dollar spent – in terms of transported passengers, reduced vehicle emissions and congestion, increased economic activity, and improved quality of life, would be considerably higher.

The majority of public transport fares are already covered by Government. For example, in 2022 Metro received \$11.2 million in ticket fares revenue, which was only 16% of its total

revenue. The majority of its revenue was a \$56 million contract with the State Government to deliver services.¹⁰

During Metro Tasmania's fare-free trial in March of 2022, the lack of fare collection reduced conflict between drivers and passengers about fares.¹¹ This conflict has been a contributor the driver shortage,¹² and making public transport free is one of the things we can do to help retain bus drivers.

The Greens will fight for a free public transport system (including buses, ferries, and light rail) across Tasmania – including in all rural, regional, and urban areas.

Budget (\$m)

Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Total
28.00	28.00	28.00	28.00	112.00

FIND ALL OUR POLICIES: tasgreensmps.org/policy/

¹ Volinski, J, [Implementation and Outcomes of Fare-Free Transit Systems](#), United States Transportation Research Board, 2012.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Podwinski, I, [Tasmania's free public buses deemed a success, despite hundreds of route cancellations and driver shortages](#), ABC News, April 2022.

⁶ Knight, B, [All aboard! Should public transport be free for everyone?](#), UNSW Newsroom, March 2023.

⁷ Volinski, J, [Implementation and Outcomes of Fare-Free Transit Systems](#), United States Transportation Research Board, 2012.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Based on \$1.60 discounted Metro fare and 189 school days in the 2024 school year.

¹⁰ Metro Tasmania, [Annual Report 2022-23](#), 2023.

¹¹ Podwinski, I, [Tasmania's free public buses deemed a success, despite hundreds of route cancellations and driver shortages](#), ABC News, April 2022.

¹² Rojahn, M, [Metro Tasmania drivers report abuse and low morale, as spike in crashes blamed on inexperienced staff](#), ABC News, Jan 2023.