

INQUIRY INTO LOCAL GOVERNMENT FUNDING AND SERVICES

Streets Alive Yarra offers feedback on the following terms of reference:

- whether local councils are adequately delivering on their core service delivery objectives;
- the overall revenue structure of local government;
- whether the existing revenue structure is sustainable and appropriate or if alternative models of funding would be more sustainable and appropriate.

Our feedback is:

- No, local councils are not adequately delivering on their core service delivery objectives, i.e. managing local streets to enable people to safely access any property in their municipality, irrespective of whether people walk, bike, use public transport, or drive. For all properties to be safely accessible, people should not be exposed to hazards which carry the risk of serious injury or death [<https://streets-alive-yarra.org/safety/>]. At present, this level of safety does not exist for people walking or biking. To deliver safe access, councils need to deliver 30 km/h High Access Neighbourhoods [<https://streets-alive-yarra.org/high-access-neighbourhoods/>], modal filters, wombat crossings, and a cohesive network of protected bike lanes.
- One reason that local councils, particularly the M9 group of inner-city councils, are not adequately delivering on their core service delivery objectives is because they don't allocate enough budget to active transport [<https://streets-alive-yarra.org/expenditure/>]. This occurs because they are lacking the necessary revenue. In turn, this occurs because they are failing to generate enough revenue from on-street parking. For example, the City of Yarra has approximately 47,000 on-street parking bays but offers 3/4 of them for free [<https://streets-alive-yarra.org/revenue/>]. This offer is accepted by tens of thousands of commuters each day in Yarra, who live outside Yarra but drive into Yarra and park all day for free. This occurs even if the parking is allegedly restricted to 2 or 4 hours, because commuters simply set a timer and then move their cars. Some commuters go out in pairs and swap the position of their cars. If the City of Yarra chose to apply an all-day parking charge equivalent to an all-day Myki fee (\$10.60 per day for Zone 1+2) to 1/3 of Yarra's 47,000 on-street parking bays, for 250 days per year, then the Council would raise an extra \$39 million dollars. The annual budget for the City of Yarra is \$220 million, so this represents a revenue boost of 18%, which is material.

We recommend that the state government:

- Encourage all M9 inner-city councils to collaborate to charge commuters for all-day on-street parking.

- Encourage all M9 inner-city councils to apply demand-responsive pricing. For example, in Cremorne (a neighbourhood in Yarra) the cost for private all-day off-street parking is \$33 per day [[Wilson Parking, Gwynne Street](#)], which is much higher than our proposed default charge of \$10.60 per day. If councils applied demand responsive pricing to on-street parking, then the fee in many neighbourhoods would stabilise at a higher value than \$10.60, which would further increase revenue.
- Expand the state government's congestion levy [<https://www.sro.vic.gov.au/car-parks>], which applies to off-street parking, to cover all M9 inner-city councils, and then return the entire revenue to councils, hypothecated for investment in active transport.

If the state government collaborated with M9 inner-city local councils to implement the above reforms, we expect the following benefits:

- At least 20% increase to Yarra's revenue (results will vary for other councils).
- An order of magnitude increase in Yarra's investment in active transport, e.g. from approximately \$1 million per year to over \$10 million per year.
- A significant decrease in traffic congestion on inner-city streets, because many commuters would switch from driving to public or active transport.
- Shoppers would be better able to find a vacant parking bay near local traders, because councils could limit the number of all-day digital parking permits sold to commuters in each neighbourhood, e.g. to 1/3 of the bays in that neighbourhood, thus protecting free 2P parking for shoppers.

Further information on these themes is available at:

- <https://streets-alive-yarra.org/better-for-parking/>
- <https://streets-alive-yarra.org/better-for-drivers/>
- <https://streets-alive-yarra.org/journal/suggestions-for-the-parking-strategy/>

Streets Alive Yarra would be delighted to provide further detail or explanation of the themes raised in this document.

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About us

Streets Alive Yarra is a non-profit, volunteer, resident and ratepayer action group with a vision for more trees, wider footpaths and vibrant businesses in thriving neighbourhoods. We see our streets being used by people from all ages, irrespective of whether they walk, roll on a wheelchair, cycle, use public transport or drive. Residents and shoppers should be able to move safely, comfortably, and conveniently around Yarra; and park near shops.



Image credit: OCULUS Landscape Architecture and Urban Design

Streets Alive Yarra was founded in 2017 and now has over 3,000 followers on Facebook. A network of local champions develops concepts and proposals for how to improve their local street or precinct. Streets Alive Yarra is also a member of the Victoria Walks Walkability Action Group network, and Better Streets Australia.

Further information is available at: streets-alive-yarra.org/about.