

THE IMPACT OF 24 HOUR PUBLIC TRANSPORT IN MELBOURNE

Authors:

ASHLEE CURTIS¹

¹*School of Psychology, Deakin University, Geelong, Australia*

Presenters email: ashlee.curtis@deakin.edu.au

Introduction and Aims:

On January 1, 2016, the Victorian government introduced 24-hour public transport in Melbourne, on Friday and Saturday nights. The trial of the 24-hour service cost a total of AU\$121.7 million. In April 2017, the government announced the 24-hour public transport system would be in place for a further 4 years, at a cost of \$193 million. Public Transport Victoria noted that the aim of this service was to ensure that those who go out on weekends and shift workers have a way of getting to and from the city. However, increasing access to the city may increase the number of people who attend nightlife precincts and the time spent in the city, which may in turn increase alcohol-related harms. The aim of this study was to determine whether 24-hour public transport impacted alcohol-related harms.

Method:

Patron interviews and venue observations were conducted in Melbourne, and police-recorded assaults, pedestrian counts, road crash data and myki counts for Melbourne were obtained for 2015-2016.

Key Findings:

Whilst Myki and pedestrian count data suggested an increase in people attending the city later in the evening in 2016 than in 2015, there was no discernible impact of the introduction of 24-hour public transport on the number of police-recorded assaults or road crashes in high alcohol hours. Interviews and observations revealed insights into changes in patron behaviour.

Discussions and Conclusions:

After one year, it appears that 24-hour public transport has had no discernible impact on alcohol-related harms in the city, though it does appear that more people are using the transport system and are staying in the city later into the night.