

STREET RIGHTS



newsletter of the pilch homeless
persons' legal clinic

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Victoria's new ticketing system – myki

Myki is the new smart card “ticket” to pay for fares on public transport across Victoria.

The myki system began on buses in Geelong in December 2008 and gradually rolled out to other bus services in Seymour, Ballarat, Bendigo and the Latrobe Valley.

myki can now be used right across Melbourne on all trains, trams and buses and will be valid on V/Line rail and coach services in the future.

Using myki is simple - customers just touch on and off at readers as they travel and myki calculates the lowest fare possible.

Transport Ticketing Authority Chief Executive Officer, Bernie Carolan, said while myki is now operating across Melbourne, people have plenty of time to make the switch from Metcard.

“myki and Metcard will operate together until at least Easter next year” he said.

“All concession and free travel entitlements available under Metcard remain with myki, and the government has recently announced a number of new free travel entitlements for people with a disability and extended some entitlements for other concession holders.”

The two new free travel passes available are the Access Travel Pass and the Scooter and Wheelchair Travel Pass.

The Access Travel Pass is issued by the Metlink Central Pass Office. It is for people with a significant permanent disability who travel independently on Victoria's public transport network and can demonstrate that due to their disability they cannot use ticketing systems.

To be eligible for the Access Travel Pass you must:

- have a significant permanent disability
- be a permanent Victorian resident
- be able to travel independently on Victoria's public transport network (without any assistance from a carer or companion)
- be unable to touch on or touch off your myki independently.

Application forms for the Access Travel Pass are available from the Metlink Central Pass Office, www.metlinkmelbourne.com.au or by calling Metlink on 131 638.

The second free travel pass is the Scooter and Wheelchair Travel Pass.

The Scooter and Wheelchair Travel Pass is issued by the Metlink Central Pass Office and has been introduced to support independent travel for people who are dependent on scooters and wheelchairs.

The Scooter and Wheelchair Travel Pass is linked to progress by the Victorian Government in implementing the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* and the *Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport 2002*.

To be eligible for the Scooter and Wheelchair Travel Pass you must:

- have a permanent and severe disability (being for the term of your life and not expected to improve)
- depend on the use of a scooter or wheelchair for mobility outside your home
- be a permanent resident of Victoria.

In August it was also announced from 1 January 2011 seniors and Disability Support Pensioners and Carer Payment Recipients under 60 (DSP/CAR holders) would receive free Saturday travel across two zones. This is in addition to the current benefit of free Sunday travel.

Mr Carolan said if you are entitled to a DSP/CAR concession myki you will be entitled to free travel across two adjacent zones right across Victoria all weekend from 1 January.

“If you are in Melbourne, this means you can travel anywhere in Zones 1&2, all day, free of charge,” he said.

“If you are in Geelong, you can travel from the Bellarine Peninsula into Geelong and travel around all day free of charge.”

“If you are already registered for a Sunday Pass you will receive a free concession myki in the post from September.”

“If you don't have a Sunday Pass and would like free Sunday travel, weekend travel from 1 January 2011 and a free concession myki, you can complete a Sunday Pass Application form available from premium train stations, staffed V/Line stations and the MetShop. Or you can download the application form at <http://www.metlinkmelbourne.com.au/fares-tickets/free-travel-passes/sunday-pass>.”

What are my rights? public housing - refusing offers

You can refuse an offer of housing from the Office of Housing if the property that is offered does not meet your property or location requirements. The Office of Housing's Policy lets you refuse an offered property if it does not meet your medical needs - for example if you cannot walk up stairs then an offer of a property with stairs is actually an **invalid offer**.

What to do

If you have special property or location requirements, tell the Office of Housing about them as soon as possible. These requirements must be approved by the Office of Housing before they can be included in your application for housing. You should provide the Office of Housing with a letter from your doctor and any other relevant documents as evidence of any special requirement.

When you inspect a property that has been offered to you, you should immediately tell the Office of Housing representative if the property does not meet any special property or location requirements that you have.

If the Office of Housing has already approved your special property or location requirements and the property does not meet these approved requirements, you should point out to the Office of Housing representative that the offered property does not meet your special requirements.

If the Office of Housing has not already approved your special property or location requirements, then you can explain what these requirements are to the Office of Housing representative and explain that you are refusing the property because it does not meet these needs. You must then provide the Office of Housing with evidence of your special property or location requirements within **28 days** of refusing the offer so that the Office of Housing

can approve your special property or location requirements. There is a risk that the Office of Housing will refuse to approve your special requirements.

When the Office of Housing has already approved your special requirements

It is better if you have already told the Office of Housing all of your special property or location requirements and the Office of Housing has approved all of these requirements for you medical needs. If an offered property does not meet your special property or location requirements already approved by the Office of Housing, then the offer of the property is invalid.

When the Office of Housing has not previously approved your special requirements

You will need the Office of Housing to approve your special property or location requirements if you have not previously told the Office of Housing about your special requirements, and there is a risk that the Office of Housing may refuse to give this approval.

If the Office of Housing approves your special property or location requirements, then the offer of housing which did not meet these requirements is invalid and not counted as an offer of housing to you. However, if the Office of Housing decides not to approve your special property or location requirements, then the offer of housing is treated as valid and your refusal of the offer reduces the number of offers you will receive.

IMPORTANT: If you don't have special requirements you are able to receive up to two valid offers of housing. If you refuse all valid offers your application will be rejected from the waiting list and you will need to reapply. If you have an early housing application you will only be offered one property as an

Q&A

Anna McCann
Baker & McKenzie



What inspires you to volunteer at the Homeless Persons' Legal Clinic?

I am inspired by the people who come into the clinic seeking help. These people are amongst the most disadvantaged in our community, many of them sleeping rough and living in conditions that we can't even imagine. And yet they are often so grateful for whatever assistance we can give, even if it is only listening to them and pointing them in the right direction. They are able to have hope in such difficult circumstances and it really drives home how lucky we are. Sorry, didn't mean to get so deep....

When you are not being a lawyer, what do you do in your spare time?

If I had spare time I would read books, go to the movies, go for walks or drink coffee in the sunshine. But with three pre-school kids to look after, spare time is a foreign concept! So I love going to parks, playing chaisey and having tea parties with fairies and teddy bears.

early allocation. If you refuse this offer your early allocation status will be removed and you will be placed in the 'wait-turn' category.

For more information, call the HPLC on **1800 606 313**.

In our next edition: public housing appeals.

Common Ground

The Elizabeth Street Common Ground Supportive Housing is the first of its kind in Victoria and aims to provide a home and long-term support for people experiencing chronic homelessness.

Common Ground is based on the New York model of the same name, where multiple run down hotels and buildings have been converted into housing which has support services on location. In New York its been estimated that the number of people sleeping rough has fallen by roughly 25 per cent since Common Ground was first established in the early 1990's, and the vast majority of people who had been provided with supportive housing hadn't relapsed into homelessness.

HomeGround will be running the support services at the Elizabeth Street Common Ground, which include providing case workers, medical, psychiatric, employment, drug and alcohol services as well as social and recreation programs. This project differs from other emergency housing as it will provide long-term homes and support, not just a place to stay for a few weeks or months. The complex is very secure, with a swipe card needed to access the building and has a 24 hour concierge service which will provide support, controlled access, as well as monitoring security within the building via CCTV.

The project has 10 floors containing 131 supportive housing units and 30 apartments for low-income families. Every apartment has a balcony and there is common roof-garden which has separated areas so that the residents can relax in one area, while the kids can play in another. There is also a children's playground and a barbeque area. There will be a balanced social mix of formerly homeless and low-income households in order to avoid stigmatizing the building and its tenants. It is also hoped that having a vibrant social mix will promote community through the diversity of the tenants' interests and backgrounds.

The project was built on the initiative of the Victorian Housing Minister Richard Wynne who is a former lord mayor and social worker, and has had a career-long interest in public housing. Common Ground has been jointly funded by the State and Federal governments and was built at-cost by the Grollo family's Grocon Group, with donations or at-cost contributions from 60 other businesses. Yarra Community Housing will own and manage the building.

Common Ground is located at 660 Elizabeth Street and is expected to be open by Christmas.

- Laura Blackie, HPLC Volunteer

Good news story

The HPLC recently helped a client seeking assistance after he was locked out of his house by his landlord. George* had entered into an oral lease with his landlord. His landlord denied that there was a lease.

At the hearing, HPLC established via statements which showed that the client had paid for bills, rates and works to the property, that there was an oral lease. VCAT ordered that the landlord comply with the Act and provide George with access to the property. This was the best possible result for George as he was able to return to the property and the landlord was prevented from interfering with his quiet enjoyment of the property.

HPLC was assisted by Harwood Andrews lawyers.

* Names have been changed.

Subscribe

Please contact 1800 606 313 or hplc@pilch.org.au to subscribe, or to have your say.

The HPLC provides free legal advice at these locations and times:

Melbourne Citymission
214 Nicholson Street
Footscray 3011
Mon: 10:30am - 1:00pm
Footscray train station - Tram 82 (Droop St)

Ozanam House
179 Flemington Rd
North Melbourne 3051
Tues: 10:00am - 12:00pm
Flemington Bridge train station
Trams 55, 59, 68 (Flemington Rd)

Urban Seed (Credo Café)
174 Collins St, Melbourne 3000
(Approach via Baptist Pl, off Little Collins)
Tues: 12:00pm - 1:00pm

St Kilda Crisis Contact Centre
(for women and their accompanying children)
29 Grey St
St Kilda 3182
Tuesdays 12pm - 2:00pm
Trams 79, 96, 112

Flagstaff Crisis Accommodation
9 Roden St,
West Melbourne 3003
Tues: 1:00pm - 2:30pm
North Melbourne train station - Tram 57
(Victoria Street)

Salvation Army Life Centre
69 Bourke Street
Melbourne 3000
Tues: 12:30pm - 2:00pm

Hanover Southbank
52 Haig St, Southbank 3205
Wed: 1:15pm - 3:00pm
Southern Cross train station - Tram 112
(Clarendon Street)

HomeGround Housing
1A/68 Oxford Street
Collingwood 3066
Thurs: 12:00pm - 2:00pm
Collingwood train station - Tram 86 (Smith Street)

VACRO
116 Hardware Street
Melbourne 3000
Thurs: 1.00 - 3.00pm
Melbourne central station
- Tram 19, 57 and 59 (Elizabeth Street)

Northside Geelong
92 Cox Rd, Corio
Thurs: 12:00pm - 2:00pm

The Big Issue
148 Lonsdale Street
Melbourne 3000
Fri: 2pm - 3pm

St Luke's Anglicare
175 Hargreaves Street, Bendigo
Every Friday, 10am - 12pm

PILCH
Level 17, 461 Bourke Street
Melbourne, VIC 3000
(03) 8636 4408 or 1800 606 313
www.pilch.org.au