

Clements, Quinton (REPS)

From: Committee, NCET (REPS)
Sent: Thursday, 6 March 2003 7:54 AM
To: Clements, Quinton (REPS)
Subject: FW: Parking in the Parliamentary Zone submission



-----Original Message-----

From: Paul Starr [mailto:paulstarr@froggy.com.au]
Sent: Wednesday, 5 March 2003 6:52 PM
To: Committee, NCET (REPS)
Subject: Parking in the Parliamentary Zone submission

Hello,

As someone who works in the Parliamentary Zone and drives to work, I would like to make a submission.

I currently drive to work, usually parking in the carparks adjacent to either the John Gorton or Edmund Barton Buildings. I am involved in a regular car-pooling arrangement with people who live near me in the Inner North of Canberra. I would be concerned that the introduction of paid parking would provide a disincentive for car-pooling arrangements.

I am also concerned that this would be introduced as a revenue-raising exercise, rather than something enacted out of a genuine interest in encouraging greater use of public transport and achieving reductions in the number of single-occupant vehicles on our roads.

One of the outcomes of the Parliamentary Zone Review is the principle that access should be easy and open. The widespread introduction of paid parking in the Parliamentary Zone would directly contradict that principle. Canberra Tourism would suffer, with visitors curtailing their times at public institutions so as to conform to the dictates of parking meters.

The current state of the public transport system in the ACT does not permit many people to make the choice of taking the bus to work. For example, my travel time to work on an ACT bus is 50 minutes. This compares to 15 minutes in a car and 30 minutes by bike. Unless there is a prior improvement to the frequency of Canberra bus services, and a reduction in bus travel times, no paid parking should be introduced in the Parliamentary Zone.

It is also inappropriate to simply apply standard public transport models to work travel in the ACT. Many Parliamentary Zone employees live across the border in NSW and simply would not have equitable and affordable access to public transport alternatives if paid parking were to be introduced around their workplaces.

Arguments against parking areas based on visual amenity are specious in that they conveniently ignore the responsibility of the National Capital Authority for the current look of these areas. Given that employees working in the Parliamentary Zone are also taxpayers, it is incorrect to claim that their use of parking spaces escapes the "user-pays" principle.

The cultural institutions in the Parliamentary Zone should be encouraged to investigate opportunities to designate parking areas for visitors (rather than consumers) through methods more sophisticated than simply 1-3 hour parking periods. Visitor voucher systems could be combined with more aggressive policing of current parking restrictions to provide a mix of behavioural signals to both visitors and commuters.

I find it difficult to accept that an excess of parking spaces is preventing a vibrant

cultural life in the Parliamentary Zone. I would suggest that it is more the absence of mixed commercial/cultural spaces, particularly along the edge of the lake, that actively discourage a Canberra culture of making full use of these public spaces during the working week.

Parking is certainly an issue deserving serious attention, but the current suggestions have a clear flavour of revenue raising about them and would have negative impacts on equity of access if implemented before enhanced public transport solutions were available.

Regards,

Paul Starr.