

HON WARREN TRUSS MP

Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

12 MAR 2003

Senator Ross Lightfoot
Chairman of the Joint Standing Committee on the National Capital and External Territories
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Senator

Thank you for your letter of 31 December 2002 and your invitation to me to provide comment to the Parliamentary Zone Parking Inquiry.

Over recent years, car parking, particularly in the areas adjacent to the Parliamentary Zone, has become a matter of increased concern and I am pleased to see that your Committee is looking at this issue.

Regarding the proposal to introduce paid parking in the Parliamentary Zone, I would like to offer the follow comments:

The recently announced policy of the ACT Government to further expand the introduction of pay parking to areas adjacent to the Parliamentary Zone will without doubt result in an increase in the number of vehicles being parked in any area providing free parking simply in order to avoid or minimise parking charges. As such, it is reasonable to expect that people, particularly those working in offices along or near the Zone boundaries, such as Barton and Forrest, would likely start parking in the Parliamentary Zone once the introduction of pay parking in these areas commences and while parking in the Parliamentary Zone remains free. I would suggest that this "migration" and its associated pressure on already limited parking facilities within the Zone would likely have a far greater impact on tourism and the national institutions within the Zone than would the introduction of parking fees - I would expect that most, if not all, tourists already accept parking fees in such areas as being normal practice.

Given the inevitability of pay parking in the surrounding area the only practical solutions appear to be either the introduction of a similar charging regime within the Zone or, alternatively, limit all parking at or near public institutions to bona-fide visitors and limit remaining parking spaces to short-term parking only.

However, to ascertain which of the two options would be the better solution the broader issue regarding parking should be considered and that is the apparent lack of any integration of parking provisions within the overall building planning and approval processes - both within the Zone and in adjacent areas.

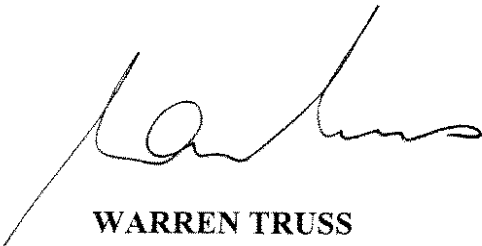
Taking Barton for instance, while there has been a substantial increase in building construction, particularly in office accommodation, that has significantly increased the number of vehicles coming into the area there has been no associated increase in parking facilities. This development has placed significant pressure on the already limited existing facilities to the point where it is now having a direct impact on the viability of conducting business within the Barton area.

If the introduction of pay parking, in any location, can provide the means to fund appropriate parking facilities then I support their introduction.

Given that my Department is located in the Barton area, Departmental Officers would welcome the opportunity to appear at any Committee hearing on this matter.

The contact within my Department on this matter is David Banham who is available on (02) 6272 2102.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Warren Truss', written in a cursive style. The signature is positioned above the printed name.

WARREN TRUSS