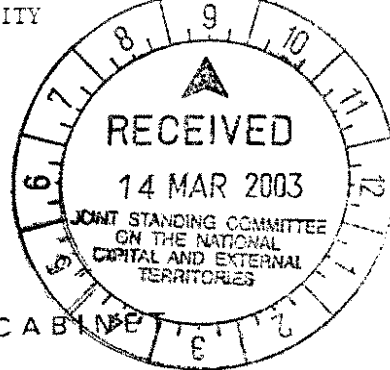


SUBMISSION

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THE DEPARTMENT OF
THE PRIME MINISTER AND CABINET3-5 NATIONAL CIRCUIT
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Mr Quinton Clements
Inquiry Secretary
Joint Standing Committee on the National Capital
and External Territories
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Mr Clements

Please find attached this department's submission to the Committee regarding its Inquiry into Pay Parking in the Parliamentary Zone.

The department appreciates the opportunity to contribute to the Committee's deliberations on this matter. Over the past several years this issue has been the subject of much discussion between the department and the National Capital Authority.

Should you require any additional information, the department's contact officer is Mr Terry Crane, Acting Assistant Secretary, Corporate Support Branch on 6271 5406.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Metcalfe
Deputy Secretary
Government and Corporate

14 March 2003

Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet
Submission to the Parliamentary Zone Parking Inquiry

Introduction

As a significant building tenant in the Barton precinct, the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (PM&C) has a considerable interest in the important issue of parking arrangements in Barton and the surrounding areas. PM&C has been in discussions with the National Capital Authority (NCA) for a number of years regarding the parking policy in Barton and the effect that the introduction of pay parking in this or adjacent areas would have on the department and its staff.

The National Capital Plan Draft Amendment 42 (York Park Master Plan), issued by the NCA in November 2002, contains principles and policies designed to facilitate the aspirations for York Park as a prestigious office precinct. The department supports the majority of those principles and policies, however the current and proposed arrangements for parking within Barton and adjacent areas are issues of significant concern.

Parking Situation in the Barton Area

Parking in the Barton area is limited and the quality of the space available in PM&C's immediate vicinity is poor. The mitigating factor for staff is that parking is free, however since 1999 PM&C has contributed well over \$100,000 towards the improvement and maintenance of the parking available in the York Park temporary carpark. This strategy has been supported by management and staff while a high proportion of York Park spaces are available to and occupied by PM&C staff.

Due to recent building developments, the competition for parking in the Barton precinct is increasing rapidly. A reduction in the on/off site parking ratio associated with planned future developments, such as that at 1 National Circuit, will only exacerbate this situation.

The NCA's parking strategy of encouraging the use of public transport has merit, however this can only be successful if transport services meet the needs of potential customers. This is currently not the case, particularly as many staff in this department work long and irregular hours. For example, the department's access records indicate that up to 10 percent of staff leave the premises after 7.00pm.

The NCA has also maintained a policy of limiting the availability of free on-site parking to a point where pay parking structures will be economically viable. In 2001, the NCA suggested that a catalyst for private sector construction of parking structures in the area could be for employers, particularly Commonwealth departments and agencies, to pre-commit to rent or lease parking spaces. The use of these spaces could then be offered to staff, perhaps through individual Australian Workplace Agreements

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or, more generally, Certified Agreements. While this strategy also has some merit, it has financial implications for the department and therefore the Commonwealth. PM&C is aware of other agencies which have made provision within their Certified Agreements and Australian Workplace Agreements for assistance to staff for the payment of parking costs. It is reasonable to assume that such claims would flow to this department in the event of pay parking being introduced in the Barton precinct.

It is the department's understanding that the ACT Government and NCA have reached 'in principle' agreement for the introduction of pay parking in Barton.

Impact of Parking Policies on Adjacent Areas

Whilst multi-level pay parking stations may provide additional spaces in the Barton area, such structures, or the general introduction of pay parking in the precinct, cannot be considered in isolation. Free parking currently exists within both Barton and the Parliamentary Zone, only a short walk from each other. The limiting of car parking in Barton and/or the imposition of a fee would most likely result in staff choosing to park in the Parliamentary Zone, thereby competing for spaces at national institutions. Likewise, if pay parking was introduced in isolation in the Parliamentary Zone, staff employed in that area would simply compete for the free parking spaces in Barton. It would therefore be difficult, if not impossible, to successfully introduce pay parking in Barton or the Parliamentary Zone without extending the arrangement to the other.

The department agrees that there are difficulties associated with introducing pay parking in the Parliamentary Zone, particularly in relation to legislative requirements.

The introduction of pay parking in the Parliamentary Zone/Barton area would also not be consistent with existing policy, which has seen such measures restricted to Civic and town centre sites attached to significant retail and community facilities such as Woden and shortly Tuggeranong and Belconnen.

Conclusion

There is significant pressure on parking availability in the Barton and Parliamentary Zone areas and the situation continues to worsen as the areas are further developed. While the NCA has clearly articulated its future parking policies for Barton, PM&C considers that these are unlikely to be successful unless the parking arrangements in the Parliamentary Zone are also addressed and integrated policies are developed.

The introduction of pay parking in the Parliamentary Zone/Barton areas would, of economic necessity, require many staff to utilise public transport. Existing public

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transport arrangements clearly do not meet the needs of many staff of this department. Therefore, a rigorous review of commuter requirements and a significant increase in public transport availability would be required before further consideration is given to the introduction of pay parking in the Parliamentary Zone or the Barton precinct.