

Di Iulio, Tiana (REPS)

From: Groeneveld, Karen [Karen.Groeneveld@dcita.gov.au]
Sent: Friday, 9 May 2003 5:05 PM
To: Committee, NCET (REPS)
Cc: Coulson, Simon; Bates, Eleanor
Subject: parking in the parliamentary zone

Dear Senator Lightfoot

I am very concerned, not only at the current lack of adequate parking facilities, but the proposal to introduce paid parking in the Parliamentary Zone (including offices in Forrest and Barton).

My partner and I live in Queanbeyan and commute to work in Canberra. We are parents of 2 daughters - one in primary school and one in high school. Currently we use only one small car, which, environmentally speaking, is an attempt at responsible use of fossil fuels. We do not use public transport because the schedules and locations of buses are inconvenient. Deanes Buses between Queanbeyan and Canberra are available for a short time at peak hours morning and night, but are scheduled very infrequently at the times in between. Bus fares between Queanbeyan and Canberra make bus travel much more expensive than running a small car, especially when that car is transporting 4 people to work/school/childcare.

As a parent, flexibility in transport is essential - parents must be available in the case of emergencies, and to ferry children to doctors, dentists, sports etc. on a regular basis. As a public servant, my certified agreement requires that my working hours be flexible to cater for my employer's perceived needs - this often means that peak hour travel is not feasible. The area in which I work, in Forrest, is poorly lit at night, presenting hazards for people (especially lone women) walking to the bus stops (which are some way away) after hours. The additional time take to travel by public transport also adds significantly to one's working day - already so long as to present difficulty in reaching a balance between home responsibilities and work. The additional time might be justifiable if services were available close by, but the need to travel additional significant distances to shops, professional services, schools etc, makes the 'balance' untenable.

The cost of housing in the areas around the Parliamentary Zone is amongst the highest in Canberra. The call from 'pedal pushers' for people to cycle to work, fails to recognise that most workers cannot afford to live close enough to their workplaces in this area. It also completely fails to recognise the needs of workers with family responsibilities, or those who are less able.

The currently inadequate number of parking places in this Zone already discriminates against workers with family responsibilities, who start work later than 9am because they have had to drop children at school or childcare. Paid parking in this area would further discriminate, because workers with family responsibilities have less choice to travel by public transport than many of their counterparts. To impose a parking levy would cost workers thousands of dollars a year (based on the rates currently payable in Civic and Woden), regardless of the individual's earning capacity - a hefty pay cut - especially for those already on lower incomes.

Regards

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