

JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE
ON THE NATIONAL CAPITAL
AND EXTERNAL TERRITORIES

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**GOVERNMENT RESPONSE
TO THE REPORT OF THE JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE
ON THE NATIONAL CAPITAL AND EXTERNAL
TERRITORIES**

***NOT A TOWN CENTRE: THE PROPOSAL FOR PAY
PARKING IN THE PARLIAMENTARY ZONE***

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MINISTER FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT, TERRITORIES
AND ROADS**

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INTRODUCTION

The Parliamentary Zone includes some of Australia's most important legal, cultural and political institutions. However, parking issues in the area have long been a cause of concern. Problems include traffic congestion, a lack of available parking spaces, the isolation of the buildings from other services and facilities, and inadequate pedestrian access. An emerging issue is the need for more comprehensive security arrangements and the impact this might have on parking.

The National Capital Authority (NCA) has proposed the introduction of pay parking as a solution to some of these problems. Pay parking in the Zone has been under consideration since 1994 when the then Joint Standing Committee on the National Capital and External Territories (the Committee) inquired into a proposal from the then National Capital Planning Authority for the operation of a paid voucher system. The Committee's June 1994 report did not support pay parking.

Since then there has been consideration of the issue by the NCA, the Territories Minister and the Committee. After considering a June 2002 NCA submission which addressed issues arising from the NCA's March 2000 *Parliamentary Zone Review Outcomes Report*, the Committee resolved to hold a further inquiry into pay parking. The issue was formally referred to the Committee on 10 December 2002.

Committee's Report

On 13 October 2003 the Committee presented to Parliament its report *Not a Town Centre: the Proposal for Pay Parking in the Parliamentary Zone*.

The Committee noted that the Parliamentary Zone is unique and should not be treated in the same way as commercial centres. While it acknowledged the need for a strategy to alleviate parking problems, it found itself "in no better position to advise the Parliament on the idea of pay parking in the Parliamentary Zone than it was in at the outset of the inquiry".

The Committee pointed to key concerns which it considered had not been adequately addressed in the NCA's proposal for pay parking. It noted that the Zone contains destinations of national cultural significance and is visited by large numbers of volunteers, tourists and students and the needs of these disparate groups have not been addressed. The fact that two jurisdictions (ACT/Commonwealth) operate side-by-side does not mean that parking policy will necessarily be complementary, and this also needs to be addressed.

The Committee did not give in-principle support for pay parking. Instead, it recommended that a further detailed study be undertaken by the NCA in conjunction with the ACT Government, and in consultation with all relevant stakeholders.

THE GOVERNMENT'S RESPONSE

Recommendation 1

That the National Capital Authority – in collaboration with the ACT Government and in thorough consultation with all relevant stakeholders, preferably with their consensus – develop a detailed parking policy proposal for the Parliamentary Zone that recognises the isolation of the Zone from commercial facilities and clearly defines the following characteristics:

- **the infrastructure to be built – including the timeframe and funding arrangements;**
- **the parking fees to be introduced – including provision to exclude visitors, volunteers and people with disabilities; and**
- **contingencies should the Parliamentary Zone experience further encroachment of commuters from the adjacent Barton precinct.**

Agree:

The Government acknowledges that the current parking arrangements in the Parliamentary Zone need to be improved. However, the Government has not made a decision about the introduction of pay parking in the Parliamentary Zone at this time. The Government therefore supports development of a detailed parking proposal which addresses all of the concerns raised by the Committee.

The Government considers it preferable that a seamless approach be adopted for the management of parking arrangements in the Parliamentary Zone and the surrounding areas. The recommended collaboration between the NCA and the ACT Government is therefore crucial to a successful outcome. The ACT Government has confirmed its willingness to continue to work closely with the NCA on this matter.

The Government supports the need for thorough, detailed, and responsive consultation by the NCA with all relevant stakeholders.