



Pedal Power ACT Inc.

SUBMISSION 42

SUBMISSION ON PAY PARKING IN THE PARLIAMENTARY ZONE

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Pedal Power ACT Inc. is the leading recreational and commuter cycling organisation in the ACT. As well as organising rides and other events, it is active in lobbying for cycling facilities and the rights of cyclists. It has over 1500 members.

Pedal Power supports the introduction of pay parking in the Parliamentary Zone for the following reasons:

- To correct an inequity between transport modes
- To reduce traffic congestion and assist traffic planning
- Better utilisation of valuable land
- To reduce the negative effects of car use
- To encourage healthier and more sustainable transport options

We also believe that better public transport services and facilities for active transport should be provided for commuters and other visitors to the Parliamentary Zone.

Our arguments are:

Increasing transport equity

Parking is essential to activities in the Parliamentary Zone but careful pricing and control of the supply of parking is vital to ensure that the space allocated to parking is cost justified.

Commuter parking charges should reflect the full costs of providing parking facilities. Free parking constitutes a significant subsidy for car drivers, which gives private motor transport an unfair cost advantage compared to public transport.

In Canberra's city centre and town centres, paid parking is the norm, or is in the process of being introduced. Free parking in the Parliamentary Zone is inconsistent with practice in the rest of Canberra.

Funding from parking fees could be used to provide better public and active transport (walking and cycling) facilities in the Parliamentary Zone (refer to article in Adelaide Advertiser, 2nd May 2003).

Reduction of traffic congestion and improved traffic planning

Effective control of parking has broad impacts on transport infrastructure and development. Pay parking can help reduce traffic congestion and assist traffic planning in the Parliamentary Zone by reducing the number of cars entering the zone.

Better land use

Car parks are barren, ugly spaces that are a poor use of land. If pay parking results in a reduction in the number of car park spaces required in the Parliamentary Zone this will allow some valuable land now being used for parking to be used more productively or be converted to open space.

Reducing the negative effects of car use

The external costs of car use, in terms of land allocation and road infrastructure provision, greenhouse emissions, air and noise pollution, health impacts and urban amenity, far exceed the fuel excise collected in Australia. Free parking in central areas is inconsistent with environmentally sustainable transport policies.

Encouraging healthier and more sustainable transport

Environmental and health authorities recognise the importance of public transport and active transport. A key strategy must be to shift a proportion of commuters from cars, especially single occupant vehicles, to buses or light rail, cycling and walking.

We applaud the Government's aim of increasing sustainability and reducing greenhouse gases, by encouraging bicycle commuting, walking and public transport through the AGO's support for state & territory TravelSmart programs. Improved facilities and services are required to make this a reality. Government departments and public institutions in the Parliamentary Zone are likely to be included in the ACT Government's TravelSmart program, which includes the provision of information about public transport services and active transport facilities available in and connecting with the Parliamentary Zone.

Improved public transport services and facilities for active transport

Given that paid parking may be seen as imposing a penalty on commuters, Pedal Power recommend that paid parking be complemented by improved public transport services around the area and connecting with other major centres, for both visitors and workers. This would promote ecologically sustainable development, through reduced car dependence and greenhouse gas emissions and develop a 'place of the people' that has more activity and better urban amenity.

Encouraging bicycle commuting depends on safe cycling routes and convenient end of trip facilities, such as secure bicycle parking, lockers, change rooms and showers. These facilities should be provided in all workplaces.

Conclusion

Pedal Power's policy on parking is:

- Commuter parking charges should reflect the full costs of parking facilities
- Parking charges should favour short term parking ahead of commuter parking, to ensure that people have good access to national institutions, and commercial and community facilities within the Parliamentary Zone
- All buildings should have adequate bicycle parking and showers, lockers and change rooms for cyclists

END OF SUBMISSION