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Dr Bill Pender
Inquiry Secretary
Joint Standing Committee on the National Capital and External Territories
PO Box 6021
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Provision of Amenity within the Parliamentary Triangle

Dear Dr Pender,

Questacon welcomes the Joint Standing Committee's invitation to provide a submission to the inquiry into the provision of amenity within the Parliamentary Triangle (PT). We comment below on the matters which arise under your terms of reference (letter, 24 May 2013) and note that we will be pleased to inform our staff of the existence of the inquiry.

In response to your terms of reference we advise the following:

a. The changing nature of the working environment in the Parliamentary Triangle.

Since 2007, when Questacon undertook parking surveys in preparation for a funding bid to expand its Parkes building, there has been a significant increase in demand by commuters for car parking spaces in the PT, whilst at the same time there has been an overall reduction in the number of car parking spaces.

This has led to increased competition for available car parking spaces, with the impact on the working environment being that workers arrive earlier to secure a car park and restrict movement during the day to ensure that they do not lose their space.

The reduced level of flexibility particularly affects those Questacon workers employed on a casual basis whose shifts commence after all the available car parking spaces have been occupied. From staff feedback we understand that workers are allowing an additional ½ hour before each 4 hour shift in case they have to park at some distance from the building.

- b. The adequacy of the retail services in the Parliamentary Triangle against the benchmark of like employment precincts located in the Capital.

The 2007-2013 timeframe has seen a minor increase in the provision of retail services in the PT. Whilst welcome and well supported, they are of the non-essential or discretionary type, being cafes, gift shops and bicycle or Segway hire concessions located in the National Institutions and along the lake's edge.

Notwithstanding the General Post Office, which was previously located in the National Archives building, and excluding the retail services offered within the Australian Parliament House, there is an inadequate level of retail services and amenity in the PT.

- c. Should these services be considered inadequate, recommend steps that would ameliorate that inadequacy.

Employees and visitors to Questacon would benefit from the provision of increased levels of retail services and amenity within the PT. The type of services requirements vary according to the type of precinct user however could include:

- Professional suites:
 - Medical, including dental and other allied health services
 - Legal, financial and personnel
 - Medicare, banking and postal services
- Retail outlets:
 - Food, including mini-market and café or luncheon outlet
 - Clothing
 - Newsagent
 - Hair dresser

Questacon would support the provision of these facilities provided that their location, appearance and conditions of operation do not detract from the national significance and symbolic nature of the Parliamentary Triangle. As such these facilities should be a discrete component of any new multi-storey car parking structure or incorporated into any new or expanded agency or institution.

Questacon appreciates the opportunity to make a submission to this inquiry and we look forward to active participation in any consultation and implementation process should the provision of amenity within the Parliamentary Triangle proceed.

Yours sincerely,



Lorraine Neish

A/g Director

3 June 2013