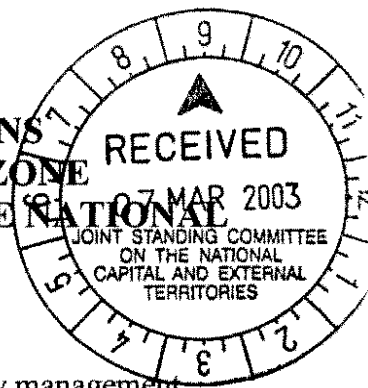


**SUBMISSION BY THE TREASURY WORKPLACE RELATIONS COMMITTEE TO THE INQUIRY INTO PARLIAMENTARY ZONE PARKING BY THE JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE NATIONAL CAPITAL AND EXTERNAL TERRITORIES**



**The Focus of this Submission**

The WRC represents the interests of Treasury staff in their dealings with Treasury management. This submission is not intended to be a comprehensive document covering all aspects of the Terms of Reference. Rather we will focus on:

- The interests of those employed in the Parliamentary Zone;
- The interests of the national institutions in the Parliamentary Zone; and
- Proposed parking policies ... and the effects of these policies on parking arrangements in the Parliamentary Zone.

While it is proper that we only advocate on behalf of Treasury employees, we would note that the impacts outlined are likely to be felt by many other staff in the Parliamentary Zone.

**The NCA Proposals**

We note that the NCA Parliamentary Zone Review background paper on 'Transport and Parking' proposes that:

- Paid parking be introduced for long-stay parking during the week;
- The amount of surface area given to parking be substantially reduced and replaced by buildings and landscape;
- Parking in structures and/or basements of new buildings be established as existing surface car spaces are replaced by development;
- The overall supply rate of parking in the Zone be reduced; and
- More commuters switch from using their vehicles to get to work to utilising public transport, as a means of improving environmental outcomes.

**Impact on Treasury Employees**

**Issue 1: Ensuring an Adequate Supply of Safe, Secure Parking**

Treasury staff are concerned to ensure that there is an adequate supply of conveniently located, safe and secure parking in the Parliamentary Zone.

We are concerned that the NCA's plan to substantially reduce the surface area provided for parking, and to reduce the overall supply of car parking spaces, may result in insufficient parking facilities for staff.

- While it may be possible to accommodate reductions in the surface area allocated for parking, we oppose reductions in the overall supply of car parking spaces, given existing supply pressures. Indeed, there may be a need for greater supply of car spaces, particularly if the NCA's plans to have extra buildings in the Parliamentary Zone come to fruition.

- We are also concerned about transitional periods involving insufficient parking supply, as existing parking facilities become unavailable while new facilities are being established.
  - For instance, if the parking on Langton Crescent were removed and the land converted to alternative uses, this would remove several hundred conveniently located car parks. Treasury staff would have to park at other facilities, creating supply pressures for other institutions. This would create significant inconvenience until alternative parking facilities were built.

Furthermore, there are particular issues that arise from the specific nature of the work of Treasury (and that of politicians, their staff, and other agencies in the Parliamentary Zone such as Finance). This work often involves:

- long hours, which often requires that employees travel home at night; and
- regular meetings, which can best be facilitated by adequate supplies of conveniently located, easily accessible parking.

The nature of the work in the Parliamentary Zone therefore requires the following:

- At a broad level, recognition that a key purpose of the Parliamentary Zone is the efficient working of Government. It is not simply about facilitating the needs of visitors – the main flavour of the NCA proposal.
  - We agree that visitor parking is important and that parking next to institutions like the National Gallery and the National Library is properly the preserve of visitors to such institutions.
  - However, it is also important to recognise that the Parliamentary Zone is the seat of Commonwealth Government, and therefore the efficient working of government needs to be an important consideration in all plans for the Parliamentary Zone, including parking arrangements. Indeed, adequate parking supply for employees will help to ensure that encroachment by employees into visitor parking does not occur.
- Parking arrangements that allow employees to get to their cars without their personal safety being threatened.
  - Long walks at night or in multi-storey parking stations create an environment of risk.
- Parking arrangements that facilitate the security of vehicles.
  - At present, Treasury employs a security guard all day to protect vehicles. This followed a spate of 'break-ins' to vehicles.
- Convenient short-stay parking so that the business of government can occur efficiently.
- Recognition that bus travel may not be a useful option for many staff working in the Parliamentary Zone.
  - Night travel creates personal security risks at bus stops, on the bus, and walking home.
  - Buses are not frequent later in the evening, and travel from the Parliamentary Zone often requires the catching of two buses.

- Buses are particularly unhelpful for families with children, particularly if school or child care is not located within the vicinity of work.

These considerations place a significant premium on ensuring that substantial facilities are constructed to provide an adequate supply of safe, secure parking, prior to existing parking spaces being removed and used for alternative uses. The NCA paper does not include any detailed plan to ensure that such parking will be provided over time, and our contact with the NCA has not led us to believe that any such plan exists. Rather, parking would be considered as each development application was considered. This leaves open the strong possibility of: significant inconvenience in transition periods; and insufficient supply of safe, secure parking in the longer term.

#### **Treasury WRC Position**

1. There be no overall reduction in car parking spaces.
2. The NCA be asked to establish a plan to ensure adequate supplies of safe, secure parking for Treasury and other staff in the Parliamentary Zone.
3. The NCA consult affected agencies prior to finalisation of the plan.
4. No decision to authorise implementation of paid parking be made until such a plan exists.
5. Should paid parking be allowed, the NCA be required to consult actively with Parliamentary Zone staff prior to any developments that would affect employees or the efficient and effective operation of the government.

#### **Issue 2: Impact on Employees' Financial Position and Working Conditions**

##### *(i) At Present*

Under present workplace relations arrangements, Treasury staff would be compensated for any payments they had to make for parking. Section 5.5 of the Treasury Certified Agreement 2002-04 states that:

- 1) The parties recognise that, at the commencement of this Agreement, parking around the Treasury Building is at no cost to employees.
- 2) The parties agree that, should paid parking be introduced in the current Treasury carparks, then the Treasury, in consultation with the Workplace Relations Committee, will ensure that employees are no worse off as a result.

As paid parking has not yet been implemented, nor long stay rates determined, we can not be precise in determining how Treasury might compensate its staff for the imposition of paid parking.

However, a rough estimate is that the cost to Treasury would be in the order of \$2.3m per annum. This calculation is based on the following assumptions:

- A \$6 charge for all-day parking;
- An average of 250 working days per year;
- 800 employees;
- The need to provide \$6 in after tax income/benefit.

Under this scenario, the impact on Treasury staff would be:

- Lost time and inconvenience associated with purchasing and displaying parking tickets and navigating multi-story car parks; and
- If Treasury was not given supplementation for the \$2.3 million per annum it had to pay to staff to compensate for paid parking:
  - staff may have to face employment reductions, work intensification and/or reduced funding for education and training, and other services; and
  - the capacity of Treasury could be marginally diminished.

*(ii) In the Future*

The current Treasury Certified Agreement expires in September 2004. It is possible that clauses ensuring compensation for parking would be maintained in the subsequent agreements. However, if clauses providing for compensation of Treasury employees for having to pay for parking were removed, many Treasury employees would face a substantial additional financial burden.

- Many Treasury employees would face a financial burden of around \$1,500 per annum.
  - This figure is derived by assuming the need to pay \$6 per day for 250 days.

Arguably, payment for parking in Parkes has limited justification. In return for payments for parking in other locations such as Civic, people gain access to a substantial array of services, such as post offices, newsagents and a large variety of retail outlets. A cluster of such facilities does not exist within 3.5 kilometres of Treasury. To access such services, staff have to travel to Kingston, Manuka or Civic. If paid parking were imposed in Parkes, staff would have to pay to park in the Parliamentary Zone, and then be charged again when they wished to access services in Kingston, Manuka or Civic.

**Treasury WRC Position:**

- We oppose the imposition of paid parking in the Parliamentary Zone.

**Broader Impacts**

While it is proper that we only advocate on behalf of Treasury employees, we would note that the impacts outlined are likely to be felt by many other staff in the Parliamentary Zone, including:

- Department of Finance
- Environment Australia
- High Court of Australia
- National Archives of Australia
- National Capital Authority
- National Gallery of Australia
- National Library of Australia
- National Science and Technology Centre
- Old Parliament House
- Parliament House
- Reconciliation Place
- The Lobby Restaurant