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JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE NATIONAL CAPITAL
AND EXTERNAL TERRITORIES

Reference: Pay parking in the parliamentary zone

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JOINT COMMITTEE ON THE NATIONAL CAPITAL AND EXTERNAL TERRITORIES

Wednesday, 13 August 2003

Members: Senator Lightfoot (*Chairman*), Senator Crossin (*Deputy Chair*), Senators Colbeck, Greig, Hogg, Lundy, Scullion and Stott Despoja and Mr Causley, Ms Ellis, Mr Johnson, Mr Neville, Mr Snowdon and Mr Cameron Thompson

Senators and members in attendance: Senators Hogg, Lightfoot and Lundy, Ms Ellis and Mr Neville

Terms of reference for the inquiry:

To inquire into and report on:

- The interests of visitors to the Parliamentary Zone;
- The interests of those employed in the Parliamentary Zone and adjacent areas;
- The interests of the national institutions in the Parliamentary Zone;
- Tourism and related issues; and
- Proposed parking policies for Forrest and Barton – areas adjacent to the Parliamentary Zone managed by the ACT Government – and the effects of these policies on parking arrangements in the Parliamentary Zone.

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Committee met at 6.06 p.m.

LARCOMBE, Mr John Francis, Senior Transport Economist, A.C.T. Planning and Land Environment Authority, Department of Urban Services

MACDONALD, Mr Brian John, General Manager Road Transport, Department of Urban Services

THOMPSON, Mr Alan Geoffrey, Chief Executive Officer, Department of Urban Services

THURSTON, Mr Guy, Chief Executive, ACTION Authority

CHAIRMAN—I welcome the representatives of the ACT government. These hearings are legal proceedings of the parliament and warrant the same respect as the proceedings of parliament itself. Giving false or misleading evidence is a serious matter and may be regarded as a contempt of parliament. The committee has received a submission from the ACT government, No. 37. Are there any corrections or amendments you would like to make to your submission?

Mr Thompson—No, Senator.

CHAIRMAN—The committee prefers that evidence be taken in public, but if you wish to give confidential evidence to the committee you may request that the hearings be held in camera and the committee will consider your request. Before we ask you some questions, do you wish to make an opening statement?

Mr Thompson—We have a PowerPoint presentation to which I will speak a reasonable proportion of, and then hand over to Mr Thurston to finish.

CHAIRMAN—Can you give the committee some idea of how long that presentation will take?

Mr Thompson—I would say, if I move promptly through it, about seven or eight minutes.

CHAIRMAN—That is fine. Please proceed, Mr Thompson.

A PowerPoint presentation was then given—

Mr Thompson—We are here today representing the ACT government as both the state government of the ACT and the city council, if you like. I guess it is fair to say we are here in support of the policy proposals of the National Capital Authority. Our government's policy in terms of pay parking and public transport is highly consistent with the policies which we understand have been developed by the National Capital Authority for this part of Canberra. It is also fair to say that we do not have all the solutions, but we think we can contribute to resolving some of the particular parking challenges that are here right in the parliamentary triangle area and the adjoining area of Barton.

We have been developing a sustainable transport plan for Canberra, and I will get on to some of the components of that a little later. We have pay parking in a lot of the ACT and we intend

introducing more of it in some of our major shopping areas. There would be implementation issues in terms of introducing pay parking in this precinct. We know that, but we have lived through it in other parts of Canberra, and in the end we believe there are some very beneficial results.

Mr NEVILLE—Just for clarity, ‘on street parking’ means?

Mr Thompson—‘On street’ means on the street as distinct from—

Mr NEVILLE—Kerbside parking.

Mr Thompson—Yes. If you move into Barton, we own one off-street car park and another temporary one in Forrest. As the governing authority in Barton, we are also responsible directly for on street parking. However, it is worth reflecting that even in Barton, where there are some very difficult parking problems, our on street parking is only 11 per cent of the total. The remainder is on the leases in private car parks. In Parkes, our role is to assist the National Capital Authority simply because we have an enforcement arm. Our parking operations people try to be courteous but in the end sometimes have to issue a penalty notice.

There is an indication of the situation in Barton and that adjoining bit of Forrest on this side of Manuka. You can see the overall figures there. On street parking is some 600 spaces and a much more substantial number of parking places on the ground surface, including big car parks like that behind the Edmond Barton building and on site, which generally means basement parking in a lot of the other buildings.

Senator HOGG—When you say ‘on site’, what do you mean by that? On whose site?

Mr Thompson—On the site of those properties.

Senator HOGG—So it could be private property or it could be Commonwealth property?

Mr Thompson—Yes. It could be purely private property like the Institution of Engineers building. It could be a Commonwealth occupied property which the Commonwealth is leasing from a private landlord or it could be one of the ongoing 100 per cent Commonwealth owned properties.

Mr NEVILLE—Could you go back to that slide again? Following on from Senator Hogg’s question, are those on site car parks all developed parking sites under buildings and asphalted ones adjoining buildings, or do some of them include areas which have spread out on to grass and things like that?

Mr Thompson—The on site ones are the ones in the basements of buildings and the like. A number of the surface ones—and you can see the major ones there, such as site 4, site 2 and so on—are reasonably well developed as surface car parks. They might have kerbs, guttering and a sealed pavement. But if you go out there on a working day you will also find that cars park almost anywhere.

Mr NEVILLE—We have witnessed that.

Mr Thompson—So they are a bit of a mixture.

Senator HOGG—You might be covering this later in your submission, but do you know the occupancy rate of the on site car parks? At any point in time do you know if they are 50 per cent occupied or 75 per cent occupied? In other words, do you know the average occupation?

Mr Thompson—I am afraid I cannot give you that.

Mr Larcombe—I think it is close to 100 per cent in the areas marked there, but there are some vacancies towards the fringe and indeed in Parkes as well. Of those central car parks—2, 4 and 5—4 is pretty much 100 per cent, as is 2, and 5 has a boom gate and there is some pay parking there.

Senator HOGG—Sorry, you are now confusing me. I can see 2, 4 and 5; they are surface parks.

Mr Larcombe—They are, yes.

Senator HOGG—I am just interested in the on site car parks at this stage.

Mr Thompson—These are the basement ones and the like.

Senator HOGG—You do not know the average occupancy rate?

Mr Thompson—No. I would assume, if they are typical of other office buildings around Canberra, that they will be fully allocated to the people who work in that building. These are not commercial car parks; these are for the tenants of the building.

Senator HOGG—Do you know if the occupiers of those on site spaces pay for those individually or are they paid for by the corporate entity?

Mr Thompson—With most commercial leases there will be a package deal where you lease a certain amount of floor space at a going rate and that may entitle the tenant to a certain number of car parks as well, which is built into the lease rate per square metre. For others it will be a very explicit charge per car park per month.

Senator HOGG—But you have no analysis of what happens in that on site sector of the marketplace?

Mr Thompson—No.

Senator HOGG—But you can tell us what happens in the surface sector, because I presume you are responsible for that.

Mr Thompson—No. We are responsible for only a small amount—about 130 sites on the surface.

Senator HOGG—About 130 spaces? Is that in No. 5?

Mr Thompson—Yes. The big one at No. 4 is a Commonwealth property, which is one of the more crowded ones. It is the one where you see a lot of cars parked on the kerb and it is often a bit of a mess.

Mr NEVILLE—And 2 is?

Mr Larcombe—No. 2 is the one at Foreign Affairs.

Mr Thompson—It is not ours.

Mr NEVILLE—And 3 is an unofficial one; is that what you are saying? People just spread out onto it?

Mr Thompson—Yes. I think in one sense I did not finish off answering the question about the casuals. No. 3 is an ad hoc one.

Senator HOGG—Are there any charges that apply to No. 5 currently?

Mr Larcombe—Yes, there are. That is managed on behalf of the ACT government and it is a pay parking arrangement.

CHAIRMAN—Could I perhaps ask you to proceed with your opening submission? There must be only five minutes left. Then if the committee wishes you could switch back to some of these if there is time.

Mr Larcombe—This diagram shows car park 4, which we talked about.

Mr Thompson—To be blunt, during the weekdays it is messy. There will be cars parked in a fairly random way.

This next one is back in Parkes. It is typically very busy in those areas, particularly where there is all day parking. Commuter parking can, to some extent, interfere with tourist activities within the Parkes area.

This one gives you a very quick indication of how we as Canberrans behave relative to other capital cities. We do use cars for transport to and from work a bit more than other cities. The two graphs on the left are for drivers and for passengers. We use public transport rather less than other cities. We walk about the same amount and we cycle a little bit more than in other cities. In terms of public transport, it is worth noting that our usage of public transport is well below that of Sydney or Melbourne.

We have been working on a sustainable transport plan. It is an ambitious plan. It is about encouraging people to travel to and from all sorts of places, particularly from work, by walking, cycling and taking public transport in preference to motor vehicles. We have quite an ambitious target to move up from seven per cent public transport usage for all trips to 20 per cent over the next 25 years. We will achieve that primarily through carrots, hopefully. One of the incentives is

to send signals to people by making sure that the cost of parking is understood by people and can be seen as an offset against the cost of a bus ticket.

In terms of the areas we are responsible for, we already have pay parking in Civic, Woden and so on. Either we ourselves or the various commercial entities that manage our commercial centres, such as Lend Lease, are encouraging structured car parks in the centres rather than on the ground car parking. It is just a waste of space. A very important part of our parking philosophy is to make sure we have plenty of short-term parking for the short-term users—shoppers, tourists and the like—as well as longer stay parking for people travelling to work. The reality is that even when we charge we often merely cover the cost of the forgone revenue that we could achieve from the land.

Pay parking is not a panacea to everything; we know that. But it does drive a couple of very useful behaviours. It does provide some encouragement to people to use public transport. It also provides people with encouragement to use other forms of transport—bikes, walking and the like. It also provides the facilitation—I guess that is the right word—for the construction of off street structured car parks.

This one shows where we are focusing our own efforts, and our proposal for Barton is for short-stay parking on street with a view that the commuter parking in Barton ought to be off the streets in structured car parks. This is just an indication of the indicative charges that we levy across Canberra. For Civic, the inner ring, it is \$9 a day, but for the outer rings it is \$6.70 and \$4.50—and somewhat lower charges in the other town centres. That compares with our current flat across Canberra bus fares per day on the monthly ticket of \$3.65 or single use \$4.80.

We find when we are implementing pay parking—and we are right in the middle of that in Tuggeranong and Belconnen at the moment—we need a lot of consultation to deal with all sorts of local issues. Undoubtedly, there is initially opposition. We have encountered that before today. Generally we are able to resolve concerns. Once pay parking is in, generally the community accepts the system, but it is not totally painless as it is brought in.

I will now hand over to Guy Thurston to speak briefly about the public transport system that is here in and around the parliamentary triangle. It is a very good system.

Mr Thurston—There is a comprehensive bus network in Canberra, and we will leave you with a bus map which I believe you asked for last time. We are servicing an area equivalent to the distance of Hornsby to Cronulla, and that is a big area. However, there are three million people in Sydney and we have 300,000-odd in Canberra. That puts the issue in perspective, but there is a comprehensive bus network in Canberra which covers the majority of people within reasonable distance of a bus service.

Let us move to the bus network map, which we will leave with you, as well as a handout on this information. This is a blow-up of the bus map specifically to the parliamentary triangle. What we have is seven regular seven-day-a-week routes servicing the parliamentary triangle, generally speaking going from the northern suburbs in Ainslie-Dickson through to Woden via the parliamentary triangle. On the Constitution leg, during the day there is a bus every eight to 12 minutes. There are three routes servicing that. On Commonwealth Avenue there are four routes servicing that with a bus every eight to 10 minutes. It goes up to 16 buses in peak periods.

We also have the intertown service, which is really the backbone of the public transport system. That primarily services Belconnen, City, Woden and Tuggeranong and it stops only at Albert Hall. So it would certainly assist people working in a number of areas but not the whole of the parliamentary triangle. That is a very regular service every five minutes all day every day from Monday to Friday with regular services on weekends.

There is a comprehensive bus service, but one would ask why it is not being used more. We would like to suggest that as part of this process we have some information sessions with different parts of the area and focus groups to try to stimulate demand or identify usage patterns to see if we can adjust the bus service to more reflect the requirements, if that is required. Then we would need to market the bus services again. However, we are dealing with a city which has the highest car ownership in the country, the highest two-car ownership in the country, the highest income in the country, the least traffic congestion and the cheapest parking. So there are a number of issues there which do not lend themselves to good usage of public transport. Obviously the more people we can get onto public transport the better, and the system can become more and more efficient. The easiest thing to do is to increase frequency if we are getting increased patronage. It is a bit like the dog chasing its tail.

The other thing I wanted to talk about was the mode split. Under the sustainable transport plan we are looking at migrating a section of the community to consider public transport as an option. There is a view when we start talking like this that we want everyone to convert to public transport. That is not the case. What we want is people to look at their travel needs in a week and see that if they use the bus one or two days a week it would be of a great benefit. We cannot expect the community to say they do not need to rely on a car. That is just not practical in these days because Canberra is well dispersed and there is a lot of activity. So we are using our marketing to say to people, 'Consider one of the adults in the household being on the bus and using that as many days as possible and, more importantly, get your kids on the school buses to reduce congestion as well.'

There could be a lack of understanding by a number of people in the parliamentary triangle, and I think that is perhaps where we could do some good work to try to improve the situation. People will not use the system if they do not understand it. As there is a high turnover of people in Russell in the parliamentary triangle and the Public Service every year, perhaps that is an area where we could make any transition easier.

The other issue is fares. Alan mentioned a monthly ticket being \$3.65 return. It is \$4.20 return anywhere in Canberra, which is pretty cheap by any standards, and that fare will not go up for the next two years, at the direction of the pricing commissioner. I do not think price is the issue. I think bus prices are very attractive. It is a matter of increasing people's understanding and selling our wares better.

Ms ELLIS—Thank you, gentlemen, for being here this evening. First of all, can we go back to the earlier graph you had which showed transport use, ACT versus national, for just a second? Is that measured as at 2001?

Mr Thompson—Yes, on the national census.

Ms ELLIS—What amount of paid parking in the ACT was in place at that point?

Mr Thompson—As of then, basically you had pay parking in Civic, Woden, Manuka, Dickson, Deakin and Forrest.

Ms ELLIS—So a fair bit?

Mr Thompson—Yes, a fair bit.

Ms ELLIS—It does not seem to have had much of an impact in terms of swaying people towards public transport.

Mr Thompson—No.

Ms ELLIS—Can I just say to Mr Thurston, this is not an attack on ACTION. I am a bit of an ACTION fan. I am not a user but a fan of it. I support the fact that we need to get people onto public transport. What I am trying to get at is to what degree it is going to be effective in this case. Where other areas in the ACT already have public parking today, what improvement have we seen in the patronage of ACTION buses as a result of those initiatives?

Mr Thurston—That would be hard to measure.

Ms ELLIS—It needs to be measured, given that one part of the justification for the consideration of pay parking in Barton and the triangle is in fact to get people on buses—in other words, traffic management.

Mr MacDonald—It is fair to say that we have the highest level of buses in the city area. I think we have a 20 per cent modal share, if I am not mistaken, Mr Thurston, in that area. That is one demonstration of the convenience of public transport because it is very high frequency through the city and where the highest parking charges exist. Elasticity studies have shown us that, frankly, unless parking charges are reasonably priced—that is, getting towards that top end—they may not have an effect. I think one of the strategies we are talking about is trying to rationalise parking and the problems we have all seen in the parliamentary triangle by having some pricing put in place to allow us to start building multidecks and rationalising the whole parking situation—a bit of demand management.

Ms ELLIS—Can you elaborate on what you mean by that? Are you saying that we need to adjust the cost of pay parking?

Mr MacDonald—There is no charge currently, obviously. If there is an introduction of some pay parking, that will be a stimulus for the construction because there is a commercial return now available through fees for multidecks and things which will allow an adequate supply of parking on the basis that it is priced to reflect the cost of provision of service.

Ms ELLIS—I am going to be the devil's advocate for a second here. Are you saying that we need to put in pay parking to get the money to build the structures that people then park their cars in? Where is the horse and where is the cart here, please? It is a bit confusing.

Mr Thompson—If you take Barton, which is our bailiwick, if you like, we are not suggesting that we would introduce pay parking so that it raised some money for the ACT government to

build a car park. What we are saying is that by introducing pay parking on the streets of Barton we believe that will provide the impetus for commercial companies to find it financially feasible to put up structured car parks.

Ms ELLIS—Has there been some work done on how feasible that will become? Have there been discussions with the private sector as to what point it will reach that will trigger it to see an investment opportunity? What sort of work has been done to base that theory in reality?

Mr MacDonald—I think that is probably a question for the NCA. I am sure it has had a look at those issues.

Ms ELLIS—We will ask the authority that question as well, but seeing that it is part of your reasoning I would have thought it may have been part of your deliberations.

Mr Thompson—It has been the history in virtually every other major city in Australia that once the council brings in paid parking on the streets then the Wilsons and so on find it feasible and are able to get a financial return from a structured car park.

Mr MacDonald—An example of that is in the city, where we have two privately constructed car parks, multidecks.

Ms ELLIS—I am not convinced that Civic or the city—whichever we call it—is a good analogy because we do not have theatre, restaurants, late night shopping and so on in the parliamentary triangle, as we have in the city-Civic area. It might be a slightly skewed analogy to some degree because they are quite different usage areas other than between the normal working hours of the day. I just make that as an observation. I do not know if it is an accurate analogy for the sake of the discussion.

Can I go back to the first briefing that we had at this committee some time ago now. It was an informal briefing where we had both you and the NCA together introducing the idea of pay parking to the committee in Barton and the NCA area. I have to be very frank and say that one of the most disturbing aspects of that briefing for me that day was the quite considerable contrast between the two authorities in the reasoning, the purposes and the outcome being aimed at in relation to the wish for pay parking. Without wishing to verbal anybody, I will try to remember as accurately as I can. The impression I got was that, on the one hand, we had the ACT government saying that we needed to manage the traffic and the parking. We were very conscious that we had to then coerce, suggest, move people onto public transport and the parking fees would be very much aligned to that view. In other words, parking fees would be—I do not wish to say ‘draconian’; I am not meaning that—very much a deterrent to bringing the car in with a wish to getting people onto buses.

The other side of the argument from the NCA’s perspective—and I am being very general here—was that we need to control the traffic, we need to control the parking, we have to somehow get this back under our own control. So we wish to bring in pay parking but we have no intention of making it a charge to deter tourists, visitors, volunteer workers to national institutions and so on. They are two quite different wishes of outcome which I think were part of the trigger for this committee deciding to have an inquiry into this matter. You cannot have both of those things sitting side by side, street to street neighbouring with quite different views. I

cannot see that both the parking charges would be the same. I am happy to be convinced otherwise; that is why I am asking the question. Have I in fact got that wrong? If I have, can you point out how I have? If I have it right, have we sorted it out since then? I am willing to hear that I have it wrong, but that is how it came across.

Mr Thompson—A very important part of this is that our briefings were all about introducing pay parking for Barton, which is fundamentally an office area, and we would see whatever regime we introduced there being compatible with the regime in Manuka, Dickson and so on. It would be about providing signals to people to think about using the bus and also that financial signal for the commercial companies to build structured car parks.

If you move across Kings Avenue—and it is quite a wide avenue—then I think the NCA view is a very rational and defensible view. It is very akin to the way things operate at Woden, which is the best example at the moment. People go shopping there for a very low or non-existent charge, whereas if they want to stay the whole day—that is, the travel to work or commuter people—then they pay more money. That is the vision I had for Parkes. I am not trying to speak for Annabelle, but I was assuming that in Parkes there would be a system where the parking for tourists who are visiting the gallery for three hours were very low, whereas it would be significantly higher for the all day parkers. That is the sort of model which I think was behind what you were asking about.

Ms ELLIS—I might expand on this a bit further with the NCA later on. It is not just, with the greatest of respect, Kings Avenue. There are bits closer than that where the border is very close. It seemed to me at the time that there was a very big danger that we could have two regimes in place. They are going to be two regimes with different aims and therefore possibly different outcomes occurring. I was just curious as to how on earth this was going to be managed. You could only speak for your own, and I respect that. I fully understand the aim that you people had in mind.

Mr Thompson—It does work fairly well in shopping centres and at other tourist facilities to have the shorter term. I think for museums and the like it might be a figure of three hours—I am not sure—where the fee is either nil or a very low fee and then it ramps up after that.

Ms ELLIS—We will need to take that up with the NCA, because there are people who legitimately need to stay there longer than three hours. I am conscious my colleagues want to speak as well, but I have one last question to Mr Thurston about ACTION. You put up a map about the routes that service the triangle. We have had public hearings here where we have spoken to a range of people, both the operators of the national iconic buildings and institutions as well as workers and volunteers from those organisations.

It seems to me from my observation that, yes, on the outskirts of the triangle, for want of a better term, the frequency of bus services is excellent—every five minutes and seven minutes. But the comment made to us constantly and consistently was that for a worker in that area within the triangle needing to go out during lunchtime or other periods of the day for business other than work—medical, shopping, banking, whatever it might be—that is where the service is lacking. If it is going up Commonwealth Avenue or along Kings Avenue that is fine, but they have got to get to it. Am I right in accepting their argument? Has ACTION ever considered mini

services within the triangle to actually be closer to the doorstep, so to speak? That is the time element, I would imagine, and the inconvenience.

Mr Thurston—It is a bit of a catch-22, in answer to your question. Travel time is the key element for people to use public transport. If it does the proverbial Cook's tour, no-one would use it. If you look at that map, it is saying that if you went to, say, the Prime Minister and Cabinet in National Circuit you have got the choice of seven different routes which are going every three, four or five minutes. One way might go via the Commonwealth, the other via Constitution. I am sure there are some examples where people would have a walk. But if you look at the centre in National Circuit where there are seven routes operating, it is within walking distance of most agencies or buildings.

Ms ELLIS—So you are disagreeing with the views that they gave to us?

Mr Thurston—I think it comes back to the point I made in terms of understanding the bus routes. One of the problems with bus routes anywhere, especially when you see a map like that, is that it is like a tin of spaghetti on a sheet of paper. Perhaps we need to put more effort into people's understanding of the bus services. I would like to see as an outcome of these deliberations a recognition that perhaps we have to do more education within the instrumentalities around the area to try and improve the understanding of what is available. If people do not have confidence, they just say that it is all too hard.

Ms ELLIS—Is it true that that applies ACT wide?

Mr Thurston—I think there is an element of that, yes, in any bus system in the world. I use the example of a railway system. By its very nature, it is fixed and so people become very used to what it does and they have confidence in using the system. What we are looking at are some ways of improving the confidence of bus passengers. That may mean real-time information, better facilities at interchanges and so on. It is the whole package of things to get people to use the public transport system. But I think it is about education. Irrespective of this, we will be trying to do some focus groups to see if we can improve the understanding. I was overseas for the informal committee hearing. When I got back, I found that people had said there were no bus services in the parliamentary triangle. Obviously there is a mismatch of understanding.

Ms ELLIS—There I have one more question back to you, Alan, if I can: as far as the ACT is concerned, in this case within Barton, within ACTPLA is there a strong view about the need for appropriate incorporation of parking requirements when the development of a building occurs?

Mr Thompson—Yes, there is. John can give you a reasonably good picture of that.

Mr Larcombe—I would say the answer is yes, although in terms of the requirement rate, if you like, from an office building we tend to require less than the total generation rate—and this happens in all cities—with a view to ultimately encouraging forms of transport other than cars. Our transport plan is talking about 20 per cent of people using public transport. There is still going to be 80 per cent using their car. We do acknowledge that. We realise that it is important to the viability of the town centres that we have adequate parking. These town centres compete with each other and they compete with areas like the airport that have development. We

recognise that we cannot get too draconian with either charging or the availability of car spaces in the pursuit of sustainable transport.

Ms ELLIS—We have discussed this amongst the committee, particularly after we had our little bus tour around the area and saw that they are virtually parking on top of trees. I think you should be giving out parking awards for ingenuity and death-defying acts of parking in some cases. The real question I think is that the parliamentary triangle is the centre and heart of the national capital—the heart of the nation, to put it in emotive terms. My view is that it needs to be treated quite differently from other places in terms of its requirement, for the simple reason of what it is, what it is to look like and how we want to project it. I know the NCA has views about this as well.

My view is that any requirements need to almost be a little bit additional, given the environment in which this is sitting. Nobody wants to see the car parks and the place looking like it is with the lack of parking. I find it fascinating that we can have a large building—and this is not in your area necessarily, although it might be—with a basement with 25 car parks under it. I know it costs money, but what is more important when we are looking at the national capital and the triangle in which it sits? I just wanted the view of the ACT people, I guess, as to how we feel about this.

Mr Larcombe—I think we acknowledge that all development requires parking spaces. It comes down to an issue of whether the government pays for it directly or whether you feel that users should pay an appropriate charge.

Ms ELLIS—The person who builds the building?

Mr Thurston—And that does happen.

Ms ELLIS—Could I be so bold?

Mr Larcombe—I think there is also an issue in that the car parks underneath buildings in basements often do not get fully utilised for various reasons. It may be more efficient from a community point of view to build structured car parks for multiple users, and pay parking is part of that.

Ms ELLIS—Do you have a view as to why the ones in the basements are not fully used? I am sure if the workers could get to them they would use them.

Mr Larcombe—Yes, but there are often issues about how you allocate that.

Ms ELLIS—I know. I am aware of that.

Mr NEVILLE—While I do not prejudge the outcome of the inquiry, I think I should put my cards on the table early. There are three key things that I am looking for in this. The first one is—and I hope I am not stealing Senator Hogg's thunder; and it comes off what Ms Ellis said as well—that I think this triangle is unique, not because we live here as politicians but because it has all of the national institutions. I do not think you can impose the same sorts of parking rules and regulations on it that you impose on shopping centres and the like. That is the first thing.

The second thing is that I will be governed by the reasonableness of anything. I will certainly not be a party to using parking as a blunt instrument to put people onto public transport. The third thing—and I suppose it is related to the first—is that I think people should have unfettered access to the national institutions, say, the Library—not just the people of Canberra but the thousands of tourists who come here. As largely as possible, that should be, to my way of thinking, on a free basis. Perhaps there might be some rules that, if you go beyond two or three hours, you pay a nominal fee. My general view is that people should be able to access national institutions without paying.

I refer now to our tour of public buildings down there at an earlier date. I realise, in fairness to the ACT government, that you have very few agency buildings in Parkes and Barton for which the ACT government is responsible. Our observation from the bus was that a lot of the below institution parking for the Commonwealth agency and peak body buildings was not fully utilised. There were a lot of very big cars, obviously the executives' cars, in a lot of the car parks but a lot of others were empty. Nowhere did we see clearly delineated visitor parking—where people could park when they come onto the premises for half an hour or an hour, or whatever it might be, to do business with that particular department. I suspect there is unutilised parking in that area. That is just a personal observation. It is largely anecdotal, but we did observe that as we drove around. Is the base one-way fare \$2.10?

Mr Thurston—If you buy multiride tickets.

Mr NEVILLE—I have jumped ahead of myself. The base one-way trip fare is \$2.40?

Mr Thurston—That is correct.

Mr NEVILLE—It is \$2.10 if you buy 10?

Mr Thurston—Yes.

Mr NEVILLE—That is presumably five—

Mr Thurston—You can use those 10 trips any way you like at any time.

Mr NEVILLE—In a week?

Mr Thurston—No, there is no time limit.

Mr NEVILLE—So if someone bought one of those each week to go to and from work those 10 would suffice and it would cost \$21 for the week?

Mr Thurston—That is correct.

Mr NEVILLE—And you have a weekly ticket for \$23.50. How does that differ?

Mr Thurston—You can use the weekly ticket seven days a week as many times as you like—lunchtime, all that sort of thing.

Ms ELLIS—You can make six trips in one day.

Mr NEVILLE—I see what you mean. The others are fare savers. The meter clicks down with each trip.

Mr Thurston—Our marketing has been that the fare saver has a good discount from \$2.40 to \$2.10. That is the most usable ticket. It can be used at any time to suit the passenger rather than having to be used in a week.

Mr NEVILLE—I was not trying to get so much into your fare structure other than to try to determine what the average Canberran would pay to go to work and go home from work five days a week on the public transport.

Mr Thurston—\$21.

Mr NEVILLE—What are parking charges for a week for the car parks you control?

Mr Thompson—It is a sliding scale. It depends on how close you are in to Civic and so on.

Mr NEVILLE—What would be an equivalent of the parliamentary triangle?

Mr Thompson—Woden would probably be comparable.

Mr MacDonald—Zone 1 is basically right next to the shops. Zone 2 is slightly further away. So it is basically a distance based parameter.

Mr NEVILLE—So to be within walking distance of the major buildings of Parkes and Barton most people could park for around \$5 per day; is that right?

Mr Thompson—Yes.

Mr NEVILLE—Someone who parked all day at Woden or Civic would be paying \$22.50 per week?

Mr Thompson—Yes.

Mr NEVILLE—Let me put this proposition to you then. I think the Commonwealth—I am not talking about governments of any particular colour—have failed because this has grown like Topsy. I know that the agencies like yours and the NCA will say that you have tried to bring this to our attention over the years and we have ducked it each time. That may be a legitimate criticism. I think it is a problem that an area as important as this is to Canberra has been neglected for this long. I would like you to comment on what you would think of some architecturally pleasing car park—I am not talking about the Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane car parks that are raw concrete with a few slabs at the front and occasionally a brick wall. I am talking about architecturally pleasing designs—perhaps two or three levels underground and one or two levels above ground. What would your reaction be to having a couple of those in the Barton-Parkes area?

Mr Thompson—Structured car parks above ground are a lot cheaper than going down into the ground. As soon as you go underground the costs go up a lot. You can certainly do good designs for car parks. Good architects like Ms Pegrum could certainly deliver you a very nice one and you would probably do it by having a facade of office and then car park behind rather than having car park right onto the street. That is all fine, but the catch is that somebody has to pay for that car park. The cost at the moment for above ground structures would be of the order of \$15,000 per car park. That is a significant investment. You either have people like Wilsons do that and get a commercial return because of the parking charges or some group of taxpayers end up paying the bill. I think those are the only two choices.

Mr NEVILLE—Is there a middle ground where the taxpayer pays for it but there is a nominal recoupment, with the government agencies providing their own attendants? Why does it have to be commercial? Why can it not be on a cost recovery basis over a 10-year span? We have all those buildings and we know roughly what is going to happen in the parliamentary triangle. The ACT has a rough idea what is going to happen in Barton, perhaps not to the same level of delineation over the next 10 or 15 years. We do not know to the exact year because some buildings are brought forward and some are pushed back. But by and large, we know the types of buildings and the sorts of institutions that are going to go there. We know roughly what the Commonwealth Public Service is going to be in this area and what the ACT Public Service is going to be. Those things are reasonably well known.

Why could we not plan architecturally pleasing car parks, perhaps two quite large ones, in that area on a cost recovery basis for 10 years? Why does it have to be commercial or why does it have to be a dead loss? Why do we always attack those sorts of problems with either/or rather than looking at this as a very special place for the public who come here, where the government institutions operate and need to operate efficiently and with due respect to their employees? I suppose I am asking a lot of rhetorical questions. I would like to hear what you think of those propositions?

Mr Thompson—When I was talking about commercial, I was not necessarily talking about a car park operator making a huge profit. Obviously there are horses for courses. With some of those inner Sydney or inner Melbourne car parks, I assume Wilsons or whomever are making very handsome profits. In terms of car park structures, there are all sorts of models. Some of the car parks that you see in Sydney and Melbourne run by Wilsons are not owned by them. They are owned by somebody else who then brings in Wilsons as an operator. There will be some sort of commercial deal. All of those things are possible. As soon as you move away from the word ‘commercial’ to something else, you have to find a government willing to put up the wherewithal, the capital outlay, and then that government has to take its own decision about what level of cost recovery it wants over a 10-year period.

Mr NEVILLE—You do that with ACTION Buses, do you not? I am talking about the principle, not the operation.

Mr Thompson—The sources of revenue for ACTION are the fare box and a series of community service obligation payments, recognising there are pensioners, recognising it operates seven days a week and recognising it operates well outside peak periods when a commercial bus operator might not make a return. So that has been like a public policy position of most governments in Australia. It has been less common for governments to take a position

about investing in significant structured car parks on a subsidy basis, if you like. It is not unknown, but it is certainly much less common.

Mr NEVILLE—If there is one place in Australia where you are trying to balance all those competing interests, would it not be Parkes and Barton?

Mr Thompson—I would say definitely in Parkes it would be the case.

Mr NEVILLE—And to a lesser extent, Barton. As you get across the other side of Barton it becomes very heavily commercial.

Mr Thompson—But Barton is very much a mixed economy area now. It is Commonwealth government departments, it is lobby groups and it is significant national associations. It is very mixed.

Mr NEVILLE—The other question I would like to explore with you, and you might like to come back to the committee on this: let us say you had a sensitised, slot type card that was issued to public servants and people who worked for government agencies at some nominal weekly charge that entitled them to a particular type of parking, whether that is kerbside, in an open car park or in an undercover car park, where boom gates are worked by an electronic card system, including multistorey car parking. Is there any reason why that would not work?

Mr Thompson—In a practicality sense, none at all, but it comes back very much to a policy decision for the Commonwealth government both in terms of the planning issues and in terms of the Commonwealth as an employer of those staff. In a practical sense, yes, the technologies exist. They are used every day in Sydney and Melbourne.

Mr NEVILLE—In fact, they are used in some of the government departments themselves with their own underground parking.

Mr Thompson—Yes.

Mr NEVILLE—So it is not a new technology. It is just that the employees a little lower down the scale do not get that opportunity.

Mr Thompson—That is right, yes.

Mr NEVILLE—If the ACT government were to do a station and the Commonwealth were to do a station, what would you envisage charging in Barton?

Mr Thompson—I could not give you a figure.

Mr NEVILLE—But in that sort of ballpark? Perhaps in the Civic zone B through to Woden zone 1 or somewhere in that range? Would it be 450 to 670?

Mr Thompson—It is probably in that range, but to be blunt we would have to do a cost assessment of the site and work out whether it would be at least a break even for us.

Mr NEVILLE—Obviously if there is not some commonality between the two agencies, the workers in that area are going to car park shop. Wherever the cheapest parking is, most of the cars are going to go.

Mr Thompson—Within reason. People will walk some distance, but equally people do like convenience. We certainly witness it around Civic. You can see people who constantly park in that zone 3 along Constitution Avenue and then you see them taking a bracing walk into Civic each morning. There are others who like parking almost outside their office door and they are willing to pay the \$9 a day. So there will be a range of choices there for people. But I think it needs to be said that it has not been our mind-set for us to embark on constructing a structured car park in Barton.

Mr NEVILLE—Okay. What is your solution then?

Mr Thompson—Our solution for Barton is to set up the regime so that the commercial operators, which may include people who own property there now, will find it reasonably attractive to provide off-street car parking. Part of the contribution we make to that is to institute a reasonable level of charging for on-street parking, because that provides the signal so that people—

Mr NEVILLE—That will be ticketing or meters, will it?

Mr Thompson—Yes.

Mr MacDonald—On-street car parking is basically short stay. It is meant to allow people to come and go. It is not meant to be long-term commuter parking. We see that as being addressed through off-street parking. When we are talking about \$4.50 a day on-street, we are talking about an hourly rate perhaps.

Mr Thompson—One of the questions before was about providing visitor parking. That can actually work reasonably well in big buildings where you can pull off the street and park, but for a lot of other commercial operations and even the smaller government agencies in Barton the visitor parking has to be on the street because there is no other space. The way we can help that is to make sure that it is short term so there is turnover, rather than having people park outside the door all day, forcing visitors to walk hundreds of metres.

Mr NEVILLE—I understand that. Equally, too—and this is essentially not an ACT problem; it is a Commonwealth problem—many of these national institutions have volunteer workers. I do not think they should be charged even nominal charges. I think there should be a place for them. They make a contribution to that institution. The least that they can be provided is free and safe parking.

Ms ELLIS—Mr Thompson, to come back to the structured car park idea, I am a little bit confused as to where it fits because you would bring pay parking to Barton. The aim is to deter as many people as you can from bringing their cars in. That will happen because there is nowhere else for them to go or they migrate to other areas to park their cars. But in doing so you say that you hope to create the atmosphere or the case for one of those investors you talk about to then build the thing. So do we take them all off the buses? I do not wish to be simple about

this, but it seems to me a bit upside down. I understand the reality of investing—I am not silly—but it seems to be a little bit reverse. If you are very successful, you will not have a case for a structured car park. I am taking you literally.

Mr Thompson—The general behaviour once you introduce a pricing signal for on-street car parking is that some people will use that as a signal to think about public transport; other people will still want to keep on driving. For those people, they will be getting a strong hint, particularly if we have short-term on-street parking. They will be looking around for a long-stay car park. That is where the opportunity is for the commercial operator to build a structure, and that is where commuters will park.

Ms ELLIS—If this committee—let us be hypothetical, because we cannot recommend what the ACT does—for argument's sake, were to make recommendations that pay parking should not go ahead in the triangle and the minister agreed with that, where would that leave you? I am not pre-empting it; I have no idea what we will do.

Mr Thompson—We have a current program to introduce pay parking at both Tuggeranong and Belconnen and now—

Ms ELLIS—No, I am talking about here.

Mr Thompson—I know, and our thinking was that the next cab off the rank would be pay parking at one of those rates—

Ms ELLIS—And you can go ahead with that.

Mr Thompson—Yes.

Ms ELLIS—How do you think the NCA and the National Library and everybody else will feel about it if there is a migration of parking from the Barton controlled ACT area into the NCA controlled other area?

Mr Thompson—Certainly in terms of visitors, they would not be very thrilled. But we have been working up our policy on this broadly in concert with the program that the NCA have been developing. I guess we would like to hear what this committee's deliberations are. But we think right now in Barton there is a problem and we are trying to find a solution to that. We can contribute some of the elements to the solution; we cannot solve it all.

Ms ELLIS—I do not disagree with you.

Mr MacDonald—Particularly as we control about 11 per cent of the parking, so we are only a small part of the solution really.

Mr Thurston—We should not lose sight of the overall sustainable city.

Ms ELLIS—No, absolutely.

Mr Thurston—We either continue to build more and more roads and put more lanes on the parkways or we have a city where we manage the growth. We only have to moderate five or 10 per cent to be successful. The perception is that we have to shift 80 per cent of people onto public transport. The answer is no. I will give you an excellent example from London. We are talking about chalk and cheese in one sense. They had a major congestion problem in the centre of London. Ken Livingstone took some strategic leadership and brought in congestion taxiing in the city—5 pounds, \$13 or \$14, depending on the exchange rate. He got elected on that and he introduced it. It has been the most successful thing in recent times on this issue in the bigger scale. They have successfully reduced the amount of traffic in the inner city by about 20 per cent. They have improved the participation in public transport by 14 per cent. They have improved the travel time of public transport and nobody is really unhappy. Yet the world was seen to end. I see that at the macro. Canberra is never going to be like that, but I would hate to think we keep building more parkways to accommodate the cars which need to park in Barton and the city.

Ms ELLIS—I do not disagree for a minute. I am a supporter of all of those theories.

Mr NEVILLE—Yes and no. London has a very well organised public transport system, both surface and underground. As you said yourself, the underground, because of its fixed nature, has a public perception of certainty about it. When you go over there it is certainly a magnificent system to use. We have gone for lifestyle in Canberra. Ms Ellis raised the fact that there are very few shopping or bill paying or post office facilities in Parkes. People have to move out of it. They have to go across to Civic, into Kingston or somewhere like that to carry out those sorts of transactions. Hence the car becomes very attractive. The other complaint we heard—and it was not a shot at ACTION as such—was that because of the lifestyle things in Canberra, anyone coming in from one of the outer suburbs, such as Tuggeranong or somewhere, is looking at a 45- to 50-minute trip to work, and some of them up to an hour. It is not just a matter of the money; it is a matter of the time—an hour at the beginning and an hour at the end of the day, whereas they can probably drive in 15 or 20 minutes. That is another pressure. If it was the centre of London I would go along with your argument. But we have other constraints overlaying the Canberra problem, and in particular the Parkes problem, that do not really fit the framework that you are suggesting to us.

Mr Thurston—All I say in response to that is that if we continue to see an increase in population and we continue to see an increase in transport needs, something has to give. We have to shift only a very small percentage of people to public transport. That is a lot cheaper than building more lanes on roads or parking stations in commercial areas.

CHAIRMAN—Thank you very much. If there are any matters on which we might need additional information, the secretary will write to you. You will be sent a copy of the transcript of your evidence, to which you may make some editorial corrections. On behalf of the committee, I thank you again for your attendance here.

[7.15 p.m.]

ADDISON, Mr Ross Allan, Director of Finance, National Capital Authority

EVANS, Mr Lindsay Stewart, Managing Director Business, National Capital Authority

PEGRUM, Ms Annabelle Nicole, Chief Executive, National Capital Authority

SCHULTHEIS, Mr Ted, Principal Town Planner National Capital Plan, National Capital Authority

SCOTT-BOHANNA, Mr Graham, Managing Director Design, National Capital Authority

CHAIRMAN—I welcome representatives of the National Capital Authority. These hearings are legal proceedings of the parliament and warrant the same respect as the proceedings of parliament itself. Giving false or misleading evidence is a serious matter and may be regarded as a contempt of parliament. The committee has received a submission from the National Capital Authority, No. 22. Are there any corrections or amendments you would like to make to your submission?

Ms Pegrum—Yes, there is one.

Mr Schultheis—In relation to table 3 in that submission, there are some figures in the last column which have been altered. They are now in the PowerPoint presentation information we are providing to you tonight. They do not change the overall outcome, but they are figures that needed to be adjusted.

CHAIRMAN—We will pick them up from that.

Ms Pegrum—There was also a commercial-in-confidence submission made and there is a minor error in that, which we have also provided for the committee.

CHAIRMAN—I propose, subject to the concurrence of my colleagues, to take your in camera evidence at the end of your plenary evidence. You will let us know when you want to proceed to that?

Ms Pegrum—Thank you, Mr Chairman.

CHAIRMAN—The committee prefers that evidence be taken in public, but if you wish to give confidential evidence to the committee you may request that the hearings be held in camera, and the committee will give consideration to your particular request. Before we ask you some questions, do you wish to make an opening statement?

Ms Pegrum—I would like to, Mr Chairman. As you know, the National Capital Authority is the statutory agency that manages the Commonwealth government's interest in the planning and development of Canberra as Australia's national capital. We have a suite of functions under the

ACT Planning and Land Management Act that include those relating to the National Capital Plan, land management, awareness of Canberra as the national capital, and building and enhancements for the capital. These provide a strategic and comprehensive set of functions in order to deliver the planning and development of Canberra as the capital.

With respect to pay parking in the parliamentary zone, it is probably worth a quick recap of the background. The authority was given responsibility for the management of national land that has been declared as required for the special purposes of Canberra as the capital. That occurred in 1992, just over 10 years ago. In 1994 the government proposed pay parking to fund a restoration program. Members would be aware that this was not supported by the then public inquiry of the joint standing committee—largely, as I understand it, because it was budget driven. The committee expressed a concern that there needed to be a strategic review of parking as part of a holistic look at the parliamentary zone and its intent and use.

In 1998, in response to a growing number of concerns about the parliamentary zone as lacking people spaces, as not being conducive to positive visitor experience, of having ageing infrastructure, of having a major impact of through-traffic among other issues to do with signage and orientation, the government initiated a review of the parliamentary zone. We tabled an outcomes report in 2000. In 2002 the ACT government made it clear that they had a timetable to implement pay parking into the Barton-Forrest office areas.

The parliamentary zone review focused on the heart of the national capital as described in the Parliamentary Precincts Act. You can see that the manner in which the geometry of the parliamentary zone is configured provides the primary circulation routes that connect the parliamentary areas with the urban and other office and government areas of the capital.

A number of critical issues were looked at with respect to that review, of which one—accessibility—dealt directly with matters relating to car parking. Fundamental to the review outcomes was a statement of principles about what the parliamentary zone should become. It was determined that it should become a place of the people which would be accessible to Australians so that we could fully understand and appreciate the collective experience and rich diversity of the country. In effect, what this was doing was confirming the unique and important role that the parliamentary zone has to play.

An organisational framework was determined as part of that review that reflected Griffin's design concepts and, importantly, the relationship between functions, buildings and the landscape. A series of campuses were prescribed for areas of future development and again reinforced that concept of the relationship between users, buildings and landscape. Part of the campus concept was that surface car parking would become the appropriate area for additional buildings being developed in the parliamentary zone. So, typically, if we take the National Gallery of Australia, you can see additional buildings over time being developed on what is currently surface car parking and the space between buildings becoming a campus that relates to the collective group of buildings in that area.

The review also nominated a statement of objectives which was broadranging and dealt with matters directly addressing some of those critical issues but, importantly with respect to car parking, dealt with concepts of welcoming people to the parliamentary zone and making access easy and open. With respect to the statement of objectives, a series of intentions were looked at.

So, typically, those pertaining to the discussion for this inquiry of welcoming people dealt with visitor friendly public transport and car parking, encouraging pedestrians and cyclists rather than through-traffic, and making it easier for people, particularly visitors, to find their destinations. Similarly, the intention of making access easy and open for visitors related to a comprehensive system of paths, cycleways and roads, improving public transport, constructing safe, secure and centralised car parks—be they structured or surface—and good directional signage to preferred destinations.

In delivering on those objectives and intentions, one of the initiatives dealt with car parking. In the parliamentary zone it was nominated that the intention was to reduce the amount of surface car parking. This was predicated on a number of the issues I have already outlined. It was also predicated on the fact that something like 14 per cent or 14 hectares of the total area of the parliamentary zone, excluding the parliamentary precincts, is occupied by the surface car parking, compared with 10 per cent occupied by buildings.

Equally, it was intended that pay parking be introduced to control the impact of overflow parking from Barton to Forrest, that pay parking be introduced to achieve improved management of the parliamentary zone parking—your attention has been drawn to that by both your field trip in the shuttle and the presentation of the ACT government this evening—and, in time, to provide centralised structured parking which would include amenities such as kiosks, drycleaners, ATMs and the like in addition to requiring basement parking for new buildings as they took up the surface car parking in the zone.

Slides were then shown—

Ms Pegrum—I draw your attention to the images that we have used on this slide. Mr Neville made some comments about the quality of structured car parking, as did Ms Ellis. It is our intention that structured car parking, when and if it is provided in the parliamentary zone, be of very high quality and order. The confidence of the committee in that is that the authority would be required to give works approval but so, too, would both houses of parliament.

There was also an initiative for a shuttle bus. That had to do with connecting destination points with the centralised parking areas, be they surface or structured, with improving access for visitors and also providing safe access before and after peak hour for commuters within the parliamentary zone. A possible shuttle bus route has been described by additional work that we have done. You can see that that provides access within the parliamentary zone but primarily focuses on tourist destinations of the cultural institutions.

The parliamentary zone review looked at a development scenario for some 50 years that would take the parliamentary zone from the structures that we were looking at in 2000-01 through to a consolidated development that would meet the intent of the parliamentary zone as a place of the people and also a centre of the seat of government. Most of those objectives and the statement of principle were then brought into the National Capital Plan through amendment 33, which came into effect in September 2001.

The indicative development plan from the amendment includes issues to do with orientation, visitor destinations, roads and traffic, and the shuttle bus. It is silent on pay parking because the authority was aware that we did not require an amendment to the National Capital Plan to

introduce it—so, too, we did not need it for a shuttle bus—but the joint standing committee's position on pay parking of previous years and the importance of understanding how it would relate to Barton and Forrest was primarily in our minds with respect to this particular amendment.

Since and during the review of the parliamentary zone we have implemented a number of these initiatives in order to deliver the place of the people—that is, include construction of the international flag display, Commonwealth Place, Reconciliation Place, a number of campus MOUs are in draft with the various cultural institutions, refurbishment of some of our fountains and restaurants, incorporating new commemorative works such as at Magna Carta Place, upgrading the Old Parliament House gardens and the Parliament House setting and a number of car parking upgrades as well as significant advancement on a series of the policies identified as initiatives in the parliamentary zone.

I put this up to show that we have tried to be active in delivering on making the parliamentary zone a place of the people and looking seriously at the detail of some of these policies. But the effect of this has been successful in that it has increased the level of visitation to the parliamentary zone as a place in its own right rather than just to the cultural institutions. In effect, this is exacerbating some of the car parking issues that we are now looking at. With regard to employment and the parking rate, these are current figures based on an additional Datacol survey of August 2003 which we have included in the supplementary submission which we would be happy to table this evening if the committee chooses to accept it.

Senator HOGG—We do not have those figures.

Ms Pegrum—You do not have these newest figures, although you have similar figures. Looking at the number of employees associated with these buildings and facilities in the parliamentary zone, the total long-stay parking and the space per employee, you can see the average daily rate of use of that long-stay parking and you can see that displacement of parking is an issue in the zone, not only supply. So buildings such as Old Parliament House, West Block and East Block have a lesser daily rate of use of the long-stay parking than those associated with the other cultural institutions.

This is the existing public parking in both Parkes and in Barton and you can see the off-street parking associated on national land, the off-street public car parks on ACT government land in the Barton area and the total number of car parking spaces of just under 10,000. This is excluding Parliament House and including all surface, on-site and street parking. So it shows you the quantum and the differentiation between the on-street and the off-street. In the recent Datacol survey, we looked at the utilisation of parking spaces in the parliamentary zone. This particular survey was conducted over two days of which, for a number of reasons, part of this parking associated with the National Gallery of Australia was restricted. That accounts for why this amount of utilisation of the car parking might be down on other days, but even so you can see the manner in which parking spaces are taken up in the parliamentary zone currently.

The diagram I have here is the overspill zones from Barton and Forrest into the parliamentary area that is current. What you can see here is walking distances of 600 metres and of 1,000 from the Barton area across Kings Avenue into the parliamentary zone area. In the recent Datacol survey we have observed something like 600 movements per day currently from the

parliamentary zone to Barton, which is indicating people working in the Barton area taking up car parking spaces in these areas, and we have the details of those in the supplementary submission. This is the diagram that you have seen in the ACT government's submission. It reflects the parking strategy that was in place and is still in place for the Barton-Forrest area—the developed sites, the vacant sites and those reserved for parking structures currently in use.

There are of course, as always, a large number of options with respect to parking management and we have looked at those in the parliamentary zone in detail over the past years. We have been able to distil those to the four before you this evening—the do nothing option, limiting pay parking to, say, long-stay commuters and making it free for all visitors, free parking in structures, and everyone paying for parking. With respect to the do nothing scenario, our view is based on all of the studies we have done and all of the surveys that the current situation will most definitely get worse, particularly with the introduction of pay parking in the Barton-Forrest area. I say here that all of our work with respect to pay parking as a management tool has been predicated on us doing it in tandem with the Territory rather than individually—that is, either the Territory introducing it individually in Barton-Forrest or for us to introduce it in the parliamentary area.

More Barton-Forrest workers will park in the parliamentary zone once pay parking is introduced there. There will be a frustration of sustainable transport objectives. Visitors to the capital will compete with commuters for parking near the national institutions, which will diminish their opportunities and their experiences of the parliamentary area, and there will be insufficient future parking in the parliamentary zone over time. If we limit pay parking to the long-stay commuters, then visitors again are competing with commuters for parking near the national institutions because what you will find is that the short-stay parking, in our view, will become a target for commuter uses.

Ms Ellis, when she was still at the hearing, indicated that there ought to be an award for the way in which people are avoiding parking fines in the area, and that is true. People do leave the office and move their cars. We believe that that would increase significantly if we limited pay parking to long-stay commuters and visitors would experience fines if they exceed their time limits. This is already an issue for visitors who may go into the National Gallery, for example, and decide that they are enjoying it so much they want to stay for three hours. Presently, if their car is in a short-stay parking area, they rush outside to move it. Introducing pay parking would allow them to make a choice either to be in differential parking in a short-stay area or to purchase a ticket for a longer stay.

Free parking in car structures really relates to having government fund structures or taxpayer funds in some form or the other. If we are looking at structured car parking of the aesthetic standard that we would believe is absolutely essential to any parking structure in the parliamentary zone, we believe that we are looking at something like \$20 million per structure for about 1,000 parking spaces. Free parking is also contrary to the concept of the user-pay principle and it is inequitable with employees outside of the zone having to pay for parking. I would suggest that many Australians might question a decision to spend \$20 million on a car parking structure so that public servants in Canberra could continue to park freely in the parliamentary area.

If everyone pays for parking, in our view it is an appropriate car parking management technique that will allow for adequate and convenient visitor parking to the destinations that they were looking at. It will allow choice for visitors to pay for time used parking and avoid fines. It will at least control overflow parking problems in the event that pay parking is introduced into the Barton-Forrest area. It will allow us to look at upgrading associated lighting, signage and pedestrian pathways associated with the pay parking scenario. It would allow us far more readily to integrate a shuttle bus service with pay parking than to integrate it if parking continues to be free and the centralised parking structures can incorporate a range of services to start to free up surface parking for new development over time.

There are a number of ways that you could implement pay parking for everyone. It could allow a differential parking charge as described by Mr Neville with respect to visitors versus commuters. We could look at a flat charge. We could look at free access for volunteers. But I would have to say here that in this scenario somebody does pay and that may well be the national institution or, indeed, the Commonwealth government agency that is providing that parking. It could allow for permit holders and pre-purchased tickets. It could allow for boom gates, pay and display, ticket validation or combinations of the above. Any of these are possible once we can start detailed consultation on implementation both with users of the parliamentary area in Barton and, of course, the ACT government.

We have engaged in detailed consultation towards this particular strategy. There was consultation as part of the parliamentary zone review itself. There was further consultation specifically on the outcomes report and specifically on pay parking as an initiative of that. There was the establishment of a national institutions working group in 2002. We have had only one meeting of that. My recollection, Mr Chairman, is that Minister Tuckey guaranteed the committee members that we would not progress implementation discussions subject to the outcomes of this inquiry. I am aware from today's *Canberra Times*, if they are correctly attributing the comment, that the National Archives claims there has been no consultation. I am advised by my officers again that that is not factual and that there has been considerable consultation with the different institutions over the years. Of course, we are aware that there would need to be ongoing consultation with working groups and the ACT government.

Mr Chairman, we have answered a number of the questions in our original submission and I believe in our supplementary submission, should the committee chose to accept it, that have derived from some of the submissions that have been made to this inquiry. Short of particular questions on these, it was not my intention to go through these at this time. As a quick recap, from our point of view the consideration of the issues that have led to pay parking as a management tool in the parliamentary zone derives directly from the concept of establishing the zone as a place of the people that is attractive to visitors but still provides for those people who work in that area.

Our objectives in the event of introducing pay parking would be to provide convenient visitor access to the institutions through the sorts of implementation options that we have available; to look at volunteer, researcher and visitor parking near the institutions deriving benefit from the way in which implementation would be made; to look towards operational and visitor parking associated with the offices; to ensure that commuter parking is consistent with the ACT transport and parking strategies—in other words, it would be a joint approach and strategic

implementation; to look at adequate visitor parking for major events in the parliamentary area; and to consider safe, secure parking for visitors and communities.

We would also be looking at reducing the amount of surface parking over time to improve the visual impact by developing on the surface car parks and introducing basement parking associated with those facilities. Land would become available for future development. The government has already endorsed this through amendment 33 to the National Capital Plan. We would be looking at minimising overspill parking, effective management for tourist coaches, convenient internal tourist shuttle bus systems or similar and seeking to increase the use of public transport, not as a blunt instrument through public pay parking but as a commitment towards the greenhouse strategy and sustainable transport. In our view, if we are going to deliver the parliamentary zone as the place of the people, it is not an option to do nothing. We must address the parking issue and, in our view, pay parking is the appropriate management tool.

CHAIRMAN—I need the committee to accept the supplementary submission, identified as the ‘Inquiry into Pay Parking Supplementary Submission’, received today, which we have numbered 57.

Senator HOGG—I move we accept it.

CHAIRMAN—It being so moved and there being no objections, it is so ordered. We will go to questions.

Senator LUNDY—I refer to the slide that had the percentages of the long-stay car parking that was used by employees of the various institutions.

Ms Pegrum—I am trying to find it for you.

Senator LUNDY—To me that clearly means that, if it were not for the encroachment of the commuters into the parliamentary triangle, there would be both adequate car parking for employees of the institutions and enough flexibility to cope with any visitors at current levels.

Ms Pegrum—The current parking supply in the parliamentary zone is becoming an issue as there are additional visitor activities occurring in the triangle, both in the works that are being done in the public domain but also even if you look at the impact of things like the National Portrait Gallery, the upgrade of the Archives buildings, the new exhibitions of the National Library, the new exhibitions down at Commonwealth Place, Reconciliation Australia offices, the use of the Treasury Building and the John Gorton Building last year. Since being upgraded increasing numbers of people are using it—

Senator LUNDY—Are you able to show trends in this?

Ms Pegrum—What I am saying here is the supply at the moment is appropriate to the demand. There is a displacement problem now in that commuters are competing with business.

Senator LUNDY—I am trying to get a clear understanding. Without the commuter problem, the current situation is that there is not a crisis; there is enough room for visitor parking?

Ms Pegrum—Yes. After hours and on weekends there is more than adequate supply for visitors.

Senator LUNDY—What about during the week?

Ms Pegrum—During the week there are already competing demands.

Senator LUNDY—I know it is hard to disaggregate the commuter problem during the week, but in theory if you did disaggregate or remove the weekday commuters' figures, theoretically there would not be a problem.

Ms Pegrum—If there were no commuters parking in the parliamentary zone during the week, there would be no problem because it would mirror the situation of weekends. Senator Lundy, at the beginning of your question you said that one of the imperatives, though, at the moment is the overspill issue from Barton and Forrest, and that is absolutely correct.

Senator LUNDY—I will come to that. With regard to the overarching parliamentary plan that you referred to, amendment 33, can you identify specifically which surface car parks will disappear if the plan, as it is currently expressed graphically, were to come to fruition?

Ms Pegrum—Yes. If I go back to this—this is amendment 33 to the National Capital Plan—you can see here the indicative development opportunities that are associated with taking up space on the surface car parking. So basically amendment 33 is saying the future development should be on the current surface car parking, with respect also to the campus plan that I described earlier.

Senator LUNDY—Do you mean all surface car parking?

Ms Pegrum—One never knows how many institutions there will be or what expansion—

Senator LUNDY—I know that. I know how this works. That is why I said it is an indicative graphic of what the NCA would like to see.

Ms Pegrum—It is an indicative graphic. The statement of objectives that is now part of the National Capital Plan indicates development and the organisational framework for development indicates new development surface car parking.

Senator LUNDY—I refer you to the slide that showed all of the off-street public car parks on national land and also, in green, ACT government land—

Ms Pegrum—Yes. I believe it is that one.

Senator LUNDY—Are you telling me for that vision to be achieved all of those surface car parks would go?

Ms Pegrum—They could go, yes.

Senator LUNDY—What is the strategy under the current plan to allow that to occur?

Ms Pegrum—That is the current plan. That is the indicative development plan and the master plan that is part of amendment 33.

Senator LUNDY—You mentioned before that pay parking was not an issue, but what was the strategy outlined in amendment 33 to address the car parking issue?

Ms Pegrum—Amendment 33 addresses that as those new developments occur there would be basement parking for those new facilities and that, as supply was diminished for the displacement of the current parking, there would be structured car parking in the parliamentary zone. It does not identify the exact sites, but the intention was that they most likely would be associated with the central area of the parliamentary zone, although there are always opportunities back through here as well.

Senator LUNDY—Sorry, what is the central area?

Ms Pegrum—They are the areas behind or adjacent to the Treasury building and the John Gorton Building. But that could also be true of those adjacent to the East Block and West Block.

Mr NEVILLE—Does structured mean surface?

Ms Pegrum—No, structured can mean surface, but we are using it in the terms of multideck, which could be part basement and part up to two storeys.

Senator HOGG—In amendment 33, is there scope for a major shopping centre in that region?

Ms Pegrum—No, certainly not. Under the current land use provisions of the National Capital Plan a shopping centre would not be appropriate, but you can have facilities to support tourist activities and the like. So we were suggesting that if there were structured car parking you might have an ATM, a small kiosk, a drycleaner or florist shop or the like, and equally there can be minor restaurants and kiosks in the parliamentary zone.

Senator LUNDY—I want to get a picture of the car parking strategy behind amendment 33. Are you telling me that if the scenario were that commuter traffic did not impose, you would be looking to maintain the existing number of spaces, the existing flow-over for visitor rates through that, and as spaces were taken up they would be replaced or replicated within the new structure in the form of basement car parking and visitor car parking?

Ms Pegrum—If I understand the question, if we were building a new cultural institution, you would be providing part of the parking depending on what the generation rate might be, and that would normally be aligned with generation parking in other areas adjacent to the parliamentary zone. You would be providing that parking in basements primarily.

Senator LUNDY—You say ‘primarily’. Is there some scope for institutions not to be required to fulfil requirements for both employees and visitors?

Ms Pegrum—It would depend on what the parking generation rate was that we were providing at the time. I think I am correct in saying that the parking generation, for example, in Barton and Forrest at the moment is one space for every thousand.

Mr Schultheis—It is two spaces per 100 square metres of office space.

Senator LUNDY—So there is a formula? So that is office space of an institution?

Ms Pegrum—No, that is commercial office space or Public Service office space, depending on who is in there.

Senator LUNDY—Is there a different formula for cultural institutions?

Ms Pegrum—You would be looking at the number of workers who are part of that institution versus visitor car parking generation rates. I cannot give you a definitive answer.

Senator LUNDY—I am just trying to get a bit of an insight. So a Public Service office would be required to provide fully for their permanent and temporary car parking requirements if any new development were approved and any existing?

Mr Schultheis—We would apply a figure that is comparable to Barton in terms of the rate for offices because it is in balance; it is not meeting unfettered demand, which might mean something like three spaces per hundred square metres. So it is in balance against what would be experienced. Russell has a high level of vehicle occupancy there which could be in the order of four per 100, but in the Barton area and in this area it would be closer to 2 per 100.

Senator LUNDY—Why is that? Does that mean how many offices occupy floor space?

Mr Schultheis—That is a calculation against what was actual demand in that area, which was in excess of two. It was 2.6 or 2.7 back in about 1995 or 1996. Strategically there was seen to be a need to reduce that over time towards the objectives for Barton in particular.

Senator LUNDY—Are you telling me that that formula has been constricted so it could create this scenario where car parking places for the number of public servants working in a given building would not actually be catered for?

Mr Schultheis—That figure would reflect the current level of demand in relation to office space.

Ms Pegrum—It would be true to say that, regardless of what that generation figure would be in that scenario, that has no influence on whether parking is free or not free.

Senator LUNDY—I know that. I am trying to get a much deeper understanding of how all of these ratios and proportions are established in the first place, because I think that is a useful base of knowledge to start with in considering the pay parking issue.

Mr Schultheis—In the supplementary submission, the table we included gives you an indication of current rate of space per employee. I cannot remember the exact figure. There are some which are in excess of two spaces per employee.

Senator LUNDY—My question is: how do you establish the usage rates of the institutions during a normal commuter week because of the mix-up with the traffic? Do you do that assessment on weekends?

Ms Pegrum—You mean how do we distinguish who is a visitor versus who is a commuter?

Senator LUNDY—No, who is an employee in the existing buildings in the triangle and who is a commuter in nearby Barton using the car parking places?

Mr Schultheis—Only by a survey of movement from one to the other. We are able to assess that there is a relatively large number currently occupying spaces in the zone and moving, and that is by count.

Ms Pegrum—You are right. We have no way of branding people as visitors or commuters. So of these 600 movements per day, we do not know whether they are visitors or commuters, but one can assume that it is most likely that they would be people who are working in Barton and have chosen to park in the parliamentary zone.

Senator LUNDY—I am not quite at that point yet. Going back to the distinction between commuters and employees in the zone, it strikes me as a little odd—

Mr Scott-Bohanna—You are using words which are a bit confusing. Employees and commuters are the same people.

Senator LUNDY—Sorry, commuters from outside of the area, that is, people who work in Barton but are encroaching on the parliamentary triangle. That was the distinction—employees of buildings inside the parliamentary triangle. I am trying to establish whether or not those employees are being catered for adequately within the policies of the NCA. Mr Schultheis explained that over time those ratios of car parking spaces available to floor space in those buildings—that is, employees in the parliamentary zone—are being reduced, hopefully to reflect usage and demand. My next question is: if that is the case, how do you discern demand of those employees and differentiate that from commuters? My concern is that an unnecessary squeeze is occurring there or a squeeze is being put on to counteract the encroachment by commuters from Barton.

Ms Pegrum—I do not think you can make that sort of a judgment. It is true that the office buildings in the parliamentary zone are old buildings, so there is very limited basement parking. But the opportunity is still there for the agencies, for example through workplace agreements, to make spaces available to B class licence holders. That would probably be comparable to some of the older buildings in areas such as Civic where you would have been looking at surface car parking generation versus basement car parking generation. But it is very difficult to know exactly the answer to your question.

Senator LUNDY—In a sense, you have answered it because you do not know. You are not able to differentiate between the car park usage of employees as opposed to the car park usage by commuters from outside of the parliamentary triangle unless by estimation, but there is a further complication because you cannot differentiate between commuters and visitors, either.

Ms Pegrum—Yes, and that is a significant issue.

Senator LUNDY—Yes, it is. It is like an added veil, if you like, on this issue I am talking about.

Mr Schultheis—If I understand that you are dealing with commuters as distinct from employees, being those who go outside the zone, as I say, we have that measurement of movement across into Barton. We also have a measurement of people getting on buses and leaving the area. So we have an understanding of the relative scale. It is not very large, but it is there.

Senator LUNDY—I was going to say that it would not be any good doing an assessment on the weekend without the commuters because I am sure many of the employees would choose not to use their cars anyway.

Ms Pegrum—I do not know that you could give definitive figures on what I think you need anywhere—not just in this area. All we can say with confidence is that, based on the sort of movements that we are surveying between the parliamentary zone and Barton, there are significant movements now and we would anticipate those to increase if pay parking in the parliamentary zone continued to be free and pay parking was introduced in Barton and Forrest.

Senator LUNDY—With the York Park precinct—that Barton precinct—do the current policies provide for car parking for employees and anticipated visitation for every new building that goes up in that precinct?

Ms Pegrum—The parking generation figures are basically the same throughout that area for commercial offices. I do not believe it distinguishes between visitor spaces versus office spaces.

Senator LUNDY—Sorry, what was that?

Mr Schultheis—We apply the rate for the office development based on a rate per 100 square metres of floor space, and that takes into account demand that comes for that building.

Senator LUNDY—Is that 2.1 or—

Mr Schultheis—Two per 100 square metres of GFA.

Senator LUNDY—How does that compare with Russell?

Mr Schultheis—Russell at present is a much higher level than that—historically.

Senator LUNDY—Putting aside historically, why is that? Is that part of a policy to discourage vehicles being used to get to work in that area? Is it a policy designed to squeeze commuters using cars out of the area?

Mr Schultheis—It is not policy to squeeze people out; it is, in fact, a reality of the fact that the demand in Barton is that there is a shortage of space generally, but with new development the parking is being provided. The issue has arisen primarily from cars displaced by new developments.

Senator LUNDY—It begs the question that for new buildings that ratio has increased, surely; that it becomes four to one so you are not exacerbating the commuter squeeze.

Mr Schultheis—In Barton the strategy is to provide for this parking through structures.

Senator LUNDY—But only to a ratio of two per 100 square metres, you said.

Mr Schultheis—That would provide the structures that were identified—the locations are able to accommodate the parking at that level. So the numbers that are currently using that area could be accommodated in structures at that level. If we went beyond that, we would then be attracting more traffic back in that is not currently using that.

Senator LUNDY—Or you would be drawing the traffic out of the parliamentary zone.

Ms Pegrum—By having free structures in Barton-Forrest?

Senator LUNDY—Yes. By making developers of new buildings provide an increased number of car parking spaces perhaps more commensurate with their building occupants and not exacerbating the problem.

Ms Pegrum—Historically there was an agreed strategy between the Australian Capital Territory and the Commonwealth for the Barton-Forrest development which, for example, looked at a levy on commercial development in those areas with a view towards having part parking on site and part parking off site to force the development of structured car parking.

Senator LUNDY—Sorry, you are stepping ahead of me again. My question relates to specific developments like the DOCITA building.

Ms Pegrum—I am saying that part of that strategy was to encourage use of public transport quite consciously at that time.

Senator LUNDY—So even with new buildings going up in the Barton area there is effectively a policy to encourage greater use of public transport and thereby creating a deficit car parking environment in Barton even now?

Ms Pegrum—I would not say—and I will stand to be corrected—that that is different from anywhere else in Canberra's commercial development areas. To my knowledge, the parking generation figures here, for example, would be the same for commercial development—or very close to commercial development—say, in Belconnen or Woden.

Senator LUNDY—I am not actually challenging whether it is the norm. What I am challenging is that there is clearly a problem that is getting worse. So there is more encroachment into the parliamentary triangle, and yet there are policies in place which do squeeze the number of commuters away from the buildings that they are working in by that low ratio. That is a conscious decision at some point presumably that the NCA has something to do with, which in turn exacerbates the problem, anyway. There is a cause and effect thing here, is there not?

Ms Pegrum—There is certainly a strategy about the parking generation levels. Part of that did and continues to have its roots in sustainable transport. If the suggestion is that you increase supply by stepping back from that support of sustainable transport objectives, if you like the greenhouse strategy, no, we would not be supporting that. I am not aware that that would be the case anywhere in the major development areas of Australia. It is a component of looking at parking generation.

Senator LUNDY—If that is the motivation, then that policy is contributing directly to the encroachment within the parliamentary triangle of commuter traffic, and that has to then be recognised as part of the problem and part of the issue. Anyway, I have made my point.

Mr NEVILLE—Can I ask a question at this stage on the supplementary submission, or do you want us to go in camera for that?

Ms Pegrum—On the supplementary that was tabled this evening or the commercial? I think the chairman was indicating there would be an in camera—

Mr NEVILLE—Supplementary confidential submission.

CHAIRMAN—That is the one you wished to go in camera with, is it not?

Ms Pegrum—If that suits.

CHAIRMAN—That is fine.

Mr NEVILLE—I want to ask you some questions about figures. Perhaps rather than deal with yours I will put a few generic questions to you. What would an average parking facility cost? Speaking generically, what size multilevel parking facilities do you envisage and at what cost?

Ms Pegrum—I cannot give you a definitive but—

Mr NEVILLE—I do not want you to go into the various options.

Ms Pegrum—We have estimated around \$20 million for a structured car park for about 1,000 car parking spaces to give you the kind of aesthetic quality that I think we would all expect. From memory, that is generated on about \$20,000 per car parking space. Mr Thompson earlier was saying that you might be looking at around \$15,000—and I would agree with him—if you were looking at a fairly basic structured car park such as some that we currently see in the city.

So we would be looking probably at two decks in order to deliver that in the kinds of areas that we are talking about. But this is not an immediate thing. This would be longer term.

Mr NEVILLE—Again, without revealing the confidentiality of your submission, you project each year for quite substantial operating surpluses. What do you envisage those being retained for?

Ms Pegrum—I cannot, because at the moment that would be a revenue flow to the Commonwealth. How the Commonwealth uses that would be at their choice. Equally, what that surplus might be, if any, because it may indeed be cost recovery, would be up to the government.

Mr NEVILLE—You say in your submission you are on the most conservative projections so, if anything, it is going to be on the upside, not on the downside of that. In your figures do you propose that this shuttle bus system would be paid for out of the proceeds of the car parking?

Ms Pegrum—That was the intention, that it be integrated with the car parking implementation. I think I said in the previous introduction this evening that obviously you could also run a shuttle bus without pay parking, provided someone paid for it or it was subsidised by the institutions. But the best way forward, if you like the cost recovery way forward, would be to integrate it with pay parking.

Mr NEVILLE—What would you envisage as a weekly fee to employees in the parliamentary triangle? You have all these projections, but when we get down to the nitty-gritty what is the average public servant going to pay to park in the parliamentary triangle?

Ms Pegrum—We were looking at the shuttle most likely being free because—

Mr NEVILLE—Forget the shuttle for the time being. For the pay parking spaces, what would an average public servant pay for an average parking space, firstly, in the facility you envisage and, secondly, in the open?

Ms Pegrum—So long as it is recognised that this is not a definitive answer—

Mr NEVILLE—Yes, yes.

Ms Pegrum—we would be envisaging something like \$5 or 25 a week maximum.

CHAIRMAN—\$5 a day, \$25 for a five-day week.

Mr NEVILLE—That would fund the shuttle bus. Would it be the same charge for an outdoor park or would you have a lower level for someone who had an outdoor park as distinct from a covered park?

Ms Pegrum—From my memory, we are benching that on the outdoor park.

Mr NEVILLE—I am surprised. When you come before us, you and your staff are the essence of the particular, and I admire you for that. What my colleagues and I are being asked is to approve a parking system that is going to affect a lot of public servants who have had free

parking there for a long time. While I accept that we cannot go into particularities of the case because of the confidential nature, I am surprised that you have not differentiated, for example, between open car parks and those in structured, covered car parking. Obviously people would pay a bit more if they knew their car was under cover all the time.

Ms Pegrum—Our fundamental to the management plan we are putting forward is in, if you like, giving priority to the visitor and then to the volunteer and the researcher.

Mr NEVILLE—I understand that.

Ms Pegrum—Our staff are also public servants who would be affected by this. So we are very conscious of it corporately as well as in the more important role we have with respect to the zone. It is true that there are a large number of public servants who would have free parking taken away from them, but so too has that occurred for Commonwealth public servants in Belconnen and in Woden and is most likely in Barton-Forrest where it is a matter for the Territory. It is also true that we are very concerned that any charge rates would be equitable. It is also true that Commonwealth agencies could look at workplace agreements to offset some of that and negotiate that.

Mr NEVILLE—I accept that. Would you envisage that the various institutions that already have some car parking facilities within their buildings would utilise those free or would you believe there would be a generic charging regime right through the area? For example, if the National Library had sufficient parking for its staff and its volunteers, would you envisage that they would continue to operate in that mode or would you envisage that they would have a parallel system to the charging in the government controlled facility?

Ms Pegrum—All of the basement car parking now associated with those facilities is under their control now. We do not control it. It would be at their discretion whether they would introduce a charge, continue to make it free or decide that it would only be available to staff rather than, as it is for a large number now, available to visitors or staff. That would be part of the consultation on implementation, but the decision would rest with those institutions.

Mr NEVILLE—I have that. When it comes to the visitors to the institutions are you envisaging no charge, a nominal charge or an hourly charge which would be similar to what the public servants would pay?

Ms Pegrum—Part of the slide that I put up earlier about options for implementation is there to indicate that all of those options are available.

Mr NEVILLE—We want to hear it from you.

Ms Pegrum—My personal view is differential parking charges for short-stay parking versus long-stay parking. That would allow a visitor potentially to have a lower rate for short stay but make a choice if they wanted to stay longer and pay the long-stay rate. I would also envisage personally that for volunteers, researchers and the like the agencies might choose to pay, through their agreements, for certain car parking spaces to be reserved for them, just as there are car parking spaces, for example, reserved for people with disabilities, just as currently there are car parking spaces reserved for B class licences for government vehicles.

Mr NEVILLE—Do you envisage that this would be contracted out?

Ms Pegrum—Most likely, yes.

Mr NEVILLE—I will ask you the same question I asked the ACT government representatives. Why could we not approach this on a cost recovery basis with some Commonwealth organisation administering it?

Ms Pegrum—You could. The question is then: would the government want to put the money upfront and then have it paid back over time? Certainly you could.

Mr NEVILLE—We are not looking at a multiplicity of facilities. We are looking at perhaps one or two, are we not?

Ms Pegrum—If you are talking about the structured car parking, yes. But, in the first instance, where you would be looking at pay parking for on-street or surface parking in the parliamentary zone, then you are probably looking at one provider. It could be a government agency on behalf of the Commonwealth government. How the Territory chooses to implement it is their call. It certainly could be that. It is just with our own agency we are not in the business of running car parking stations. We are in the business of making that area accessible and of the right quality.

Mr NEVILLE—I thought our concern here was the people who use it.

Ms Pegrum—Yes. I hope I am understanding your question correctly. I thought you were asking: would we go to a government agency to run it or would we go to a commercial provider?

Mr NEVILLE—It seems to me that we have government institutions that can successfully run things like ACTION Buses, knowing what subsidy the government has to put in, knowing that they have to raise the capital to purchase those things. What amuses me in all this is that we seem to be stuck between, on the one hand, a total open go like we have at present that is getting out of control and, on the other hand, a highly structured, cost recovery, profit each year basis. Rather, we should be saying, ‘What is the purpose of this facility? Is it to provide the public servants of this area with reasonable parking and in so doing freeing up parking for visitors around the national institutions?’ It is a very simple formula to my way of thinking. Why can we not do that on a cost recovery basis rather than have to commercialise the whole thing? Quite frankly, the profit margin with the commercialisation of it is going to be a cost on all of the public servants in that facility. If you want to keep the character of Parkes, you need some middle ground. I do not know how my colleagues feel about that. This idea that we have to accept open go or highly organised commercialism offends me—we cannot find middle ground.

Ms Pegrum—If you mean by that that either the commercial sector runs it—and, of course, they make a profit—versus the government funding it and charging simply for cost recovery, that is an option, but the latter is a policy matter for government because in that case the taxpayer pays. We are not saying one rather than the other. We are saying pay parking.

Ms ELLIS—Ms Pegrum, you referred earlier to the 1994 report. I want to refer to it as well. What you said is completely correct. Before the recommendations were printed they outlined for

the committee a list of about four or five concerns. One of them was that insufficient attention had been paid to allaying the concerns of the major institutions in the zone and that this proposal would affect visitor numbers and financially disadvantage these institutions either through operations of the FBT or the impact on volunteer staff. I find that quite pertinent given what you have just said, even though I take it absolutely that it is your personal view only.

In asking this I remind myself that not all institutions have stated to us that they have a dramatic difficulty with this. The National Archives, for instance, may be one that is less affected by access to parking by visitors. Can you clarify for me that the personal view you just gave us was that, under a regime that you may consider suggesting, it would be up to the institutions to cover the cost of parking for volunteers and visitors that they would dispense free to their volunteers and visitors? In other words, it would not be literally free to the volunteers and visitors. I think you inferred that there would be a range of parking fees. No matter what it is—the lowest or the highest—the institution would be the point at which the decision is made as to how to stand the cost of those parking spaces?

Ms Pegrum—I think that is most likely in a scenario where everyone pays. If I were a volunteer in an everyone pays scenario and they wanted to give me a space free, I would know that somebody is paying for it somewhere. But there could be a scenario where there are some free spaces and here we have free access to volunteers literally. The issue in implementation—and I am not saying it is impossible, but it is a challenge—is validation. It is the same as where you try to give totally free parking to visitors. How do you say they are a bona fide volunteer? How do you say they are a bona fide visitor?

Ms ELLIS—Who is going to decide whether it is some free or all pay? If, as a member of this committee, I have to make a decision, I want to know that now.

Ms Pegrum—Ultimately we are waiting for the committee's view on pay parking as a policy.

Ms ELLIS—I am not going to give it to you until I know whether it is going to be one or the other.

Ms Pegrum—Let us imagine that the committee supported pay parking as a policy. We already have an implementation working group working with the institutions. We have a working relationship with the ACT government and the details of that implementation would be done in consultation. The only reason we stopped at the time we did was that the committee specifically asked about this.

Ms ELLIS—I understand that, but you must understand the position in which I find myself. Am I going to be in favour of ticking for paid parking not knowing whether or not there is going to be an imposition on, in the case of this argument, institutions? It is not your concern, but it is certainly a concern for me as a member of the parliament and a member of this committee if there is an everyone pays regime adopted and these institutions—which have already faced at some time in history and face right now in some cases cutbacks in funding from the government—have to support or sponsor volunteer visitor parking spaces. I would have a huge concern with that. So it is difficult for me to make a decision, and I have to look at the whole picture, not just this submission of let us or not let us have pay parking. I have to look at the scenario in which I am considering the whole equation. I see myself sitting in a very difficult

position if I do not know what it is I am approving. Maybe there is not an answer to that, but I want to very strongly make that point.

Ms Pegrum—What I think we are seeking you to approve is a principle.

Ms ELLIS—I know, and that is my problem.

Ms Pegrum—In terms of the implementation of that, there are obviously considerations that have already been put on the table by the institutions. What I can do is commit our intention to consult on any implementation.

Ms ELLIS—Sure.

Ms Pegrum—Even if there were a blueprint that said to you, ‘These four car parking spaces are free. This one’s going to be \$10, this one’s going to be boom gated,’ in five years time the scenario will shift again because there will be, we hope, extended institutions, more exhibitions and more visitors going there. So you cannot freeze it in time. I might pose another philosophical question, which is one that we address all the time—that is, what do we do if we do nothing, because while the institutions will have some decisions to take, at the moment they are suffering and so are the visitors?

Ms ELLIS—Absolutely, and I understand that very clearly. Thanks.

Ms Pegrum—It is not easy.

Ms ELLIS—No. Far from it.

Senator LUNDY—I refer to the National Capital Plan draft amendment 42, the York Park master plan, which came before the committee today. In the context of the undertaking by Minister Tuckey that there would not be anything done about parking until this inquiry is finished, can you reconcile that against the fact that draft amendment 42 does mention parking and actually provides for specific policies in relation to parking in the York Park precinct, given the vicinity? It is obviously part of the problem about the flow-over of commuter traffic into the parliamentary triangle.

Ms Pegrum—The commitment of Minister Tuckey, as I understood it, was about doing nothing about implementing pay parking. The parking strategies associated with York Park, Barton and Forrest are not frozen and they have longstanding discussions that go back to joint strategies with the Territory. So this is a draft amendment. It is not about pay parking; it is about parking generation. But I have to reinforce that we do continue to support sustainable transport objectives and the greenhouse strategy.

Senator LUNDY—Specifically, in this proposal—which the committee was asked to approve today and we deferred it until next week—one of the elements of this indicative development plan of the York Park master plan is a site for a public parking station and integrated office retail development. It is quite close—in fact, one block back—from the parliamentary precinct. Are you saying that that proposed parking station would not be pay parking?

Ms Pegrum—Mr Schultheis can give you the detail, but it is no different from this diagram for Barton-Forrest, which was showing sites for future car parking structures.

Senator LUNDY—We were asked to approve this today and—

Ms Pegrum—I do not believe to approve. I think—

Senator LUNDY—No, you are right; not approve but to advise the minister whether or not we recommend he should have an inquiry into it, I think is the technical consideration of it. It has the same effect of the committee just saying yea or nay to that point.

Ms Pegrum—This is no different from the indicative development plan for the parliamentary zone which indicated that you could have structured car parking. A structured car parking site does not predicate that it shall be pay parking. What we have all been saying and what I have heard the Territory say as well is that somebody does pay in the future, so it is most likely but it is certainly not assuring pay parking. It is setting sites aside for structured car parking at some time.

Senator LUNDY—One of the principles, again in the same document, says at principle 8 that ‘less use of private transport and greater use of public transport should be encouraged, particularly for the journey to work with more efficient use made of private transport’.

Ms Pegrum—That is sustainability principles and policy. We continue to support those. As I said, that is the approach that Australia generally, to my best knowledge, has taken. I certainly cannot imagine that we would take a scenario where we tried to increase private car use or not try to encourage things like car pooling.

Senator LUNDY—Figure 8 in the documentation provided to us it contains a dot point which says:

On-site car parking shall be provided at a rate of one space per 100 square metres of gross floor area for new offices approved throughout the central national area of Barton. A higher on-site and off-site provision may be required by the authority in specific cases.

It goes on to talk about on-site and off-site parking and the capacity of public transport in the area. Can you tell me why there is now a policy decision by the NCA to further reduce that ratio of car parking space per 100 square metres as a result of this plan? What is your argument that this is not impacting upon the problem we already have in the parliamentary triangle?

Mr Schultheis—I can answer the specifics. That provision is already in the plan. This proposal does not change that provision. This proposal—

Senator LUNDY—Well, that is a problem anyway, I think.

Mr Schultheis—I am suggesting that it is not a change from what was there before, so the amendment is not bringing in a new provision in that regard and that may be an issue you—

Senator LUNDY—So currently in Barton it is one space per 100 square metres.

Mr Schultheis—That is the provision. That says that there should be an on-site minimum of one space per 100 and the policy goes on to say up to two maximum can be provided on site or some of that can be provided off site or by contribution.

Senator LUNDY—No wonder there is a parking problem.

CHAIRMAN—Thank you, Senator Lundy.

Ms Pegrum—Mr Chairman, the generation figures do have to do with sustainability. We have not countenanced increasing car parking to encourage further use of private cars.

CHAIRMAN—Because of the time constraints, I have not had a chance to ask these questions from Senator Stott Despoja with respect to the National Capital Authority. Is it the wish of the committee that the questions be incorporated in the transcript of evidence? There being no objection, it is so ordered.

The questions read as follows—

Senator Stott Despoja: To ask the Chairman of the Joint Standing Committee on the National Capital and External Territories, Senator Ross Lightfoot,

To The National Capital Authority

- (1) Is the current public transport in the Parliamentary Zone and adjacent areas adequate?
- (2) How is public transport in the Zone to be improved if pay parking is introduced?
- (3) How much vehicle usage has been decreased in areas like Civic that now have pay parking?
- (4) What are the considerations of equity going to be with respect to allocation of revenue sharing? Eg, what percentage will the ACT hope to see from this Commonwealth scheme?
- (5) What will the impacts be on tourism in the surrounding areas of the Parliamentary Triangle with significant areas of interest eg National Museum, National Art Gallery, War Monument etc.
- (6) Could you please provide information on:
 - (a) Whether this proposal has the approval of the ACT government?
 - (b) Whether an environmental impact assessment has been conducted?

CHAIRMAN—Thank you, Ms Pegrum, and your colleagues for your attendance here today.

Senator HOGG—Chairman, there was a reference to in camera material. If there is in camera material which the authority want to present, after today's proceedings, we should set another time to take that in camera evidence.

CHAIRMAN—Yes, we could do that. We will notify you of a convenient date. Perhaps a less inconvenient date is a better way of putting it.

Ms Pegrum—Thanks, Mr Chairman.

CHAIRMAN—I thank you again for your attendance here today. If there are any matters on which we need additional information, the secretary will write to you.

Resolved (on motion by **Senator Lightfoot**):

That this committee authorises publication of the proof transcript of the evidence given before it at public hearing this day.

Committee adjourned at 8.28 p.m.