



**JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL CAPITAL
AND EXTERNAL TERRITORIES**

Inquiry into pay parking in the Parliamentary Zone

MEDIA RELEASE

Issued: Monday 13 October 2003

***Report Tabled: Committee doesn't support proposal for Pay
Parking in the Parliamentary Zone: more detail required***

The Parliamentary Joint Committee on the National Capital has today tabled its report on the proposal by the National Capital Authority for pay parking to be introduced in the Parliamentary Zone.

Background:

As the agency charged with managing the Commonwealth's interests in the national capital, the National Capital Authority is seeking to introduce pay parking as a means to manage traffic in the Parliamentary Zone. The introduction of pay parking is part of a proposed group of initiatives for the long-term development of the Parliamentary Zone, as set out in the *Parliamentary Zone Review Outcomes Report* released by the Authority in March 2000.

The issues relating to parking in the Zone which have become a cause for concern include traffic flow problems, limited car parking spaces, the physical isolation of major buildings and iconic attractions and a poor pedestrian access network. This was evident to members of the Committee during an inspection of the parking areas in the Zone and the adjacent Barton/Forrest area.

The Committee has been conscious of the many interests involved in this issue, as evidenced by the large number of submissions received to the inquiry. The majority of submissions were from people working in the Zone and the adjacent Barton/Forrest area. There have also been strong arguments put forward by the national cultural institutions and Commonwealth agencies located in the Zone.

Finding:

The National Capital Authority is seeking the Committee's support for the **principle** of pay parking. However, the Committee believes the Authority has failed to adequately address a number of significant issues regarding the implementation of pay parking. This has created a large degree of uncertainty for the Committee, which, at this time, finds itself **unable** to give the 'in-principle' support for pay parking that the Authority is seeking.

The **unanimous** view of the Committee is that the Parliamentary Zone is unique and should not be treated in the same way as the commercial centres in the ACT. The Zone belongs to the people of Australia, and access to any of the culturally significant sites throughout the area should remain free of any charge.

Recommendation:

The parking situation in the Parliamentary Zone and adjacent areas of Barton/Forrest, however, remains unacceptable. The Committee, therefore, makes the following recommendation:

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

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

The full report can be found at the Committee's website at:

www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/ncet/payparking/index.htm

**For media comment, please contact Senator Ross Lightfoot, Chairman
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