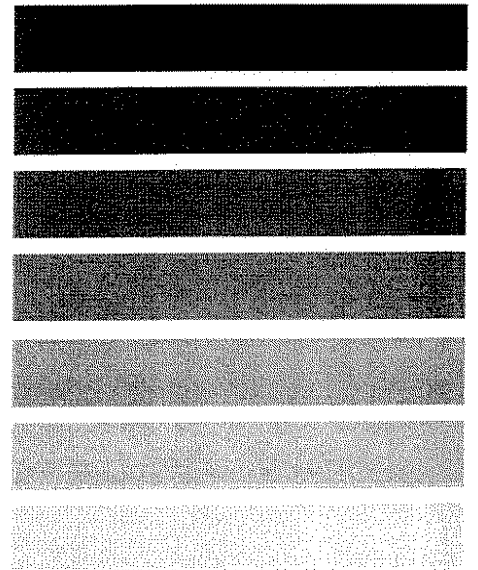


Parliamentary Zone Parking Inquiry



SUBMISSION TO
THE INQUIRY

6 March 2003

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PARLIAMENTARY ZONE PARKING INQUIRY

Introduction

The National Archives opposes pay parking in the Parliamentary Zone.

The introduction of pay parking would have detrimental effects on the status of Canberra as the national capital, on the experience of local, interstate and international visitors, as well as on the efficiency and effectiveness of the national institutions within the Parliamentary Zone.

The status of Canberra as the national capital

The National Archives is conscious of the importance of maintaining heritage values both in the Commonwealth records we care for and make accessible and in the Parliamentary Zone as the symbolic heart of the national capital:

...the physical manifestation of Australian democratic government and the home of the nation's most important cultural and judicial symbols.¹

It appears that the most likely solution to the implementation of pay parking in the Parliamentary Zone would be voucher machines with their associated signage. This would be detrimental to the architectural excellence and aesthetic appeal demanded by the NCA for all works in the area. The obvious effects on the vista from Parliament House, and elsewhere in the Zone, would be in contravention of the cultural heritage values so clearly defined in the Register of the National Estate listings for these nationally significant sites.

The interests of the national institutions

The National Archives is one of the significant national institutions and public buildings in the Parliamentary Zone, which includes the principal tourist attractions of Canberra. These institutions are largely taxpayer funded and all Australians are encouraged to visit them.

A disincentive in the form of pay parking would be in stark opposition to the marketing and promotional efforts of the National Archives and other cultural institutions. These institutions wish to encourage and enhance visitor numbers and experiences. Since 1998, the National Archives has invested considerable resources in promoting to Australians a knowledge and understanding of this most valuable national resource, the National

¹ National Capital Authority, *Parliamentary Zone Review: Outcomes*, Canberra, March 2000, piii

Archives collection. The fruits of these marketing endeavours are now beginning to mature, with visitor numbers steadily increasing and those visitors appreciating that the collection is available for them to see and use.

Interests of visitors to the Archives and effects on tourism

Visitors to the National Archives are primarily in the 55 years and older age group. These visitors, researchers and volunteers at the National Archives would feel the added burden of additional cost in exercising their right of access to valuable records in the collection and in providing volunteer support.

The National Archives and the National Library are primarily research facilities. Our researchers undertake projects that require visits to our reading room for periods ranging from a few hours through to several months. Parking requirements for institutions supporting research need to be considered in terms of that work which is very different from the needs of visitors to exhibitions, cultural events or educational programs.

There is little support for the notion that pay parking in the Parliamentary Zone is good public policy. The assertion that the introduction of pay parking in the 'place of the people' would improve the visitor experience and reduce the use of motor vehicles will do little to gain sympathy among those seriously affected by the policy. The aged and people with disabilities would have difficulty in getting from bus stops to the particular institutions. This will be further complicated during periods of extreme temperatures, in both summer and winter.

The interests of those employed in the Zone

The Parliamentary Zone has very few community facilities such as banks, food outlets, shops, doctors, childcare, etc. Any proposal for pay parking would impose a potential double disadvantage on those working in the Parliamentary Zone because these facilities, with very few exceptions, are not nearby. Staff would have to pay for parking at work and pay for parking again when they travelled to undertake any type of normal lunchtime activity. This is not an equitable situation for the staff working in the Zone compared to those, for example, who work in Civic.

For those who need to drop off and pick up children on their way to work, public transport is not an option. Nor is it the optimum choice for those who work the long hours associated with managing national institutions. Where national research and cultural institutions provide long opening hours for the public, staff providing these services can rightly expect to have the use of

their own vehicle, particularly when they are required to travel outside daylight hours.

The preliminary parking analysis undertaken in connection with the 1994 Inquiry noted that of the zone users surveyed, a significant proportion indicated that car parking charges would not change their method of transport to work – that the car was needed for other purposes. Public transport to and from the Zone is simply too inconvenient and time consuming to represent a viable alternative, at least in its present form. A major shift in public perception and the provision of suitable infrastructure and services would clearly be needed to achieve the greater use of public transport.

The introduction of pay parking would undoubtedly lead to demands for staff for compensation for, or exemption from, the additional costs involved for them. It is estimated that the costs involved for Archives staff would be in the vicinity of \$200,000 pa and meeting such demands would be impossible from within current appropriations. The introduction of unsubsidised pay parking would undoubtedly have an unfortunate effect on staff morale and is likely to lead to industrial issues.

Proposed parking policies for Forrest and Barton

The recommendations of the 1994 Inquiry and the majority of submissions received at that time confirmed that there was little support for the introduction of pay parking in the Zone. The '*major reservations and concerns*' on implementation of pay parking noted by the Committee in 1994 were based on sound logic which remains largely unchanged today. The only identifiable changes since the 1994 Inquiry appear to be the proposed implementation of pay parking in nearby suburbs and the unspecified parking proposals contained in the NCA *Parliamentary Zone Review*. The Review itself provides the long-term solution to this problem in confirming that, *each new building will be required to provide space for its own parking needs either wholly or partly on-site.*² If this long-term solution is implemented, then short-term solutions such as pay parking throughout the Parliamentary Zone and surrounding suburbs would be a reactive response with many accompanying disadvantages.

Conclusion

For the reasons stated above, the National Archives opposes any proposal to introduce pay parking within the Parliamentary Zone. All cultural institutions and national buildings in the Zone would be badly served by the

² National Capital Authority, *Parliamentary Zone Review: Outcomes*, Canberra, March 2000, p40

implementation of pay parking. Such a proposal would seriously compromise the heritage values and national significance of the buildings in the Zone. The proposed system would also be detrimental to their visitors and the staff who help to make them such renowned national assets.

Publications Consulted

National Capital Authority, *Parliamentary Zone Review: Outcomes*, Canberra, March 2000

Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia, *Proposal for Pay Parking in the Parliamentary Zone: Report of the Joint Standing Committee on the National Capital and External Territories*, Canberra, June 1994

Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia, *The Proposal for Pay Parking in the Parliamentary Zone: Volume 1 – Submissions Nos. 1 – 35*, Canberra, June 1994