

The provision of amenity within the Parliamentary Triangle

Introduction

- 1.1 On 17 May 2013, the Hon Catherine King MP, Minister for Regional Services, Local Communities and Territories, requested that the Joint Standing Committee on the National Capital and External Territories undertake an inquiry into the provision of amenity within the Parliamentary Triangle. The Committee adopted the inquiry on 24 May.
- 1.2 The terms of reference of the inquiry ask the Committee to examine the provision of amenity within the Parliamentary Triangle with particular reference to:
 - Describing the changing nature of the working environment in the Parliamentary Triangle;
 - The adequacy of retail services available in this precinct against the benchmark of like employment precincts located in the Capital; and
 - Should these services be considered inadequate, recommend steps that would ameliorate that inadequacy.
- 1.3 With limited time available to take evidence on the issue, the Committee sought the views in particular of the National Capital Authority (NCA), national institutions within the Central National Area, government departments, the Community and Public Sector Union (CPSU) and the ACT Government.
- 1.4 The Committee received 13 submissions and one supplementary submission, which are listed at Appendix A. The Committee held 1 public hearing. A list of those organisations and individuals who gave evidence before the Committee is listed at Appendix B.

Scope and structure of the report

- 1.5 While the terms of reference of the inquiry refer specifically to the Parliamentary Triangle, the Committee is cognisant that the issues surrounding the inquiry impact on the whole of the Central National Area – taking in Barton, Russell and Acton as well as the Parliamentary Zone (Parkes). Moreover, the Committee is conscious that changes in other precincts will affect the Parliamentary Triangle and vice versa. The Committee has therefore taken a broader view of its task, taking evidence upon and making recommendations affecting the Central National Area as a whole.
- 1.6 The Committee has also taken account of issues in the background of the inquiry – specifically the budget decision to introduce pay parking on National Land. The report summarises the pay parking decision, previous findings of the Committee in addressing this issue, and the recent findings of the Intergovernmental Committee (IGC) on parking.
- 1.7 The report then focusses on the provision of amenity, including:
- The rationale behind the pay parking decision
 - The changing environment of the Central National Area
 - The planning structure underpinning the provision of amenity
 - The need for amenity
 - The provision of amenity
 - Paying for amenity

Background to the inquiry

Pay Parking on National Land

- 1.8 The inquiry was initiated following the decision of the Australian Government to introduce pay parking on National Land in Parkes, Barton, Russell and Acton (see Figure 1.1) from 1 July 2014. The introduction of pay parking is designed to assist with ongoing parking management on National Land, and will see the introduction of a mixture of long stay, short stay and on-street pay parking.
- 1.9 The demand for parking has grown and therefore so has the need to manage this demand. Pay parking in the Parliamentary Triangle and other National Land has been a live issue for at least twenty years, and it appears the issue has reached a critical tipping point.
- 1.10 The new policy covers around 9000 parking spaces on National Land, and is designed to be consistent with parking arrangements at other

employment centres in Canberra. The NCA will implement the pay parking arrangements on behalf of the Australian Government. The money raised – an expected \$73.3 million – will go to consolidated revenue.

Figure 1.1 Introduction of pay parking on National Land



Source NCA, *Parking Management on National Land*.

- 1.11 The plan is to provide a predominance of short stay parking in the vicinity of national institutions for the use of visitors, and long stay parking in the vicinity of government offices for the use of workers. Hours of operation will be 8 am to 6 pm, Monday to Friday (excluding public holidays). The initial price proposed is \$11 per day for long stay parking and \$2 per hour for short stay parking. Rates will follow market prices and will be reviewed biannually. Some on-street parking will be available for up to one hour free of charge.

- 1.12 The plan does not include those car parks directly controlled by independent bodies such as the National Gallery of Australia, National Portrait Gallery (from 1 July 2013), High Court of Australia, Australian War Memorial or Parliament House. However, these institutions may be affected by access issues from surrounding areas (i.e. workers from government departments accessing free parking intended for visitors and staff at national institutions) and Fringe Benefits Tax (FBT) implications. The NCA has noted that ‘each of these bodies will need to decide whether to adopt Government policy in the management of their car parks’; and that the NCA ‘is empowered to assist these bodies with management and enforcement arrangements’.¹
- 1.13 The committee notes that the adoption of paid parking for a range of our national institutions is likely to assist in ensuring the availability of parking for visitors who currently struggle to find parking close to the places they are visiting.
- 1.14 With regard to the implications of paid parking, the NCA has noted that ‘the introduction of pay parking improves the viability of privately owned car parks and is expected to stimulate additional supply in the near future’.² The NCA has also indicated that it ‘will continue to work closely with the ACT Government to ensure public transport services meet the level of demand’.³ With regard to improving access to commercial services, the NCA has stated that ‘the planning framework for Barton allows for, and in some cases requires, mixed-use development. This enables the provision of additional commercial services *but market demand will determine the nature of any such developments*’.⁴ The NCA has noted that ‘most office buildings and national institutions have existing commercial concessions (cafés and the like)’. In addition, the NCA ‘will write to all operators encouraging them to assess options for expanding the range of services on offer’.⁵

Previous inquiries

- 1.15 The JSCNCET has dealt with the issues of pay parking in the Parliamentary Zone on two previous occasions, in 1994 and 2003.⁶ On both

1 NCA, Parking Management on National Land.

2 NCA, Parking Management on National Land.

3 NCA, Parking Management on National Land.

4 NCA, Parking Management on National Land (*italics added*).

5 NCA, Parking Management on National Land.

6 JSCNCET, *The Proposal for Pay Parking in the Parliamentary Zone*, June 1994; JSCNCET, *Not a Town Centre: The Proposal for Pay Parking in the Parliamentary Zone*, October 2003.

occasions, the Committee rejected the introduction of pay parking. In 1994, the Committee found:

- that insufficient attention had been paid to allaying the concerns of the major institutions in the Zone that this proposal would affect visitor numbers, and financially disadvantage these institutions either through the operations of the FBT or the impact on volunteer staff;
- that there is no guarantee that improved public transport links will be created to ensure an adequate service into the Zone at peak periods;
- that insufficient attention had been paid to the nature of the Zone as an area of substantial employment *but without normal commercial and community services found at other centres.*⁷

1.16 In 2003, the Committee noted that the 'current parking arrangement in the Parliamentary Zone is clearly undesirable':

...the overcrowding resulting from employees and visitors competing for parking space is not only affecting the amenity of the 'place of the people', it is affecting the level of access visitors should enjoy at the cultural institutions in the Zone.⁸

1.17 The Committee agreed 'that some form of strategy needs to be developed to alleviate these problems'. Nonetheless, the Committee was of the view 'that the solution proposed by the NCA, the introduction of pay parking, will not address the problems and will not see a significant reduction in the number of vehicles entering the zone'.⁹

1.18 With regard to amenity, the report stated:

The Committee believes that the Parliamentary Zone is unique and therefore should not be treated in the same way as commercial centres such as Civic and Woden. Such a comparison is inappropriate and misplaced. While pay parking may be a deterrent to private vehicle commuting for employees at those town centres, *the Committee recognises that the isolation of the Zone from commercial facilities suggests that pay parking will not necessarily have the same impact.*¹⁰

7 JSCNCET, *The Proposal for Pay Parking in the Parliamentary Zone*, June 1994, p. 26 (italics added).

8 JSCNCET, *Not a Town Centre: The Proposal for Pay Parking in the Parliamentary Zone*, October 2003, p. 42.

9 JSCNCET, *Not a Town Centre: The Proposal for Pay Parking in the Parliamentary Zone*, October 2003, p. 42.

10 JSCNCET, *Not a Town Centre: The Proposal for Pay Parking in the Parliamentary Zone*, October 2003, p. 43 (italics added).

- 1.19 The Committee observed that ‘pay parking will affect employees, who have reasonably viewed free parking as a measure to offset the absence of services in the Zone’.¹¹

IGC consultation 2009–10

- 1.20 During 2009–10, an Intergovernmental Committee (IGC) on parking on National Land – consisting of the NCA, Australian Government departments and ACT Government agencies – undertook a study of options for parking management in Parkes, Barton and Russell (the main areas, along with Acton, affected by the decision to introduce pay parking on National Land). The IGC was required ‘to consider the needs of all types of commuters and visitors, the isolation of the area from commercial facilities, the impact of parking policies on the Canberra transport system and sustainability outcomes’.¹²

- 1.21 The IGC found that:

- while planning policies used to guide development of the study area have, to date, provided enough car parking spaces to meet commuter demand, restrictions on access to the available parking is resulting in an undersupply of publicly available car parks.
- Very recent changes in Barton, particularly the reoccupation of the Edmund Barton Building and the introduction of pay parking on Section 9 Barton have significantly changed commuter parking patterns in the study area. Commuters who previously used the car park in Section 9 Barton are for the most part, parking elsewhere to avoid parking charges.
- Coinciding with the introduction of parking charges has been an increase in complaints regarding difficulty in locating a car park by visitors to the national institutions and Australian Government offices in the Parliamentary Zone.
- Some evidence suggests that commuters are displacing visitors by using car parks intended for visitors to the national institutions or, aware of constraints on enforcement, are parking informally or illegally. The IGC anticipates that this pattern will continue as the workforce in Barton expands and will potentially be exacerbated as commuters seek to avoid parking charges introduced in Barton. *This situation is likely to remain until measures are put in place to manage supply of, or demand for, car parking in the Parliamentary Zone.*

11 JSCNCET, *Not a Town Centre: The Proposal for Pay Parking in the Parliamentary Zone*, October 2003, p. 44.

12 Intergovernmental Committee on Parking, *Discussion Paper: Parking Management in Parkes, Barton and Russell*, NCA, October 2010, p. 8.

- The Parliamentary Zone is the symbolic and ceremonial heart of Australia. Increased use of this area as an overflow car park for Barton will significantly disrupt accessibility to the national institutions, diminish the visitor experience and compromise National and Commonwealth heritage values. *To avoid this outcome changes to parking management practices throughout the study area will be necessary.*¹³
- 1.22 The IGC suggested the following options to address the growth in parking demand:
- increasing supply to meet demand, through construction of new structured car parking (whether by the private sector or government);
 - applying demand management measures, such as parking pricing or a permit scheme, supported by alternative transport options (such as public transport or car-pooling systems) to encourage modal shift; or
 - a combination of both.¹⁴
- 1.23 The IGC acknowledged the relative isolation of the various precincts of the Central National Area from services, stating:
- Parkes, Barton and Russell are generally office precincts and do not offer the level of services and retail opportunities available to commuters who work in the town centres. They do not provide the ready access to facilities such as shops, post offices, supermarkets, and personal service establishments (such as health professionals). This is in contrast to the town centres of Woden, Tuggeranong, Gungahlin and Belconnen, and the City, where facilities are for the most part easily accessible without the need to drive.¹⁵

Provision of amenity in the Parliamentary Triangle

Pay Parking

- 1.24 In evidence before the Committee, the NCA explained that the rationale behind the introduction of pay parking 'is to remove encroachment from the Parliamentary Zone':

13 Intergovernmental Committee on Parking, *Discussion Paper: Parking Management in Parkes, Barton and Russell*, NCA, October 2010, p. 6. Italics added.

14 Intergovernmental Committee on Parking, *Discussion Paper: Parking Management in Parkes, Barton and Russell*, NCA, October 2010, p. 7.

15 Intergovernmental Committee on Parking, *Discussion Paper: Parking Management in Parkes, Barton and Russell*, NCA, October 2010, p. 23.

We have a situation where the management and the policies dealing with unleased surface car parks throughout these areas has not kept pace with changes in the city over the past 20 years. The Commonwealth through the late 1990s and the asset divestment program sold previously government owned office buildings to private hands but retained ownership of surface car parks. Whereas the market has taken over management of the buildings, we still have this constrained government ownership of car parks and no price – no market intervention at all. As the rest of the city has developed, the price disparity between car parks in other parts and the free parks we have here have created an incentive. It is now a saving of up to \$13.50 a day for people to choose to park in the Parliamentary Zone and walk or ride a bike the rest of the way to work, and that encroachment is resulting in visitors missing out on car parks close to national institutions.¹⁶

- 1.25 The introduction of pay parking would ‘remove the incentive for that encroachment by putting a price on parking’.¹⁷ In addition, the introduction of pay parking would ‘create an incentive for private operators to build multistorey car parks and create additional supply where it is needed most’.¹⁸ The NCA was ‘very confident that this policy change will improve the lot of visitors to our national institutions. It will improve availability of parking for workers in the Parliamentary Zone, Russell, Barton and Acton.’¹⁹
- 1.26 This view was endorsed by the Doma Group, a developer of office, residential, commercial and car park space in Barton. Mr Jure Domazet, director of the Doma Group, noted that the introduction of pay parking was essential to the sort of developments which would provide multistorey car parking and attached retail services in and around the Parliamentary Triangle.²⁰ He indicated that ‘there is an underlying demand for paid parking, in that people are happy to pay for the certainty of having a car park and the convenience of having a car park in the appropriate location’.²¹ Pay parking was also a vital part of achieving modal shift, encouraging people to use other forms of transport rather than cars. Mr Domazet stated:

16 Mr Gary Rake, Chief Executive, NCA, *Committee Hansard*, 11 June 2013, p. 1.

17 Mr Gary Rake, Chief Executive, NCA, *Committee Hansard*, 11 June 2013, p. 1.

18 Mr Gary Rake, Chief Executive, NCA, *Committee Hansard*, 11 June 2013, p. 2.

19 Mr Gary Rake, Chief Executive, NCA, *Committee Hansard*, 11 June 2013, p. 2.

20 Mr Jure Domazet, Director, Doma Group, *Committee Hansard*, 11 June 2013, p. 24.

21 Mr Jure Domazet, Director, Doma Group, *Committee Hansard*, 11 June 2013, p. 26.

I would suggest that, without a paid parking regime, there is absolutely no reason for people to change their behaviour. While we accept that some people will catch a bus, ride a bike or car-pool, and some people will not be able to do that, we will at least deal with that margin where people will actually have a modal shift and you will see a decrease in the number of cars in Barton per employee. What that number is, who knows. There is certainly going to be a core group of people who cannot make any other choice and will take a hit. But that is just a choice thing.²²

- 1.27 The NCA's view was also given qualified endorsement by representatives of the National Gallery of Australia (NGA) and Questacon, two of the national institutions resident in the Parliamentary Triangle. Their endorsement of paid parking was tinged with concern for the potential impact of paid parking on staff and volunteers, but both agreed that the introduction of pay parking would improve access for visitors. Mr Alan Froud, Deputy Director of the NGA, stated:

Whilst it is absolutely critical that we have people – staff and volunteers – in order to open our building and operate it, clearly our primary objective is looking at access for visitors, many of whom have travelled some distances to come to exhibitions at the National Gallery and who are not particularly familiar with the surrounds. So it is a frustration particularly at the moment on weekdays when there is very limited parking that can be accessed by our visitors. There is clearly an opportunity. Should paid parking be introduced, clearly there may be a benefit for visitors, who are our primary consideration. But there clearly will also be challenges for our staff and volunteers in that context as well with the additional cost that that will impose which does concern us. However, we are conscious of the potential for a change such as this to cause some changes in behaviour, particularly if improved public transport servicing for the zone can be achieved. I think that could go some way towards achieving a better outcome for everyone.²³

- 1.28 On the other hand, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) noted that one of the reasons for the loss of parking amenity on National Land, particularly in Barton, was the loss of parking areas to developments such as those undertaken by the Doma Group.²⁴ This point was reinforced by Mr Vince McDevitt, ACT Regional Secretary of the

22 Mr Jure Domazet, Director, Doma Group, *Committee Hansard*, 11 June 2013, p. 27.

23 Mr Alan Froud, Deputy Director, NGA, *Committee Hansard*, 11 June 2013, p. 18.

24 Mr Barry Jackson, Assistant Secretary, DFAT, *Committee Hansard*, 11 June 2013, p. 15.

Community and Public Sector Union (CPSU), who explained to the Committee:

A classic example is the Minter Ellison building. That used to be surface parking. There are a whole range of them. There is that jersey caramel one up on the corner of State Circle; I do not even know what the name of it is. But again there was plenty of parking there, and I recall that back in the day the staff at the Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts, as it was known then, all used to park in the areas around there, but it is all gone.²⁵

The changing environment

- 1.29 One of the pressures on parking and amenity is the changing work environment in the Parliamentary Triangle and other precincts of the Central National Area.
- 1.30 In its submission, the NCA noted that ‘over recent decades, there has been a trend towards intensifying institutional use of buildings in the Parliamentary Zone’, but that this trend ‘has not resulted in a material increase in the level [of] employment based within the Parliamentary Zone’.²⁶ In Barton, however, the intensification of office use had meant that ‘the employee population (government and non-government employment) has grown by approximately 50 per cent in the past two decades’.²⁷ In Russell, the employee population had increased ‘in the order of 20 per cent’.²⁸ Acton is the location of the National Museum of Australia and the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies. The NCA observed that ‘beyond the development of those institutions, there has been little to no change in the land use over the past two decades’.²⁹
- 1.31 Trends in the Russell precinct were corroborated by the Department of Defence, which stated:

There are two Defence establishments within the Parliamentary Triangle: Russell Offices and Anzac Park West.

The majority of the office/administration buildings located within the Russell apex of the Parliamentary Triangle are Department of Defence (DoD) facilities. There are approximately 8,300 Defence

25 Mr Vince McDevitt, ACT Regional Secretary, CPSU, *Committee Hansard*, 11 June 2013, p. 11.

26 NCA, *Submission 4*, p. 2.

27 NCA, *Submission 4*, p. 4.

28 NCA, *Submission 4*, p. 6.

29 NCA, *Submission 4*, p. 8.

APS and ADF personnel currently occupying the buildings located within the Russell precinct. Defence expects to increase the number of personnel located within the Russell area in the future to achieve greater efficiency by consolidating office/administrative functions into this area. Defence is planning to occupy the existing ASIO building (R9) after ASIO relocates to its new building.³⁰

- 1.32 DFAT noted recent trends in Barton, stating that ‘in recent years the land in close proximity to the head office of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade – the RG Casey Building in particular – has been developed, bringing more workers into the area. We believe this trend will continue.’³¹ DFAT also noted, however, that a significant part of this trend was the loss of parking available to workers and visitors:

This development has not been matched with a corresponding increase in parking facilities. Car parks that were on the previously undeveloped land have been removed. Pressure on parking availability for workers in the area and visitors to this department, other offices and the national institutions has had a severe impact on the working environment in the area – both for workers and visitors. It has impacted negatively on the ready access by visitors to the institutions. Increased office and commercial development in the area will exacerbate this problem unless viable transport solutions can be identified, particularly in providing for a car park.³²

- 1.33 In its submission, the CPSU identified a number of trends in the working environment of the Parliamentary Triangle which were of concern to its members. The CPSU stated that increased residential and commercial development had led to a reduction in the availability of parking spaces, which in turn reduced the willingness of workers to journey to access amenities outside the precinct during working hours for fear of losing ‘their parking space’. It also noted that the ‘introduction of commercial pay parking lots has triggered the fringe benefits tax applicable to employers in the area’. CPSU stated that both national institutions and government agencies in the precinct ‘are generally seeking to pass costs directly on to employees’; and that ‘employees are coming under increasing pressures to work longer hours, often coming and going in the

30 Department of Defence, *Submission 1*, p. 1.

31 Mr Barry Jackson, Assistant Secretary, DFAT, *Committee Hansard*, 11 June 2013, p. 13.

32 Mr Barry Jackson, Assistant Secretary, DFAT, *Committee Hansard*, 11 June 2013, p. 13.

hours of darkness' with implications for worker safety and access to public transport.³³

- 1.34 Questacon identified an increase in demand for parking in the Parliamentary Triangle, along with a decrease in available parking spaces, since 2007. 'This has led to increased competition for available car parking spaces, with the impact on the working environment being that workers arrive earlier to secure a car park and restrict movement during the day to ensure that they do not lose their space.'³⁴ The reduced availability and flexibility had impacted on casual and shift workers who were unable to readily access car parking spaces:

From staff feedback we understand that workers are allowing an additional ½ hour before each 4 hour shift in case they have to park at some distance from the building.³⁵

- 1.35 On the other hand, the NCA observed that the development of Barton had actually increased the potential for developing retail amenity, something that was not possible before.³⁶

- 1.36 Another significant trend is the changing environment from the point of view of access to goods and services online and after hours. This point was made by the NCA, which highlighted the 'evolution in the way we do business';³⁷ and the Department of the Senate, which stated in its submission:

There have been significant changes over the same period to aspects of the non-working environment. Extended retail hours and the growth of online services have taken a great deal of pressure off the need to run errands during lunchbreaks. Paying bills, undertaking banking transactions, collecting medical rebates or getting prescriptions filled, picking up supplies for dinner or the next day's school lunches, or replenishing the cat food are all possible to achieve by methods other than physically leaving the workplace at lunchtime. Access to some services like dry cleaning remains largely confined to business hours or slightly extended business hours but most things can be done on the way to or from work, or online.³⁸

33 CPSU, *Submission 6*, p. 1.

34 Questacon, *Submission 10*, p. 1.

35 Questacon, *Submission 10*, p. 1.

36 Mr Gary Rake, Chief Executive, NCA, *Committee Hansard*, 11 June 2013, p. 6.

37 Mr Gary Rake, Chief Executive, NCA, *Committee Hansard*, 11 June 2013, p. 6.

38 Department of the Senate, *Submission 2*, p. 2.

- 1.37 Nonetheless, the Department noted that it was not uncommon for employees to ‘leave the building during the day at least once a week for these types of purposes, to attend appointments, in relation to child care arrangements or to access alternative food outlets’.³⁹
- 1.38 The Department of the Senate highlighted the isolation of Parliament House from surrounding areas, and the relative difficulty of access except by car. It also noted, however, the comparative abundance of facilities available to employees within Parliament House compared to those available in other parts of the Parliamentary Triangle.⁴⁰
- 1.39 The Walter Burley Griffin Society also argued that use of on-line services made the use of physical facilities less important; and that any retail facilities provided should be placed within existing buildings, not stand-alone structures ‘due to the national profile, historic significance and visual sensitivity of the Parliamentary Precinct and its setting’.⁴¹

Providing amenity—planning

- 1.40 One of the issues raised with the NCA was the extent to which the planning regime promoted or detracted from the provision of amenity. The NCA reassured the Committee that ‘the planning system enables the development of retail with very little constraint’. The NCA’s general approach was to enable development ‘and not get in the way’; the provision of particular services or location of particular businesses, however, was left to a ‘market approach’.⁴²
- 1.41 The NCA highlighted the development of Barton:
- ...where we are seeing a fairly rapid change of character, there are more office buildings coming in, there are now several hotels that did not exist 10 years ago, and there are new apartments and more to come. It has the character of an emerging, dense urban precinct, and it will clearly need retail amenity within the next decade, probably even within five years.⁴³
- 1.42 The development of additional amenities in Barton was, ‘in planning terms, quite imminent’,⁴⁴ a point reiterated by the developer of two of the Barton sites, the Doma Group.⁴⁵

39 Department of the Senate, *Submission 2*, p. 2.

40 Department of the Senate, *Submission 2*, pp. 2–3.

41 Walter Burley Griffin Society, *Submission 8*, p. 6.

42 Mr Gary Rake, Chief Executive, NCA, *Committee Hansard*, 11 June 2013, p. 2.

43 Mr Gary Rake, Chief Executive, NCA, *Committee Hansard*, 11 June 2013, p. 2.

44 Mr Andrew Smith, Chief Planner, NCA, *Committee Hansard*, 11 June 2013, p. 6.

45 Mr Jure Domazet, Director, Doma Group, *Committee Hansard*, 11 June 2013, p. 21.

- 1.43 The NCA also noted that the planning system allowed for the development of amenity in the Parliamentary Triangle, stating:
- ...the [Parliamentary Zone] master plan enables the development of multistorey car parks behind the John Gorton Building and the Treasury building, and allows for retail amenity on a small scale...to go into those. The planning system enables it there.⁴⁶
- 1.44 With regard to Russell and Acton, the NCA stated:
- Russell is close to the eastern side of Constitution Avenue and the planning system mandates active frontages for development along that space. Even down at Acton it is a short walk from the New Acton precinct, which enables multiuse, including retail. Indeed, there is a small stall there, a cafe and now a theatre. The development of West Basin over time enables multiple use and requires active street frontages.⁴⁷
- 1.45 The NCA stressed that in terms of providing amenity, 'the planning system enables everything we are talking about. It is a case of the market and demand catching up.'⁴⁸
- 1.46 One problem identified with the current planning regime was the provision of childcare. In evidence before the Committee, Mr Domazet explained the difficulties in placing childcare centres within office developments in urban areas:
- It becomes very cost-prohibitive for a childcare centre to be built – if you look at the traditional childcare centre the one that works quite often is in a low-density area, or at least a childcare centre that is low density in that it is a much cheaper building to build. It is simply four walls and a roof with some outdoor space. Once you start putting childcare centres into office buildings you introduce a very different category of construction within an office building. ...What that tends to do is blow the rent out of the water for childcare centres. Top that with the fact that open space is quite expensive again in the inner urban areas, and you are struggling.⁴⁹
- 1.47 The NCA advised that 'childcare facilities are permitted in virtually all new developments in the subject areas', but that 'it is a matter for building owners/managers to consider whether inclusion of a childcare facility is appropriate in their location'. The NCA also advised that 'there may also
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46 Mr Gary Rake, Chief Executive, NCA, *Committee Hansard*, 11 June 2013, p. 3.

47 Mr Gary Rake, Chief Executive, NCA, *Committee Hansard*, 11 June 2013, p. 3.

48 Mr Gary Rake, Chief Executive, NCA, *Committee Hansard*, 11 June 2013, p. 3.

49 Mr Jure Domazet, Director, Doma Group, *Committee Hansard*, 11 June 2013, p. 27.

be additional constraints within the childcare regulatory system'. However, the NCA indicated that:

Subject to public consultation, the views of the Minister responsible for the NCA and Parliamentary disallowance, it would be possible for the NCA to amend the National Capital Plan [to] require inclusion of a childcare facility in new development on a site that is, or sites that are, presently unleased.⁵⁰

Providing amenity—need

1.48 The link between the provision of amenity and the introduction of pay parking is one the Committee has visited before, and one which has been highlighted in the evidence presented to the Committee on this occasion as well. There is a widespread view that car use is essential to those working in the Central National Area because of the isolation of the various precincts, perceived inadequacies of public transport and the lack of shops and services.

1.49 In its submission, CPSU noted that services within the Parliamentary Triangle and surrounding areas 'have not improved significantly over the last two decades' and that 'public transport is still not considered a viable option for most members'.⁵¹ CPSU stated that:

Members tell us they expect to be able to access reasonable amenities in the Parliamentary Triangle, for example, childcare, chemists, hair salon, dry cleaners, newsagents, post offices, optometrists, more and better located auto teller machines.⁵²

1.50 The CPSU argued that:

Amenities are a fundamental part of providing an option for people to leave their car at home. The amenities go to having access to those services that you would normally expect to have access to in and about your workplace in the course of going through your normal working day.⁵³

1.51 The War Memorial noted in its submission that 'most staff and volunteers travel by car to work as there are limited public transport services to and from the site'. There were two cafes on site, but the closest retail facilities were the Campbell shops, Ainslie shops or Civic.⁵⁴

50 NCA, *Submission 4.1*, p. 2.

51 CPSU, *Submission 6*, p. 1.

52 CPSU, *Submission 6*, p. 1.

53 Mr Vince McDevitt, ACT Regional Secretary, CPSU, *Committee Hansard*, 11 June 2013, p. 9.

54 Australian War Memorial, *Submission 5*, p. 1.

- 1.52 Questacon believed that there is an inadequate level of retail services and amenity in the Parliamentary Triangle.⁵⁵ Professor Graham Durant, the Director of Questacon, noted that this impacted on visitors as well as workers in the area.⁵⁶
- 1.53 In her submission, Miss Shelby Schofield noted the lack of retail outlets and other services in the Parliamentary Triangle, and the link between this and the ongoing parking problems in the precinct – ‘for it is the lack of amenity that requires many workers to drive to work because of the need to drive to access basic amenities during the day’.⁵⁷
- 1.54 She also highlighted the absence of childcare services in the area as a major incentive for car use:
- Access to child care facilities is minimal with only a handful of services being run within one or two office buildings. These have long waiting lists and many parents have no alternative but to put their children into care out of the area. The often long distances between parents and their child care options again requires parents to use cars as bus services are slow and their frequency inadequate.⁵⁸
- 1.55 In its submission, the Department of Parliamentary Services (DPS) noted that most visitors and building occupants use private vehicles to travel to Parliament House.⁵⁹
- 1.56 The Department of the Senate presented the results of a staff survey on the provision of amenity within the Parliamentary Triangle. It observed a high level of car use amongst respondents – 81% – influenced by the convenience of car use and the lack of adequate public transport. The survey noted the existence of direct bus services, but ‘respondents highlighted that direct bus services to Parliament House usually required catching multiple connecting buses and that trips were much slower than other modes of transport’. It was further noted ‘that the bus routes that service Parliament House were not direct to town centres (i.e. Civic or Woden) and they worked their way around certain suburbs and the Parliamentary Triangle’.⁶⁰
- 1.57 The survey found that:

55 Questacon, *Submission 10*, p. 2.

56 Professor Graham Durant, Director, Questacon National Science and Technology Centre, *Committee Hansard*, 11 June 2013, pp. 19–20.

57 Miss Shelby Schofield, *Submission 3*, p. 1.

58 Miss Shelby Schofield, *Submission 3*, p. 2.

59 DPS, *Submission 13*, p. 2.

60 Department of the Senate, *Submission 2*, p. 5.

The Parliamentary Triangle, including Parliament House, is somewhat isolated from amenities provided in Civic and other town centres in Canberra. Few amenities used by respondents are found within the Parliamentary Triangle and while the town centres are relatively close in proximity, transport options and parking issues precluded many respondents from accessing them.⁶¹

- 1.58 The survey also found that ‘while some amenities, such as retail services, can be accessed online from one’s computer, mobile telephone or portable, handheld devices, access to quality and affordable food outlets were noted as problematic for many respondents’.⁶² The survey concluded:

The provision of more amenities was recommended by many respondents and would be used if convenient and they provided cost effective services. In addition to those amenities wanted by those who work in the Parliamentary Triangle, better amenities for visitors, and in particular school groups, are needed.⁶³

- 1.59 In its submission, the Department of Finance and Deregulation noted the absence of retail services and amenities for staff working in its tenancies:

Staff wishing to transact business, or access most amenities, have to travel to Kingston or Manuka, or further afield. Staff who travel to these centres by car often lose their car spaces on returning – as parking is very tight in the area. The centres are a half hour’s walk for those making the trip on foot.⁶⁴

- 1.60 The submission from the Department of Defence highlighted the problems associated with working at Russell:

Overall, Defence employees located at Russell Offices are not provided with a comparable level of amenity to people who work in the four other main employment centres in Canberra (Civic, Belconnen, Woden and Tuggeranong).⁶⁵

- 1.61 The submission noted that the closest retail services to Russell are located over three kilometres away in Civic, and that the ‘use of private transport is necessary to travel to Civic to access retail and personal services’ given the ‘infrequent public transport services available from Russell precinct to Civic outside peak morning and afternoon periods’.⁶⁶ Given this

61 Department of the Senate, *Submission 2*, p. 7.

62 Department of the Senate, *Submission 2*, p. 7.

63 Department of the Senate, *Submission 2*, p. 7.

64 Department of Finance and Deregulation, *Submission 7*, p. 1.

65 Department of Defence, *Submission 1*, p. 1.

66 Department of Defence, *Submission 1*, p. 1.

dependency on car use, the impact of the introduction of pay parking on employees – additional expenses of up to \$110 per fortnight – potentially translated into a five per cent cut in take home pay for an employee at level APS6. The Department of Defence could see no justification for this impost given the particular nature of the Russell precinct – one which is exclusively devoted to defence employment:

...whereas the four main employment centres use pay parking to moderate parking demand between workers (long-stay) and shoppers (short-stay), at Russell demand consists of worker requirements only. Consequently, any argument that pay parking helps ensure demand is balanced between short and long stay does not apply. Cultural institutions, such as the National Gallery, are not located within the Russell precinct therefore no competing demands between visitor and worker parking exist for Defence employees.

- 1.62 In its submission, the NCA explicitly rejected comparison between conditions in the main commercial centres such as Belconnen, Civic, Woden and Tuggeranong, and those precincts in the Central National Area such as the Parliamentary Triangle. Thus, Parkes (Parliamentary Zone) is compared to Deakin West; Barton is compared to City West/New Acton; Russell to the Brindabella Office Park; and Acton to the National Botanic Gardens.⁶⁷ The rationale behind this was to compare like with like – different precincts with similar mixes of uses isolated from major town centres.⁶⁸ The NCA's conclusion was that the precincts in the Central National Area are comparatively well served in terms of access to amenities and public transport.⁶⁹
- 1.63 The NCA also noted that improving amenity at Russell was already in the purview of the Department of Defence:

The Department of Defence controls the uses within that precinct within their buildings. They already enable cafeterias to operate. If the Department of Defence was convinced that there was a need for expansion of those services, it is within their purview to expand the nature of the space that they make available for corporate uses. If they wanted a dry-cleaning agent or if they wanted to allow a hairdresser or a barber to establish, the

67 NCA, *Submission 4*.

68 Mr Gary Rake, Chief Executive, NCA, *Committee Hansard*, 11 June 2013, p. 5.

69 NCA, *Submission 4*.

Department of Defence could within its current tenancy arrangements up there bring those in.⁷⁰

- 1.64 In its submission, the Walter Burley Griffin Society urged that the Committee ‘reject claims by Government departments located in Parkes, Barton, Russell and Acton that they are “hard done by” because they don’t have retail facilities comparable to Town Centres such as Civic, Woden or Belconnen, and therefore deserve free surface car parking on National Land for their employees’.⁷¹ The Society believed that the ‘solution to the locational challenge of the single-use employment zones in Parkes, Barton, Russell and Acton, was not to continue the ‘unsustainable practice of free surface car parking, but the provision of adequate public transport to these areas’.⁷²

Improving amenity

- 1.65 In terms of improving the range of services in the Parliamentary Zone, the NCA has recommended two broad approaches – increasing the range of services provided by existing commercial concessions and making it easier to access existing services in Civic, Kingston and Manuka. A third approach – the construction of new kiosks to suit provision of additional amenity, has been suggested, but with the caveats that ‘careful assessment of the underlying business model would be required prior to assessing sites or commencing the design process’, and that additional budget funding would be necessary to fund the construction of new kiosks.⁷³
- 1.66 The NCA has also suggested expanding the services available at existing concessions – looking at ‘viable opportunities to increase the range of services they offer’; looking at ways to improve access to existing services in Civic, Kingston and Manuka; promoting public transport; and promoting walking and cycling, particularly through the use of ‘shared bicycles’ which would allow ‘easy access to Civic, Manuka or Kingston within a regular lunchbreak’.⁷⁴
- 1.67 In Barton, the NCA believed that ‘future amenity provision is most efficiently and effectively likely to be provided by the private sector’ and that ‘such provision will be market driven’. The NCA noted that:

In the case of Barton, not only has the NCA sought to reduce Government restrictions of mixed use, it has sought to improve the

70 Mr Gary Rake, Chief Executive, NCA, *Committee Hansard*, 11 June 2013, p. 7.

71 Walter Burley Griffin Society, *Submission 8*, pp. 4–5.

72 Walter Burley Griffin Society, *Submission 8*, p. 5.

73 NCA, *Submission 4*, p. 17.

74 NCA, *Submission 4*, pp. 17–18.

overall urban and social outcome by mandating that development on a reasonably small number of prominent sites must contain 'Retail Plazas'.

The National Capital Plan definition of 'Retail Plaza' is development of retail and personal service establishments at street level.⁷⁵

- 1.68 In its submission, the Doma Group, property developers active in the redevelopment of Barton, identified two developments – Block 14 Section 22 Barton (21 National Circuit) and Block 13 Section 9 Barton (44 Macquarie Street) – that it was involved in as part of the solution to amenity in the Parliamentary Triangle and Barton. Doma Group noted that 'these two properties have been earmarked by the planning authorities to be part of the long-term parking solution for the Barton precinct, with flow-on benefits to parking in the Parkes area'. It also noted that 'the development of the 44 Macquarie Street car parking structure will provide many of the retail services that are currently lacking in this employment district'. The structure would 'provide workers both with convenient car parking and retail services reducing the need to leave the area during the working day to undertake essential personal matters'.⁷⁶ The submission stated:

Market research has indicated a lack of adequate retail services in this precinct, with the catchment including the Barton office precinct and the Parkes area of the Parliamentary Triangle. Interest has been expressed for various retail and personal services uses, including a convenience store (express supermarket), post office and/or parcel delivery function, newsagent, dry cleaner and personal services establishments. The site is located far enough from the Manuka and Kingston retail centres to warrant the provision of these services. It is also unlikely that there is a suitable site within the Parkes area of Parliamentary Triangle for this type of building.⁷⁷

- 1.69 The NCA took a similar view to the provision of amenity in Russell as it did with Barton, with the proposed 'active frontages' on Constitution Avenue providing retail services.⁷⁸ The NCA noted that 'Russell retains the character of an office/business park', but that 'Constitution Avenue is presently undergoing a transformation to become a densely developed urban boulevard'. This will see development along Constitution Avenue
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75 NCA, *Submission 4*, p. 19.

76 Doma Group, *Submission 8*, p. 2.

77 Doma Group, *Submission 8*, p. 2.

78 NCA, *Submission 4*, p. 21.

between Anzac Parade and Russell, including commercial and retail frontages at Section 5 Campbell.⁷⁹

- 1.70 With regard to Acton, the NCA has taken the view that ‘given the institutional use of Acton Peninsula’, increasing access to amenities ‘would be the same as that recommended for the Parliamentary Zone—expand existing facilities and increase employer support for active transport options’.⁸⁰
- 1.71 In addition to the various proposals put forward by the NCA, DPS has indicated that it is also undertaking planning with a view to improving services in Parliament House.
- 1.72 The provision of amenity has been recognised by DPS as an important issue for the occupants of Parliament House, as ‘leaving Parliament House to access amenities on a regular basis is not practical, particularly during sitting weeks’.⁸¹ DPS has supported the provision of a range of amenities within Parliament House, including catering services; a variety of retail services such as banking, post office, travel agent, hairdresser and florist; a childcare centre; nurse’s centre; and gymnasium. In addition, DPS ‘is developing a strategic plan for improved food and retail services at Parliament House’:
- The Strategy will ensure that services are aligned with the needs of building occupants and visitors, whilst making better use of commercial space. DPS is concurrently reviewing the visitor and tourism related experience to increase the number of people visiting Parliament House and enhancing their experience. We aim to deliver a wider range of tourist programs centred on the authentic parliamentary experience, more professional exhibitions and partnerships with other national institutions.⁸²
- 1.73 DPS observed that ‘Parliament House has the potential to be a hub for retail and other services within the wider employment precinct of the Parliamentary Triangle, as part of enhanced services for visitors’.⁸³ DPS also noted that ‘enhanced public transport services within the Parliamentary Triangle...would provide an opportunity for Parliament House to operate as a retail hub for workers in the Parliamentary Triangle

79 NCA, *Submission 4*, p. 6.

80 NCA, *Submission 4*, p. 19.

81 DPS, *Submission 13*, p. 1.

82 DPS, *Submission 13*, p. 1.

83 DPS, *Submission 13*, p. 1.

as part of work to enhance retail services and the visitor experience at Parliament House'.⁸⁴

- 1.74 In its submission, the ACT Government highlighted the potential synergies between developments on ACT land and National Land in the provision of amenity within the Central National Area. Current initiatives included:
- the City to the Lake urban development proposal
 - relevant transport initiatives, such as the Capital Metro proposal and respective public transport policies, including
 - ⇒ a Central Canberra frequent public transport network
 - ⇒ extended park and ride and bike and ride facilities
 - release of the first stage of Block 6 Section 3 Parkes and Section 5 Campbell for residential and tourist accommodation
 - identification of Block 19 Section 10 City for future release for tourist accommodation.⁸⁵
- 1.75 The ACT Government noted, however, that 'should retail service development be recommended in the Parliamentary Triangle, it should align and integrate with respective urban and commercial developments across the two jurisdictions'. The Commonwealth and ACT governments need to 'ensure collaboration on respective development strategies when considering implementation of any Inquiry outcomes'.⁸⁶
- 1.76 The type of amenity sought varied between organisations, but common themes occurred around the provision of retail services, banking, childcare, improved public transport and parking.
- 1.77 The National Gallery of Australia (NGA) strongly supported 'the enhancement of amenities in the parliamentary triangle', and did so 'regardless of the current consideration being given to the introduction of paid parking'. The NGA believed amenities within the precinct that would be used by workers as well as visitors included 'banks, a post office or sub-agency, hairdresser/barber, dry cleaner, and possibly an ACT Government shopfront and a Medicare/Centrelink office'. NGA also urged improvements to the public transport servicing the Parliamentary Triangle 'should paid parking be introduced'. The NGA believed that 'it is critical for staff that the additional amenities identified be provided if they

84 DPS, *Submission 13*, p. 1.

85 ACT Government, *Submission 12*, p. 2.

86 ACT Government, *Submission 12*, p. 2.

are to be expected to abandon their cars and commute to and from work using public transport'.⁸⁷

- 1.78 In its submission, Questacon stated that employees and visitors would benefit from the provision of increased levels of retail services and amenity within the Parliamentary triangle. It suggested:
- Professional suites:
 - ⇒ Medical, including dental and other allied health services
 - ⇒ Legal, financial and personnel
 - ⇒ Medicare, banking and postal services
 - Retail outlets:
 - ⇒ Food, including mini-market and café or luncheon outlet
 - ⇒ Clothing
 - ⇒ Newsagent
 - ⇒ Hair dresser.⁸⁸
- 1.79 Questacon noted its support for such facilities 'provided that their location, appearance and conditions of operation do not detract from the national significance and symbolic nature of the Parliamentary Triangle'. It suggested that such facilities should be a discrete part of 'any new multi-story car parking structure or incorporated into any new or expanded agency of institution'.⁸⁹
- 1.80 The CPSU argued that in future 'developers should be required to provide identified amenities as part of their developments in the precinct' and that 'developers should be required to provide parking at least equal to their anticipated tenant/visitor needs'.⁹⁰ CPSU recommended improved public transport between 'the precinct, the rest of Canberra and the broader region'; the provision of 'Park-and-Ride' facilities 'outside but nearby the precinct, for example, near Canberra Railway Station, with free or cost-neutral shuttles travelling back and forth from the precinct every 15 minutes during peak hours'; and the provision of land for childcare centres within the Parliamentary Triangle.⁹¹

87 NGA, *Submission 11*, p. 1.

88 Questacon, *Submission 10*, p. 2.

89 Questacon, *Submission 10*, p. 2.

90 CPSU, *Submission 6*, p. 1.

91 CPSU, *Submission 6*, p. 1.

- 1.81 In evidence before the Committee, the CPSU urged an increase in the availability of childcare, citing long waiting lists at existing centres in and around the Parliamentary Zone.⁹²
- 1.82 The Walter Burley Griffin Society recommended the establishment of a shuttle bus service on a 'sound, permanent basis with increased frequency in periods of peak demand to provide access to the established amenities of Inner Canberra'.⁹³
- 1.83 While recognising that buses were part of the solution, however, other contributors to the inquiry urged caution in placing too much reliance on public transport. The CPSU highlighted the major difference in travel to and from town centres and travel to and from other areas, one being relatively straightforward and convenient and the other not so. Mr McDevitt stated:
- The ACT government are going to tell you a similar story about the viability of their buses, I suspect. When I pressed them on these issues in the past, I found that they turn around, look you in the eye and tell you there are 1,500 buses an hour or something. Every bus that goes over Commonwealth Avenue or Kings Avenue, they say, services the triangle. That is not the case. Especially when you follow them out to suburban Canberra, we still see fairly lengthy delays. There are a whole range of reasons why people are staying with the other 93 per cent of Canberrans and using their cars.⁹⁴
- 1.84 Miss Schofield also highlighted the difficulties associated with commuting by bus – the much longer times involved in travelling to and from work:
- To travel the 10 kilometres from my house to my place of work (a short distance indeed) it takes twelve minutes by car. If I were to catch a bus, it would take over an hour and 15 minutes and I would be required to change buses and another ten minutes to walk the distance between the bus stops and my residence and place of business. Many people who work within the Triangle would like to use the bus system, but with many working late hours, this is simply not a viable option when services are so poor.⁹⁵
- 1.85 The other aspect of amenity highlighted in the evidence presented to the Committee was parking itself. Both the NGA and Questacon emphasised
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92 Mr Vince McDevitt, ACT Regional Secretary, CPSU, *Committee Hansard*, 11 June 2013, p. 9.

93 Walter Burley Griffin Society, *Submission 8*, p. 6.

94 Mr Vince McDevitt, ACT Regional Secretary, CPSU, *Committee Hansard*, 11 June 2013, p. 11.

95 Miss Shelby Schofield, *Submission 3*, p. 2.

the need for adequate parking, especially for visitors;⁹⁶ while DFAT noted that ‘decreasing availability of car parking is the main amenity issue identified by DFAT staff’.⁹⁷ DFAT estimated unmet demand for parking in the order of 300 to 400 spaces.⁹⁸

Paying for amenity

- 1.86 A number of those giving evidence to the inquiry indicated that they believed that the revenue raised from pay parking should be utilised in improving amenity. The ACT Government took the view that the funds derived from pay parking should be reinvested ‘to support amenity development on NCA land and to provide an additional resources stream for national institutions’.⁹⁹ Miss Schofield argued that the ‘money collected from this paid parking venture should go towards providing services for the workers who are in desperate need of the most basic amenities, not to consolidated revenue’.¹⁰⁰ The Walter Burley Griffin Society recommended that any money raised from pay parking ‘be directed to support public transport in Inner Canberra serving the areas previously provided with free surface car parking’.¹⁰¹
- 1.87 According to the CPSU, using the money from pay parking to improve amenity was a simple matter of justice:

My firm view is that if the government seeks to mandate or implement pay parking from 1 July, then they have to take some responsibility to make appropriate services and what have you available for people who work in the area.¹⁰²

Committee conclusions

- 1.88 The Committee accepts that pay parking is a useful strategy for managing parking in the Central National Area, and particularly in the Parliamentary Triangle. If the growing demand for parking, especially around national institutions is to be met, then some form of price signal is essential to ensure an increasingly scarce resource – parking – is effectively managed. Having said this, it is also clear to the Committee

96 *Committee Hansard*, 11 June 2013, pp. 17–19.

97 Mr Barry Jackson, Assistant Secretary, DFAT, *Committee Hansard*, 11 June 2013, p. 13.

98 Mr Barry Jackson, Assistant Secretary, DFAT, *Committee Hansard*, 11 June 2013, p. 14.

99 ACT Government, *Submission 12*, p. 2.

100 Miss Shelby Schofield, *Submission 3*, p. 2.

101 Walter Burley Griffin Society, *Submission 8*, p. 6.

102 Mr Vince McDevitt, ACT Regional Secretary, CPSU, *Committee Hansard*, 11 June 2013, p. 10.

that this scarcity has in part arisen from planning decisions which have failed to account for likely increases in demand.

- 1.89 The Committee is also of the view that the provision of amenity must be seen the new light of the changing nature of the Central National Area – the increase in overall employment, the development of national institutions and the diversification of Barton – and the changing nature of employment – the increasingly organic and flexible interaction between working and personal lives demanded by modern workplaces. The various precincts of the Central National Area must be seen as centres of community as well as centres of employment, and that includes the Parliamentary Triangle. This means that the provision of amenity – to visitors as well as workers – should be a priority in future planning of all four precincts.
- 1.90 The Committee considers that on the whole there are inadequate amenities currently on offer. It acknowledges that there are differences between different precincts and that different approaches may be needed.
- 1.91 The Committee welcomes the reassurance from the NCA that “the planning system enables the development of retail with very little constraint.” The NCA’s general approach was to enable development “and not get in the way.” The provision of particular services or location of particular businesses, however was left to a “market approach.”
- 1.92 The provision of retail shops and services must be progressed. In this regard, the Committee notes the success of the Brindabella Business Park in integrating retail amenity with office employment in a non-residential area; and the prospective development of retail services in Barton under current development proposals. This shows what can be done, and what should be done elsewhere. The NCA has suggested that the Department of Defence look at ways of expanding opportunities for the development of retail services at Russell. The NCA should press forward with its own potential developments in Parkes, including the development of multi-storey parking and retail centres on land earmarked for such development.
- 1.93 An important part of the development of amenity is the provision of childcare services close to employment. The evidence received by the Committee indicates that there is a demand for such services. The difficulty is in providing areas suitable for the construction of childcare centres within individual developments because of space constraints. Suitable areas need to be identified and set aside. The Committee also supports the notion that the provision of public transport and parking are themselves part of the amenity of any precinct. The future development of the Central National Area should be undertaken with a view to ensuring

that sufficient parking will be available to meet current and future demand. Short of transforming the Central National Area into a major residential and commercial centre, the relative isolation of the various precincts will make access by car essential for most visitors and workers. The reality is that this is simply unavoidable and plans for the future of these precincts must take this into account.

- 1.94 On the other hand, the Committee believes that the limitations of the public transport system in Canberra need to be acknowledged in planning processes. Simply stating that a number of buses pass a certain point in a day does not demonstrate the accessibility of that point from any other point, the time required for travel, or the difficulties in terms of diverting to other destinations. Canberra is a sprawling city designed around the car, with public transport as a back-up, and the car will likely remain the primary mode of travel. Nonetheless, the Committee is conscious that bus access to the Parliamentary Triangle could be improved, and endorses the idea of a 'park and ride' system based on Kingston, and the retention of the Centennial Year shuttle bus on a permanent basis
- 1.95 Finally, in the interests of transparency and accountability, the Committee supports the creation of a strategy for the development of amenity in the Central National area, incorporating the provision of parking and retail services (acknowledging that the provision of a particular shop or service at a particular location must be determined by commercial considerations), anticipated timelines for development, funding and development responsibilities (private/public; NCA/other agencies).

Recommendation 1

- 1.96 **The Committee recommends that the Australian Government direct the National Capital Authority to develop a strategy for the provision of amenity within the Central National Area, including the Parliamentary Zone, and provide funds for the development of the strategy in the 2014-15 budget, incorporating:**
- **Provision of retail services**
 - **Provision of parking**
 - **Provision of access by public transport**
 - **Provision of childcare**
 - **Timelines for development**
 - **Development responsibilities**

Recommendation 2

- 1.97 The Committee recommends that the National Capital Authority provide a twice yearly report on development of amenities to the Committee as part of its regular biannual briefings.

Recommendation 3

- 1.98 The Committee recommends that the National Capital Authority negotiate with the Government of the Australian Capital Territory upon the development of a 'park and ride' facility on a suitable site in order to improve access by public transport to the Parliamentary Zone, and making permanent the Centennial Year shuttle bus.

Senator Louise Pratt

Chair

27 June 2013