



AUSTRALIAN  
PUBLIC SERVICE  
COMMISSION



Mr Quinton Clements  
Inquiry Secretary  
Joint Standing Committee on the National Capital  
and External Territories  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

### PARLIMENTARY ZONE PARKING INQUIRY

In December 2002 Mr Ross Lightfoot, Chairman of the Joint Standing Committee on the National Capital and External Territories, wrote to Mr Podger advising of a forthcoming inquiry into pay parking in the Parliamentary Zone.

Mr Lightfoot invited the Commission to make a written submission to the Inquiry and provided the terms of reference for the Inquiry. The Commission's submission follows.

#### Background

Mr Podger and Mike Taylor, Secretary of the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry – Australia (AFFA), have previously raised concerns about the availability of parking in the vicinity of the Edmund Barton Building (EBB), Barton with the National Capital Authority and the ACT administration. Concerns related to the shortage of parking in the vicinity of EBB, poor lighting where parking was provided and restrictions on parking in Blackall, Macquarie, Broughton and surrounding streets within Barton as a result of parking sites being progressively developed as office and residential sites. Continuation of development in the vicinity of the EBB will further exacerbate the shortage of parking for staff and visitors to the area.

In response to submissions from the Commission and AFAA, advice received from the National Capital Authority on 16 August 2002 indicated that it was pursuing 'a solution of additional parking, in the form of car parking structures, with the Department of Finance and Administration (DoFA) and the Territory Government who hold the sites strategically identified for such use'. The Authority also indicated that the car park located behind the National Archives had some spare capacity and remained an option for Commission staff.

## Current Inquiry

The terms of reference for the Inquiry include *the interests of those employed in the Parliamentary Zone and adjacent areas.*

The Commission would like to raise for the Inquiry's consideration concerns relating to the employment context of its staff working in the area adjacent to the Parliamentary Zone; and the lack of available services in the area and the consequential need for staff to depart and return to the area during the day.

A threshold attraction for staff seeking employment in the Parliamentary Zone is the availability of free parking, despite the lack of services in the immediate area. Free parking is an important element of the context in which staff consider and appraise the value of their terms and conditions of employment. Free parking, albeit restricted, is one advantage available to staff when weighing the relative benefits of working in the Parliamentary Zone and adjacent area against the services available to staff working in the city or town centres. The Commission is currently in the process of making its third certified agreement with its staff and the desirability of some form of subsidy for staff to soften the impact of the introduction of pay parking in the Parliamentary Zone has been raised in these negotiations. The Commission cannot afford to subsidise its staff for the introduction of pay parking.

The Commission is also concerned that, if pay parking is to be introduced, the level of charging should be commensurate with the level of services available in the immediate area. Staff working in the Parliamentary Zone and adjacent area do not have ready access to the same level of services as people employed in the city or near the town centres who have the benefit of accessing a wide variety of services eg postal, insurance services, ACT shopfronts, banks and the like. Staff in the Parliamentary Zone would need to travel to large suburban shopping centres (typically Manuka and Kingston) or the city to access these services. In practice this would mean paying a parking fee in the morning, travelling to a shopping centre at lunchtime and paying a second parking fee and returning to the place of work in the afternoon and paying a third parking fee.

Should pay parking be introduced to the Parliamentary Zone and adjacent areas then consideration should be given to the following:

- Provision of adequate levels of parking in the area;
- The limited services available to employees in the area; and
- Setting fees that are commensurate with the limited level of services in the area.

The Commission is also concerned about the limited availability of short-term parking in the Parliamentary Zone and adjacent area. Visitors to the Commission regularly complain about the shortage of parking and the time they spend trying to find parking within a reasonable distance of the EBB.

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