



17 Feb. 03

The Secretary of the Committee
Joint Committee on National Capital and External Territories
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This submission concerns the introduction of pay parking in the Parliamentary Zone.

My initial comment refers to a statement in the background information provided in the document entitled Parliamentary Zone Review (Parking). The author states that the existing "...car parks dominate the landscape" and that "for many visitors their first impression is one of sterile car parks". I wish to point out that these comments do not paint an accurate picture of the Parliamentary Zone or the car parks in the area. The majority of the larger car parks are in fact surrounded by 1.8 metre hedges and trees and are virtually unseen by visitors. Visitors may even find it difficult to find these car parks. I suspect that this would change dramatically with the construction of the suggested multi story car parks. Above ground multi-story car parks would be competing in the Parliamentary Zone skyline against classic art deco and modern architecture and would be visually displeasing - I have yet to see a classic multi-story car park. Should multi level car parks be constructed in the Zone I suggest that they should be constructed underground as above ground ones could not be hidden by hedges.

The introduction of pay parking in the Parliamentary Zone is not consistent with the introduction of other pay parking areas in Canberra. In the vast majority of situations in Canberra, pay parking has been introduced in or adjacent to commercial centres. Land is at a premium in these centres and people wishing to drive and park are charged a parking fee. In return people have access to a wide range of commercial outlets including department stores, boutiques, specialised services as well as entertainment, professional services, banking facilities and so on. Those who work in these centres must either catch buses or pay for parking but in return can utilise the shops and services before, during and after work.

The Parliamentary Zone on the other hand is devoid of shops, services, entertainment and the last bank in the area was closed about a year ago. There is nothing here except Government Departments, tourist attractions and takeaways. Despite the fact that thousands of people work in such a concentrated area, there is not even anything that resembles a basic supermarket or corner store or even an essential service. Those working in the Parliamentary Zone must either walk 20-30 minutes to the nearest commercial centre or drive to Civic simply pay a bill or go to a buy a loaf of bread or bandaid. Pay parking for people working in the Zone cannot be justified as it offers little if anything for the consumer apart from being able to attend work. Pay parking in effect would be a tax on Public Servants going to work.

It could be argued that Public Servants in other areas such as Civic, Woden etc already pay for their parking and that this should justify the introduction of pay parking in the Parliamentary Zone. This is not a valid argument because these areas are multipurpose and offer more than just a place to work. The suggestion in the Parliamentary Zone Review (Parking) that convenient amenities such as a dry cleaners, newsagent and flower shops could be incorporated in pay parking structures suggests that this issue is recognised but has been given little realistic consideration. Dry cleaners, newsagent and flower shops are hardly essential services. When put in the context of what is available in other pay parking areas, however, there is no comparison to the amenities offered in commercial centres such as Civic, Woden, Kingston etc.

The argument put forward in the Review that user pays is also a very thin argument and taken to its extreme would mean that pay parking should or could be introduced into all car parks in Canberra. All car parks in Canberra need to be serviced and maintained and in the majority of cases this is already done through our taxes not on a user pay system. Putting in pay parking at public school car parks for example could be justified through the user pay principal but would most likely be viewed simply as a revenue raising exercise. The same applies to the Parliamentary Zone. Pay parking would target one and only one group – Public Servants. This is discriminatory. In effect the Government would be charging its own employees to attend work. Once introduced the owner of the car parks would have a virtual monopoly on parking in the area with a captive market.

Given the above, the introduction of pay parking in the Parliamentary Zone can only be viewed as a fee or tax for workers (mainly Public Servants) to attend work. No suggestion has been given to date as to the cost of parking, however, even if the cost were only \$4.00 per day this would represent a cost to workers of about \$1,000 per year with no additional benefit to their well being except perhaps the ability to buy flowers at lunchtime.

The Review specifically indicates that an effort would be made to exclude visitors from pay parking. The "Place of the People" would be free to some visitors/tourists but not for people who actually live and work in Canberra. This appears to be a contradiction of the intent of the "Place of the People" (Please note: Public Servants are people too). The Review indicates that the intention is to provide free parking for visitors even to the point of reimbursement of visitors who choose long-stay pay parking. This would be difficult, if not impossible to manage or police. If anyone was to pay it should probably be those who choose to make use of the tourist attractions (but being a place of the people I personally believe it is in the spirit of the Zone that all should be equal).

The Review also suggests that pay parking will encourage the use of public transport to and from the Parliamentary Zone. I have not seen any evidence to support this statement. This premise also implies that people have an option as to whether they catch a bus, walk or drive. As the Parliamentary Zone is not a significant commercial centre it is not a hub for public transport. Most people wishing to use busses therefore need to catch at least two busses. In many cases this is difficult, time consuming or more often totally impracticable. The public transport system does not meet the needs

of the majority of people – otherwise the issue of car parks would not exist. Many people I work with for example are from out of town and do not have access to public transport. Similarly for workers with children in childcare or after school care, public transport in the Parliamentary Zone is not an option. When I worked in Civic, for example, I was able to catch one bus to and from work, work a full day and pick up (and drop off) my child from childcare. When I moved jobs to Barton public transport proved to be impossible. I had no option but to purchase a car and drive to work in order to be able to work a full day and drop off and pick up my child. Most other workers with young families are in a similar position.

Pay parking will also add additional time to the journey to and from work through having to queue to get into and out of parking stations. A peak arrival time for workers occurs in the morning and after work. My experience in parking stations in Civic confirm that additional time is required for the journey to and from work to compensate for this. I estimate this additional time amounted to at least 1 hour per week. This extra time results in additional costs to those paying for childcare. If pay parking is introduced not only will family incomes be reduced (perhaps around \$1000 pa through pay parking) but children will have to spend longer time in childcare and additional childcare fees will need to be paid adding further financial and emotional and stress to family routines. Pay parking in the Barton/Parliamentary Zone is not a family friendly option and would be a backwards step in Departments which promote a family friendly work environment.

The queuing at pay parking stations will also disrupt traffic flows in the area. Multi level pay parking stations are designed with one entry and one exit and therefore bottleneck the traffic. Again, my experience in Civic demonstrated that queues into parking stations, particularly in the morning, disrupted the traffic flow in feeder streets.

Experience around the world with the introduction of pay parking shows that it will shift commuter parking to the surrounding areas. Those who choose not to pay or cannot pay for parking will seek free public parking in the surrounding areas. This creates problems for other businesses, organizations and private dwellings in the area. Current free parking areas attached to surrounding buildings would need to be policed and managed to keep people out of their parking spaces. There will be a cost to the surrounding businesses associated with this. Examples of shifting the problem from one area to another can be found wherever pay parking has been introduced - for example at Canberra College in Phillip teachers and students were displaced from the school's car park when pay parking was expanded to all car parks surrounding the Woden commercial complex. The school had to build a boom gate to keep a portion of the car park available for teachers and students. The boom has to be locked and unlocked at certain times of the day by someone and when the school has functions on during the day special barricades have to be erected and manned to enable sufficient parking to be available for visitors to the school. This has added an additional cost to the school and added an unwanted inconvenience to those working in it.

Finally I wish to raise the issue of ownership of the proposed pay parking stations. Will the stations be owned and operated by Local Government or the Commonwealth? Or, will the stations be owned by private enterprise? If owned by private enterprise I would seriously question the Government sanctioning a monopoly

on private pay parking in an area which has a captive market of government employees.

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