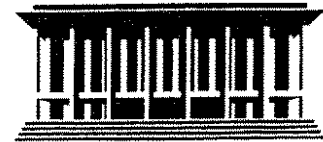
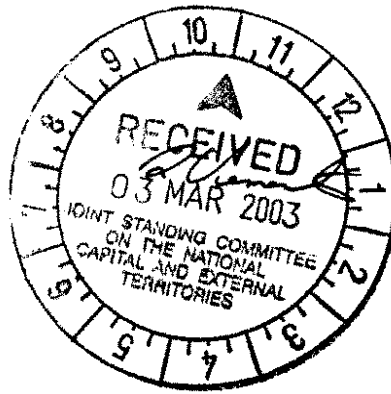


SUBMISSION 9

File No: 700/01/00895
27 February 2003



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Mr R. Lightfoot
Chairman
Joint Standing Committee On The National Capital
And External Territory
The Commonwealth Parliament
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Mr Lightfoot

PARLIAMENTARY ZONE PARKING INQUIRY

Your letter to the Chairman of the National Library invited a submission from this organisation for the forthcoming enquiry on pay parking in the Parliamentary Zone.

The Library takes this matter seriously as outcomes will have a direct bearing on the use of our facility. A submission is therefore enclosed.

Thank you for the opportunity of providing these comments.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Jan Fullerton".

Jan Fullerton
Director-General

PARLIAMENTARY ZONE PARKING ENQUIRY

1. The Library supports moves to improve the management of parking in the Parliamentary Zone. In our response below, we have worked on the basis that pay parking for the Zone is only being considered for this purpose.
2. We have noted within the National Capital Authority's (NCA's) *Master Plan for the Parliamentary Zone*, that the Zone becomes a 'place of the people' accessible to all Australians. To this end a guiding aspiration set by the Authority is that the "place of the people must have ... public facilities that are accessible and affordable."
3. The Library's understanding of the NCA's preferred parking strategy is to increase the number of shorter stay parking spaces so that visitors can use the area, with longer stay commuters using public transport or parking in outlying car parks on the perimeter of the Zone, with shuttle buses bringing them to the centre.
4. The Library does not, apart from a loading dock and small service yard, have any parking that belongs to the institution. There are two sealed car parks close to the Library building with bays for Commonwealth vehicles and both short and long term stays. There are a limited number of spaces directly in front of the Library for very short stays. There is also a dirt car park behind Questacon that is used. Most of the available parking space is for all day stays. The parking is used by readers and visitors (including tourists); Library staff; staff for office workers in the surrounding buildings; and tradespeople/contractors to the Library. The Library has a core staff of approximately 535 (including 70 volunteers) and receives some 460,000 visitors in years when we do not hold a major exhibition.
5. The major parking issue faced by the Library is the availability of parking spaces during normal business hours Monday to Friday. On this basis it is assumed that pay parking would not be considered after normal business hours or on weekends and public holidays when demand is at its lowest.
6. The Library's preferences in order are:
 - To ensure parking arrangements in the zone meet the needs of visitors and staff
 - To improve parking facilities in the Zone and provide these free of charge wherever possible
 - If charges are to be imposed, then limit these to normal business hours and locate the parking facilities close to the institutions to promote ease of access. Fees should be as low as reasonably possible.

7. The Committee's terms of reference are used in order to address the issues that the Library currently has regarding parking.

The interests of visitors

8. The Library has concerns with the proposed strategy as set out in paragraph 3 above:

Time of stay for visitors and frequency of visits

9. Our visitors can be divided into two broad groupings: readers and others. Other users of the Library cover visitors to our exhibitions, attendees at our regular events as well as tourists.
10. Frequent readers are usually long stay. Of the number of readers that annually visit the Library, approx 25% are using the facility all day. For the remaining 75% of readers, the average stay would be between 3 to 4 hours. 78% of readers live in the ACT.
11. Of the 92,000 visitors to our exhibitions per annum, approximately 50% are from interstate; the biggest proportion are from Sydney. It is our understanding that the latter utilise cars or coaches. These visitors once they are in the Library, also generally visit reading rooms, the bookshop and/or café. An average stay of 3 to 4 hours is also expected for this group.
12. Any short term parking arrangements would need to provide for an average length of stay of four hours. Anything shorter would force visitors to break their stay to move their car. Readers wishing to stay all day would have to carry their personal belongings (eg research documents and computers) from afar which may make it unmanageable, particularly for our older patrons.

Cost of stay for visitors

13. A demographic profile of readers undertaken in June 2001 showed that while 25% were defined as professional, a further 25% were students and 20% were retired or senior citizens. A further 6% were looking for work. In total, 50% were not in paid work. Of visitors to exhibitions our study indicated that 45% were senior citizens. Paid parking will therefore impact on 50% of our reader's economic ability to access the Library's facility and 45% of our exhibition visitors. For visitors to Library events, the study indicated that 80% used the car park; 72% said that they were influenced to come because the event was free.

14. Over 20% of readers visit the Library more than fifty times in a six-month period and some 13% of readers visit the Library between 21 and 50 times in a six-month period.
15. The NCA's aim of affordability for the 'place of the people' is therefore of particular interest to the Library with regards our visitors.

Security

16. As our visitors are long stay (and generally of lower economic means), it may be expected that if public transport is to be encouraged (or shuttle bus), there will be a need to carry additional personal items into the building eg coats, bags and lunches etc. This will have security implications for the Library and therefore impact on our visitors as we implement a strengthened security regime.
17. There are also safety issues that are similar for staff as set out in paragraph 20 below.

The interests of staff

Remuneration

18. It is acknowledged that staff, like those in other areas of Canberra, will have to meet the cost of parking out of their existing pay packets. The major issue here is that our volunteers, who provide very valuable services to the Library free of charge, will need to pay for the privilege, unless other arrangements can be set in train.

Productivity

19. Where free or cheaper parking has been extended for longer periods (eg up to four hours) there has been evidence elsewhere in Canberra that staff will make use of these facilities and shift their cars every four hours. This will reduce their productivity and will not help solve the issue of increased spaces for visitors.

Safety

20. Remote parking arrangements will impact on staff. The redirection of commuter parking to areas some distances from the Library building has serious implications to Library staff (as it does for long stay visitors). The Library's public hours of service are 7 days a week and from Monday to Thursday from 9.00 am to 9.00 pm. The bandwidth hours for staff are 7.00am to 9.00pm Monday to Friday. The majority of staff are female. Later morning arrivals and staff on staggered hours, frequently use dirt car parking near behind Questacon. The current lack of lighting in our car parks, dirt or

adjacent to the Library, is of concern. For those that may need in the future to traverse to a distant area, there are further concerns.

21. Staff and visitors remain within the Library until 9.00 pm (and beyond) on most days. The feasibility of shuttle buses or public transport at these off-peak times will be of interest.

Access to Facilities

22. There are no key facilities such as shopping centres or banks located within the Zone. Any proposal for longer stay commuters using public transport or parking in outlying car parks on the perimeter of the Zone, will have an impact on staff (and to a lesser extent) visitor ability to have reasonable access to those located in surrounding areas.

The interest of national institutions

Service Delivery

23. The Library is a major centre for scholarship and research. Anything which may impact on our prime client groups is therefore of interest and as expressed in the above, of concern. Our objectives and key priorities for 2003 – 2005 are to provide rapid and easy access to information and seek to break down barriers that work against this. The impact of paid parking if not undertaken with care, will be to reduce our current users physical access to the facility.
24. If the Library had to select various models of parking provision, campus parking areas are preferred rather than remote parking arrangements.

Other

25. Apart from the matters expressed above regarding impact on visitors, other 'institutional' matters of concern are:
 - *Administrative costs* – We have no doubt that each agency will be expected to manage systems for special parking provisions etc with no supplementation. There could also be *Fringe Benefit Tax* implications for the institutions.
 - *Consistency of application* – there is potentially inconsistency in the application of paid parking as some agencies have the ability to provide staff and/or visitors private parking free of charge. This can lead to inequities, particularly in attracting patrons. Alternatively, if they do charge they will be presumably able to keep the revenue.
 - *Increase in complaints* – We receive a number of complaints per annum, usually from interstate visitors, who have been booked by

parking inspectors as they could only find two-hour car parks (average stay is 3-4 hours). The number of complaints in the future is expected to increase.

- *Charge for parking* – the Library would be concerned over a high charge and while free parking is preferred, fees should be as low as possible.
- *Revenue from parking* - the Library would hope for transparency in the issue of collection and use of revenue from its clients and staff. If the funding could be used within the precinct, it would be particularly beneficial. For example the Library has yet to have external plinth identification as per other cultural institutions.

Tourism and related issues

26. The Library recognises the tension for managing parking in a situation where more tourists are being drawn to the Parliamentary Zone. Apart from the existing national icons, the creation and use of Commonwealth Park adds to the demand for managing public spaces. Tourism, in terms of potentially increasing the availability of short-term spaces, will no doubt benefit from the paid parking proposal. While they are always welcome eg holiday programs, tourists often seeking entertainment, are not our primary clients.

Parking policies for Forrest and Barton

27. The Library cannot comment at length on this issue, as we do not know the final detail. A casual comment however would be to determine the exact likely impact of the amount of space to be lost. If there is to be only street metres installed, the majority of current commuter parking may not be affected. Hence a spill over effect into the Parliamentary Zone could be minor, especially as we understand that the NCA research has indicated that there is an excess of parking spaces in the Parliamentary Zone.
28. Care must be taken to ensure that paid parking is not used as a simple panacea for the management of parking.