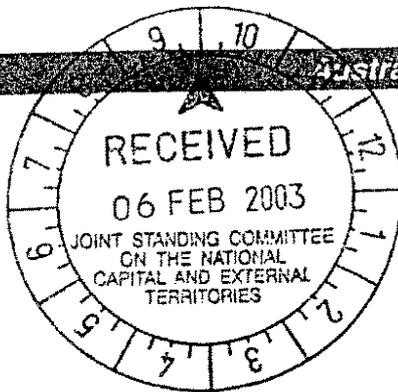




In Reply Please Quote: 94/316

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Mr Ross Lightfoot
Chairman
Joint Standing Committee on the National Capital & External Territories
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Mr Lightfoot

PARLIAMENTARY ZONE PARKING INQUIRY

I refer to your letter of December 2002 inviting comments on the inquiry into the issue of pay parking in the Parliamentary Zone. The Electoral Commissioner has asked me to respond on his behalf.

On behalf of the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) and its staff located in West Block Offices in Parkes, the following comments are provided for the Committee's consideration:

- Public transport, whilst meeting some of the staff's requirements in peak times is inadequate for staff who work outside the normal peak periods and for staff wishing to commute to and from the city during their lunch break. This is a particular problem during electoral events;
- The AEC is open to the public during business hours to view the electoral roll. This research may often take several hours. The introduction of pay parking may deter the public from using this important service;
- West Block is remote from commercial facilities such as shops, banks and professional services. Staff who are required to visit these services during their lunch break should not be unduly penalised by being required to pay for multiple parking tickets; and
- The introduction of pay parking may encourage parking in side streets in surrounding areas to West Block. This may cause traffic congestion to nearby tourist attractions, embassies and also inconvenience residents in the area.

Your consideration of these comments in relation to your inquiry would be appreciated. Any queries should be directed to Barry Doughty on 6271 4469.

Yours sincerely

Marie Nelson
Assistant Commissioner Corporate Services

3 February 2003