
The Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia

Not A Town Centre:

The Proposal for Pay Parking in the Parliamentary Zone

Joint Standing Committee on the National Capital and External Territories

October 2003
Canberra

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ISBN

Cover – Aerial view of Parliamentary Zone (ACT Planning and Land Authority)
provided courtesy of the National Capital Authority



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Foreword

This is the second time the issue of parking in the Parliamentary Zone has been examined by the Committee. Although the Committee was against the introduction of pay parking in the Parliamentary Zone in 1994, we, the current Committee members, commenced this new inquiry with open minds. As the agency charged with managing the Commonwealth's interests in the national capital, the National Capital Authority is seeking to introduce pay parking as a means to manage traffic in the Parliamentary Zone.

The issues relating to parking in the Zone which have become a cause for concern include traffic flow problems, limited car parking spaces, physical isolation of major buildings and iconic attractions and a poor pedestrian access network. This was evident to members of the Committee during an inspection of the parking areas in the Zone and the adjacent Barton/Forrest area.

The Committee is conscious of the many interests involved in this issue, as evidenced by the large number of submissions received to the inquiry. There have been strong arguments put forward by people who work in the Zone and adjacent areas who will be affected by pay parking, as well as from the national cultural institutions and Commonwealth agencies in the Zone. The Committee is well aware of the need to find an equitable solution to the overcrowding of parking areas in the Zone. The Committee is also conscious of any flow-on effect changes in parking policies or new building developments in the Barton/Forrest area may have. A majority of the submissions received were from people who work in the Barton/Forrest area.

The unanimous view of the Committee is that the Parliamentary Zone is unique and should not be treated in the same way as the commercial centres in the ACT. The Zone belongs to the people of Australia, and access to any of the culturally significant sites throughout the area should remain free.

The National Capital Authority sought the Committee's support on the principle of pay parking. Unfortunately, the Committee believes the Authority has failed to

adequately address a number of significant issues regarding the implementation of pay parking and provision for different categories of users. This has created a large degree of uncertainty for the Committee, which, at this time, finds itself unable to give the 'in-principle' support for pay parking that the Authority is seeking. The parking situation in the Parliamentary Zone and adjacent areas of Barton/Forrest remains unacceptable. The Committee, therefore, recommends that the Authority, in conjunction with the ACT Government, develop a more detailed proposal that incorporates the concerns raised in this report as a matter of urgency.

The Committee is grateful to all those who participated in the inquiry.

Senator Ross Lightfoot
Chairman



Membership of the Committee

Chairman Senator Ross Lightfoot

Deputy Chair Senator Trish Crossin

Members The Hon. Ian Causley MP

Ms Annette Ellis MP

Mr Michael Johnson MP

Mr Paul Neville MP

The Hon. Warren Snowdon MP

Mr Cameron Thompson MP

Senator John Hogg

Senator Kate Lundy

Senator Nigel Scullion

Senator Natasha Stott Despoja
(Appointed 18/11/02)

Committee Secretariat

Secretary Mrs Margaret Swieringa

Inquiry Secretary Mr Quinton Clements

Research Officer Mr Justin Baker

Administrative Officer Mr Daniel Miletic



Terms of reference

On 10 December 2002, the Minister for Regional Services, Territories and Local Government, the Hon. Wilson Tuckey MP, referred the issue of pay parking in the Parliamentary Zone to the Joint Standing Committee on the National Capital and External Territories for inquiry. The Committee is to examine the following in relation to the introduction of pay parking in the Parliamentary Zone:

- the interests of visitors to the Parliamentary Zone;
- the interests of those employed in the Parliamentary Zone and adjacent areas;
- the interests of the national institutions in the Parliamentary Zone;
- tourism and related issues; and
- proposed parking policies for Forrest and Barton – areas adjacent to the Parliamentary Zone managed by the ACT Government – and the effects of these policies on parking arrangements in the Parliamentary Zone.

On 12 December 2002, the Committee agreed to accept the terms of reference from the Minister and conduct an inquiry.



List of abbreviations

ACTION	Australian Capital Territory Internal Omnibus Network
ACTPLA	Australian Capital Territory Planning and Land Authority
AFFA	Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry
ANAO	Australian National Audit Office
CPSU	Community and Public Sector Union
FBT	Fringe Benefits Tax
NCA	National Capital Authority
NCDC	National Capital Development Commission
NCPA	National Capital Planning Authority
OPH/NPG	Old Parliament House and the National Portrait Gallery
PM & C	Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet



List of recommendations

3 The Case For & Against Pay Parking

Recommendation 1

That the National Capital Authority – in collaboration with the ACT Government and in thorough consultation with all relevant stakeholders, preferably with their consensus – develop a detailed parking policy proposal for the Parliamentary Zone that recognises the isolation of the Zone from commercial facilities and clearly defines the following characteristics:

- the infrastructure to be built – including the timeframe and funding arrangements;
- the parking fees to be introduced - including provision to exclude visitors, volunteers and people with disabilities from payment; and
- contingencies should the Parliamentary Zone experience further encroachment of commuters from the adjacent Barton precinct.