



CPSU (PSU Group) Submission:

**Parking Management in Parkes,
Barton and Russell**

December 2010

Background

The Community and Public Sector Union (CPSU) is an active and progressive union committed to the promotion of a modern efficient and responsive public sector that delivers quality services and quality jobs. We represent around 60,000 members in the Australian Public Service, ACT Public Service, NT Public Service, ABC and the CSIRO. We also have members in Telstra, commercial television and the telecommunications industry.

The CPSU welcomes the opportunity to make a submission to the Intergovernmental Committee on Parking. While the CPSU is 'pro' public transport and a strong supporter of the National Greenhouse Strategy (NGS), there are a number of specific problems with introducing paid parking in the Parliamentary precincts.

In response to the discussion paper, the CPSU has identified a number of issues regarding:

1. lack of adequate public transport alternative to private car use;
2. lack of retail amenities and services for people working in and around the Triangle; and
3. isolation and lack of secure pedestrian lighting for public transport uses in and around the Triangle.

The CPSU also notes that in its 2003 Report, *Not a Town Centre: The proposal for Pay Parking in the Parliamentary Zone*, the Joint Standing Committee on the National Capital and External Territories unanimously rejected paid parking.

Issues

Lack of adequate public transport alternative to private car use

The discussion paper stated that the Parliamentary Triangle is well-served by public transport, based on analysis by Datacol.¹ However, this analysis appears through aggregation of all bus services traveling through the precincts with a focus on those services going to Civic.

CPSU members disagree that the Parliamentary Triangle is well-served by public transport. Many members commented that they would support paid parking if there was the public transport system to support it. However, members felt that the current public transport system was inadequate.

The report has also suggested there are adequate services for those working in Parkes and Barton to access services in Civic.² However, many members reported that they actually needed to access services in areas other than

¹ National Capital Authority, Intergovernmental Committee on Parking, Discussion Paper Parking Management in Parkes, Barton and Russell, October 2010, p16

² National Capital Authority, Intergovernmental Committee on Parking, Discussion Paper Parking Management in Parkes, Barton and Russell, October 2010, p23

Civic and the public transport system was not timely or convenient in any case.

The discussion paper has not considered the potential need for multiple bus transfers by employees and the limited number of services that are run from the suburbs employees reside in. No time comparison between public transport and driving has been taken into consideration. This issue was noted by the Joint Committee in its 2003 report.

The primary reason as to why public transport commuting is undesirable is that it simply adds too much time to travel. For most commuters, travelling to or from the Zone via the bus network involves catching a minimum of two buses, often with substantial waiting times during the changeover. The Committee understands that this can place unmanageable time constraints on employees.³

This sentiment that the additional commuting time would be substantial and create time constraints was echoed by many CPSU members:

As a parent, and given I work near ANZAC parade, catching a bus is not an option. I don't have time to spend 90 minutes each way every day. I have primary school children who need to be taken to school (and picked up) because we no longer have local schools in every suburb.

I can drive to work in 10 to 15 minutes whereas the bus takes up to an hour. It's just not an option, especially when needing to drop off/pick up kids from school.

If only it didn't take 2 hours to get from Parliament House to my home in Queanbeyan via bus then again I might seriously consider public transport (It only takes 15 - 20 minutes by car)

I live in Watson and work in Barton. It takes 20 minutes in the car peak traffic or 60 minutes on the bus with a change in Civic plus walking. If there were frequent direct buses I might take them but the service is poor so driving it is

I live at Narrabundah and work at Parliament House, a distance of 4 kilometres, which takes 5 minutes by car. By public transport, however, it's one bus to National Circuit and a walk up the hill or waiting for a second bus to go up the hill, both options taking 50 minutes. I don't believe it is reasonable to expect me to spend an extra 90 minutes each day travelling to and from work

A number of CPSU members also spoke of having no nearby access to public transport at all, making driving the only option available:

³ Joint Standing Committee on the National Capital and External Territories, "Not A Town Centre: The Proposal for Pay Parking in the Parliamentary Zone", October 2003, p22

I live 15 km from the nearest public transport but only 1/2 hour from the Parliamentary Triangle. I have to drop off three children at two schools on the way through

I like many others in the APS are commuters from rural regions around the ACT area. I would gladly pay for park and ride options were the infrastructure in place to support public transport options - even if only to regional hubs such as Queanbeyan, Bungendore, Murrumbateman & Yass. Currently this is not an option.

The CPSU notes that the Joint Committee Report in 2003 stated that any restrictive measures on parking in areas of substantial employment should only be imposed where public transport access is adequate.⁴ It is clear from our consultation with members that public transport access to and from the Parliamentary Triangle is far from adequate.

Lack of retail amenities and services for people working in and around the Triangle

The isolation of the Parliamentary precincts from commercial facilities must be recognised when considering paid parking. This makes the area distinct from Town Centres where paid parking already exists. The Joint Committee affirmed this view stating that:

The Committee believes that the Parliamentary Zone is unique and therefore should not be treated in the same way as commercial centres such as Civic and Woden. Such a comparison is inappropriate and misplaced. While pay parking may be a deterrent to private vehicle commuting for employees at those town centres, the Committee recognises that the isolation of the Zone from commercial facilities suggests that pay parking will not necessarily have the same impact.⁵

Many CPSU members stated that the lack of amenities and services in the Parliamentary Triangle forced them to drive:

Anyone who has worked in the Parliamentary Triangle knows that, save from work, there's nothing here: no shops, no amenities, no 'ducking down to Shopfront to renew my licence' at lunchtime.

There are no other services located in Parkes, e.g. chemist, supermarket, etc. so quite often the car is the only convenient way to access services at lunch time or on the way to or from work.

⁴ Joint Standing Committee on the National Capital and External Territories, "Not A Town Centre: The Proposal for Pay Parking in the Parliamentary Zone", October 2003, p43

⁵ Joint Standing Committee on the National Capital and External Territories, "Not A Town Centre: The Proposal for Pay Parking in the Parliamentary Zone", October 2003, p43

There are no shops, banks, post offices, or other services in the area. Seems a little unfair to ask for payment for parking when we have to drive someplace else to access those services

The CPSU notes that the discussion paper mentions the recent changes to the National Capital Plan and the potential for a broad range of uses including retail and services. However, these do not currently exist and will not adequately exist for a number of years at earliest. Paid parking should not be considered until adequate amenities and services are established in the Parliamentary precincts.

Isolation and lack of secure pedestrian lighting for public transport uses in and around the Triangle.

The Parliamentary precincts are isolated, particularly outside of standard working hours. Many public servants often must work longer than the standard hours and need to do so with little notice. The isolation was noted by one member who stated that:

Working in the Parliamentary Triangle means you have no options. It is isolated and there are no options for any parking at all in walking distance outside the car parks

Many public servants commented that they had to work variable hours, often getting in early or leaving late in the hours of darkness, particularly during winter. The Parliamentary precincts have few bus services outside of peak hour, making driving a requirement for many. Comments included:

The work being what it is in the Parliamentary Triangle (and especially the Parliamentary Zone), working with Parliamentary sitting schedules and needing to get to work early and leave work late at night necessitates access to free and safe parking. Public transport is generally unavailable or unreliable early and late in the day, and not generally safe.

On most days I finish work very late, regularly work weekends (when timetables are even harder to work with). If we work in an area that is badly serviced by buses, work late and don't want to be in interchanges at 10.30 at night then I don't think it is fair to ask us to pay to park here.

During the Budget, we work up to 18 hours a day. They want to charge for parking fine but they will find the departments forced to work hideous hours will never have the staff to cover those hours

Often working late at night and even early in the morning, buses are not an option on these occasions and we don't always know when we will be working long hours - so cars are preferred. Our car park is patrolled which is reassuring.

The lack of secure pedestrian lighting is another issue, especially in the Parliamentary Triangle. A member raised concern about the lack of lighting and its potential as a safety risk:

The ACT Government must dramatically improve lighting in the area to ensure people walking home from work at twilight or at night are safe

The uncertainty about hours of work, the lack of public transport at these times and concerns about safety are key issues that need to be addressed before any introduction of paid parking.

Recommendations

The CPSU recommends that the Intergovernmental Committee not consider paid parking until the outstanding concerns of the thousands of workers, and employers have been dealt with.

Paid parking should not be considered until the ACT Government makes public transport a viable alternative to private car use by:

- decreasing the cost of bus fares
- reducing the duration of bus rides by introducing new and more direct services
- increasing services and amenities in the Parliamentary precincts including child care centres, pharmacies, dry cleaners, post offices, banks and shops.

The CPSU appreciates the opportunity to make a submission to the Intergovernmental Committee on Parking and would be pleased to further discuss the matters raised.

Should you wish to discuss this submission any further, I may be contacted at vince.mcdevitt@cpsu.org.au or on (02) 6220 9625.



Vince McDevitt
ACT Regional Director