

**Pedal Power's submission to the *Intergovernmental Committee on Parking Discussion Paper: Parking Management in Parkes, Barton and Russell***

**December 2010**

## **Introduction**

Pedal Power welcomes the opportunity to provide a submission to the Intergovernmental Committee on Parking (IGC) on its *Discussion Paper: Parking Management in Parkes, Barton and Russell* (Discussion Paper). This submission sets out Pedal Power's views on parking demand management measures and in particular encouraging a modal shift towards more sustainable transport options.

For over 30 years, Pedal Power has been a strong advocate of cycling in Canberra. Our mission is 'more Canberrans cycling, more often, for a better community'.

In this submission, Pedal Power argues that increasing cycling rates in the Russell, Barton and the Parliamentary Zone presents an opportunity for the IGC to increase the proportion of bicycle commuter trips leading to multiple benefits including:

- helping alleviate the current parking scarcity;
- supporting the ACT Government's cycling targets in its Sustainable Transport Plan;
- improving the sustainability outcomes of Canberra's transport system; and
- Improving public health outcomes.

Pedal Power notes the Discussion Paper commitment that "in developing options, the IGC will consider the *needs of all types of commuters and visitors...the impact of parking policies on the Canberra transport system and sustainability outcomes.*"<sup>1</sup> Pedal Power looks forward to the IGC developing a sound implementation plan for the Australian and ACT Governments that supports the needs of cyclists within the Parliamentary zone.

## **The problem**

Anecdotal evidence from Pedal Power members confirms the IGC's observation that 'commuters are displacing visitors by using car parks intended for visitors to the national institutions.'<sup>2</sup> This is clearly demonstrated by the parking practices surrounding Parliament House (for instance along Federation Mall) Questacon and the National Library.

There has been a discernible increase in the use of these parking areas since the introduction of pay parking in Section 9 Barton.<sup>3</sup>

Pedal Power endorses the following characterisations of the problem made in the discussion paper:

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<sup>1</sup> Intergovernmental Committee on Parking, *Discussion Paper: Parking Management in Parkes, Barton and Russell*, October 2010, p. 5, emphasis added.

<sup>2</sup> Intergovernmental Committee on Parking, *Discussion Paper: Parking Management in Parkes, Barton and Russell*, October 2010, p. 6.

<sup>3</sup> Similar observations are made in the Intergovernmental Committee on Parking, *Discussion Paper: Parking Management in Parkes, Barton and Russell*, October 2010, p. 12.

The Parliamentary Zone is the symbolic and ceremonial heart of Australia. Increased use of this area as an overflow car park for Barton will significantly disrupt accessibility to the national institutions, diminish the visitor experience and compromise National and Commonwealth heritage values. To avoid this outcome changes to parking management practices throughout the study area will be necessary.<sup>4</sup>

Parking within the study area is at a turning point. Despite some localised inconvenience, parking has generally been available to commuters who need it. This situation is likely to change quickly and an undersupply of car parking in the immediate vicinity of the study area will become a significant issue as new tenants occupy vacant buildings, as land is sold and developed, and as private operators introduce pay parking in Barton.<sup>5</sup>

If the increasing demand for parking is left unaddressed, the negative impact on visitors' experiences to our national institution will also inevitably increase. There will also be a corresponding decrease in the national standing of the Parliamentary Zone.

## **The solution(s)**

Pedal Power recommends an approach to balancing transport objectives in the area which involves:

1. establishing a price signal to manage parking demand;
2. effectively managing designated parking spaces for visitors to national institutions; and
3. strongly supporting alternative transport modes.

Pedal Power does not support the notion of increasing supply to meet current or future demand particularly where public costs are not recovered from users.

### **1. A parking price signal**

The introduction of a price signal in Barton Section 9 has clearly affected parking behaviour in the Parliamentary Zone. It is understandable that car commuters seek out other parking options to avoid parking charges. However, as the Discussion Paper acknowledges, this has increased the demand for alternative free parking spots which has diminished the car spaces available for visitors to national institutions.<sup>6</sup>

Pedal Power recognises that parking areas which are primarily designed for commuters should be priced as closely as possible to reflect the full cost (both direct and external) of providing parking in Russell, Barton and the Parliamentary Zone. The direct costs relate to alternative use of the land forgone and the maintenance cost.

External or indirect costs include a reduction in visual amenity, as well as the encouragement of additional car trips associated with congestion and pollution 'spillovers'. The provision of additional supply of car parks will serve to increase these costs.

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<sup>4</sup> Intergovernmental Committee on Parking, *Discussion Paper: Parking Management in Parkes, Barton and Russell*, October 2010, p. 6.

<sup>5</sup> Intergovernmental Committee on Parking, *Discussion Paper: Parking Management in Parkes, Barton and Russell*, October 2010, p. 27.

<sup>6</sup> Intergovernmental Committee on Parking, *Discussion Paper: Parking Management in Parkes, Barton and Russell*, October 2010, pp. 6 and 25.

It is also acknowledged that introducing full cost-reflective pricing in a transitional manner would likely be a more acceptable approach. Any transitional pricing arrangements should be made clear to commuters from the outset so as to enable informed decision-making about modal shifts.

Pedal Power endorses the analysis in the Discussion Paper which states: 'introduction of pay parking in the Parliamentary Zone would remove the incentive for commuters who do not work in the area to park there. Pay parking may encourage commuters in general to use alternative forms of transport.'<sup>7</sup>

**Recommendation 1: Pedal Power recognises that full cost-reflective pricing could be introduced in the Parliamentary Zone to parking spaces which are primarily designed for commuters.**

As part of an integrated strategy to better manage parking arrangements in the Parliamentary Zone, it would be appropriate that the revenue raised from cost-reflective pricing of parking (or alternatively the proceeds from the sale of land to private parking operators) be used in two ways:

- to provide improved parking arrangement in existing facilities; and
- to provide new infrastructure and encouragement projects to promote active transport for those working in the Parliamentary Zone.

**Recommendation 2: Pedal Power recommends that the revenue collected from the introduction of pay parking in the Parliamentary Zone, be used to improve existing parking facilities and to provide new infrastructure and support projects to promote active transport for those working in the Parliamentary Zone.**

The use of this revenue source to provide new infrastructure and encouragement projects to promote active transport for those working in the Parliamentary Zone is discussed below (see supporting alternative transport modes).

## ***2. Designated parking spaces for visitors***

Pedal Power's second element to manage parking demand in the Parliamentary Zone is to create specially designate parking spaces adjacent to our national institutions for the sole use of visitors. The unique nature of these culturally significant sites, and the importance of maintaining a positive and rewarding visitor experience, makes the accessibility of these facilities highly significant. Visitors to our national institutions will often be from out-of-town and may therefore find it challenging to locate a parking space under current circumstances. For this reason Pedal Power submits that specially designate visitor parking spaces are essential within the Parliamentary Zone.

**Recommendation 3: Pedal Power recommends that sufficient specially designate visitor parking spaces be provided adjacent to our national institutions.**

Pedal Power notes the various alternatives for management of publicly available parking spaces adjacent to national institutions.<sup>8</sup> However, Pedal Power does not have the expertise to offer a view

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<sup>7</sup> Intergovernmental Committee on Parking, *Discussion Paper: Parking Management in Parkes, Barton and Russell*, October 2010, p. 28.

<sup>8</sup> Intergovernmental Committee on Parking, *Discussion Paper: Parking Management in Parkes, Barton and Russell*, October 2010, p. 27.

as to which of these alternatives is preferred. It may be that certain options are preferable in particular locations to suit the distinctive visitor use patterns of individual institutions. Nevertheless, Pedal Power strongly supports the concept that these parking spaces be specifically designated to bona fide users of our national institutions.

**Recommendation 4: Pedal Power recommends that specially designated visitor parking spaces provided adjacent to our national institutions be accessible only to bona fide users of the facilities.**

### **3. Supporting alternative transport modes**

#### **Cycling**

Figures included in the Discussion Paper clearly demonstrate that huge potential for increased cycling to Russell, Barton and the Parliamentary Zone, which would significantly alleviate the current parking constraints. It is important to note that while the Discussion Paper draws on data from the 2006 Census which estimates cycling's modal share to be relatively low (3.2–3.5% in 2006),<sup>9</sup> Pedal Powers annual surveys since 2004 have shown that cycle trips to the city have increased by 64%.<sup>10</sup> This data would suggest that the modal share of cycling will increase when the next census is taken in 2011.

Furthermore, almost two-thirds of commuters to the Parliamentary Zone usually reside within a manageable cycling distance of less than 10 kilometres.<sup>11</sup> Because of this proximity, if adequate support is dedicated to cycling infrastructure and facilities, the introduction of a parking price signal has the potential to dramatically shift commuters towards cycling. Due to the extremely low level of vehicle occupancy rates (1.06–1.11 people per vehicle)<sup>12</sup> a strong shift towards cycling will dramatically reduce the current parking scarcity.

The Discussion Paper recognises that 'the key advantage of pay parking is that the pricing regime has the potential to create modal shift, which would help reduce demand for car parking spaces, and achieve sustainable transport objectives.'<sup>13</sup> Pedal Power strongly endorses this perspective. In addition, Pedal Power emphasises the importance of complementing a pricing regime with strong support (in the form of physical infrastructure, facilities, information and encouragement) for alternative transport modes so that commuters have a realistic range of options to respond to the price signal and modify their travel behaviour.

Accordingly, Pedal Power recommends that all revenue in excess of management costs generated from any introduction of pay parking be used to fund cycling infrastructure, facilities, information and encouragement programs.

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<sup>9</sup> Intergovernmental Committee on Parking, *Discussion Paper: Parking Management in Parkes, Barton and Russell*, October 2010, p. 20, citing 2006 Census data.

<sup>10</sup> Pedal Power Cordon Count, [www.pedalpower.org.au/advocacy/docs/mr%20cordon%20count%202010.pdf](http://www.pedalpower.org.au/advocacy/docs/mr%20cordon%20count%202010.pdf)

<sup>11</sup> Intergovernmental Committee on Parking, *Discussion Paper: Parking Management in Parkes, Barton and Russell*, October 2010, p. 20. A 10 kilometre radius around Parkes and Barton includes most of North Canberra; South Canberra; Belconnen; Woden; and Weston Creek.

<sup>12</sup> Intergovernmental Committee on Parking, *Discussion Paper: Parking Management in Parkes, Barton and Russell*, October 2010, p. 11.

<sup>13</sup> Intergovernmental Committee on Parking, *Discussion Paper: Parking Management in Parkes, Barton and Russell*, October 2010, p. 28.

**Recommendation 5: Pedal Power recommends that all revenue in excess of management costs generated from pay parking introduced in the Parliamentary Zone be used to fund cycling infrastructure, facilities, information and encouragement programs.**

Pedal Power recommends that this additional funding be dedicated to encourage the increased uptake of cycling to the Parliamentary Zone. This could be undertaken through the following means.

**Recommendation 6: Pedal Power recommends that:**

- 1. all Australian Government institutions located in Russell, Barton and the Parliamentary Zone provide well-equipped end of trip cycling facilities, including secure and undercover bicycle parking; and shower, storage and changing facilities.**
- 2. all Australian Government offices located in Russell, Barton and the Parliamentary Zone actively promote the use of end of trip cycling facilities and cycling as an alternative mode of transport.**
- 3. all national institutions located in Russell, Barton and the Parliamentary Zone provide sufficient secure cycling facilities.**
- 4. all national institutions located in the Parliamentary Zone actively promote cycling as an alternative mode of transport to visitors.**
- 5. the Australian Government, through the National Capital Authority provide safe and functional cycle facilities and infrastructure (including where appropriate physically separated lanes) in its areas of responsibility in and around Russell, Barton and the Parliamentary Zone.**
- 6. The NCA and appropriate authorities liaise with the ACT government to ensure an effective and expansive network of commuter cycling infrastructure leading to the Parliamentary Triangle is provided.**
- 7. incentive programs are provided by government departments to those employees who choose to ride or use similar active transport options within the parliamentary triangle.**
- 8. Incentives are provided for Government institutions and offices within the parliamentary triangle to encourage the use of bicycles for inter department transport (through initiatives such as a bike share scheme)**

## **Benefits of increase cycling**

As alluded to earlier, there are a multitude of benefits in increasing the proportion of bicycle commuter trips to the Parliamentary Zone. The main benefits are:

- reduced car parking demand and urban congestion;
- environmental benefits; and
- improved public health.

### **Reduced Parking Demand and Urban Congestion**

Encouraging a modal shift towards cycling to work and public transport would help decrease parking pressure and traffic congestion in the Parliamentary Zone. As well as alleviating the current parking constraints this will have significant economic benefits.

Bicycles require much less space than is required by cars to park. By encouraging more cycling, rather than increasing car parking space, we could reduce the current parking pressures and even retain urban space for higher value uses such as parks, apartments or offices.

### **Environmental Benefits**

Encouraging more cycling in the Parliamentary Zone would not only improve current parking constraints but also improve environmental sustainability.

A major challenge currently facing Australia is greenhouse gas emissions. National Greenhouse Gas Inventory reports the Australian transport sector has the third highest greenhouse gas emissions, after stationary energy and agriculture.<sup>14</sup> Passenger cars are the largest source of road transportation emissions contributing over 50%. Emissions from passenger cars have increased by 21% between 1990 and 2006.<sup>15</sup>

Non-greenhouse emissions from motor vehicles also produce a range of pollutants that have harmful effects on human health and the environment. Laird et al (2001) estimate the costs of health damage from transport-related air and noise pollution at more than \$3 billion per annum.<sup>16</sup> Hamilton and Denniss (2000) estimated the annual costs of urban air pollution (due predominantly to road transport) at \$8.4 billion.<sup>17</sup>

Bicycles are quiet and do not produce harmful emissions. Encourage cycling to work within the Parliamentary Zone would help reduce noise and air pollution that degrade public health and the environment. Encouraging cycling and public transport is a low-cost way to help the ACT and Australia to meet its carbon emission reduction targets.

### **Public Health Benefits**

Encouraging increased cycling is aligned with the Australian Government's policies on preventative health and health promotion. Physical activity is an important part of overall health promotion and disease prevention. The World Health Organisation recommends that at least 30 minutes of regular, moderate-intensity physical activity on most days will reduce the risk of obesity.<sup>18</sup>

The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2006) found that around half of the Australian population lack the appropriate level of physical activity, a major cause of obesity.<sup>19</sup> Access Economics (2008) estimated the economic cost of obesity and related preventable diseases in Australia at approximately \$58.2 billion annually which is close to \$3,000 per person.<sup>20</sup> The cost estimate of obesity related disease will only grow if the estimated 20% of Australian children who are currently overweight or obese continue to remain so.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Australia's National Greenhouse Gas Inventory 2006.

<sup>15</sup> Australia's National Greenhouse Gas Inventory 2006.

<sup>16</sup> Laird, P., Newman, P., Bachels, M. and Kenworthy, J. 2001, *Back on Track: Rethinking transport policy in Australia and New Zealand*, UNSW Press.

<sup>17</sup> Hamilton C and Denniss R, 2000. *Tracking well-being in Australia*, The Genuine Progress Indicator.

<sup>18</sup> [www.who.int/dietphysicalactivity/factsheet\\_myths/en/](http://www.who.int/dietphysicalactivity/factsheet_myths/en/)

<sup>19</sup> AIHW Australia's health no. 10 section 3: *Determinants of Health*.

<sup>20</sup> Access Economics, August 2008 *The growing cost of obesity in 2008: three years on*.

<sup>21</sup> 48<sup>th</sup> Royal Australian College of General Practitioners Council 26 July 2006, *Overweight and obesity Policy*.

A simple way of fitting physical activity into a demanding lifestyle is to ride a bicycle to work. Ming Wen and Rissel (2008) found that people who cycle three times a week or more are fitter and less likely to be overweight or obese.<sup>22</sup> Unwin (1995) found people who cycle regularly have half the rate of heart attacks of people who don't ride regularly.<sup>23</sup>

On a number of occasions, the Australian Government has strongly indicated its commitment to tackling Australia's obesity epidemic, in particular by helping children develop healthy habits that prevent obesity. Parents who ride to work can set a powerful and long lasting example for their children to follow. Parents who ride to work are more likely to encourage their children to ride to school and more likely to take their children riding on weekends.

### **Public transport**

Pedal Power also strongly supports improved public transport services within the Parliamentary Zone as a way to better manage parking demand. In particular, combining improved bus services with additional bike carriers on buses, will significantly broaden the range of alternative transport modes available to commuters. Additional bike carriers on buses would also provide additional options for longer distance commuters.

The Discussion Paper concluded that additional public transport capacity will be needed during commuter peak times (i.e. pre-9 am and post-5 pm) to encourage greater modal shift. The Discussion Paper states that the Parliamentary Zone 'is relatively well serviced by public transport, particularly during the core business hours of 9.00 am to 5.00 pm. Additional capacity will be needed if changes in mode are to be achieved during peak periods, but also to provide an efficient service outside of this time.'<sup>24</sup> Pedal Power supports improved bus services in the Parliamentary Zone, and particularly highlights the need to have additional bike carriers on buses.

**Recommendation 7: Pedal Power recommends that the ACT Government provide more frequent and reliable public transport to Barton, Russell and the Parliamentary Zone, to effectively service both commuter and visitor.**

**Recommendation 8: Pedal Power recommends that the ACT Government provide sufficient bike carriers on all its ACTION bus fleet.**

### **Conclusion**

As demonstrated above, increasing the proportion of bicycle commuter trips to the Parliamentary Zone has a multitude of benefits. It is Pedal Power's submission that increasing cycling rates in the Parliamentary Zone presents an unparalleled opportunity to the IGC in preparing its parking management strategy. Pedal Power will strongly support any moves by the IGC to support greater cycling rates in the Parliamentary Zone.

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<sup>22</sup> Ming Wen L and Rissel C 2008, *Inverse associations between cycling to work, public transport, and overweight and obesity: Findings from a population based study in Australia*. Preventive Medicine, 46(1): pp. 29–32.

<sup>23</sup> Unwin N, 1995, *Promoting the Public Health Benefits of Cycling*. Public Health, 109: pp. 41–46.

<sup>24</sup> Intergovernmental Committee on Parking, *Discussion Paper: Parking Management in Parkes, Barton and Russell*, October 2010, p. 16.