

POLICY STATEMENT – CONGESTION

Position

Parking Australia advocates for a traffic (parking) management and a transport planning regime that is performance based, equitable, and sustainable and focuses on the social and economic costs of personal mobility.

Policy Principles

A parking or congestion levy is currently imposed by State Governments on Sydney, Melbourne and Perth (CBDs and neighbouring commercial areas). The rules surrounding the levy in each state vary but the underlying “intent” is the same across the board: minimise congestion. Each of the legislations, although applied in different rates and with varying rules, expressly states that the levy aims to reduce the reliance on the vehicle by deterring people from driving and parking in the levy-able districts. However, the levy is imposed on the owner of the properties and is passed, to the extent possible, to the car park operator and onto the final user.

Considering that the objective of the levy is to reduce congestion in urban areas then ALL car use should be subject to price on road use. Congestion is related to many factors, time of day, location and through traffic getting to destinations, so with cars parked for 95% of the time the impacts of the parking levy are in no way an effective travel demand management tool. It is worth also noting that except for Perth, the levy does not apply to on-street parking spaces.

Furthermore, there is little or no information published by the State Governments on how the revenue from levies has been used to combat congestion. Parking Australia is aware that part of the funds raised in NSW have been used to build or redevelop park and ride facilities at railway stations and that the revenues from levies in Western Australia have been used to fund the free CAT buses that run in the Perth CBD. Whilst these initiatives should be applauded, the impact on congestion in the respective CBDs has not been documented. In Victoria no information is available on how the funds have been spent as the money spills into general revenue.

Parking Australia views planned parking as part of a solution to congestion and a support to alternate modes of transport. As such we are of the view that fair, properly implemented and hypothecated taxes can:

- Be applied as broadly as possible without being “parking business selective” as roads are used by through traffic as well as destination traffic.
- Form part of a mobility management plan that recognises that there is choice of transport modes
- Facilitate smart planning and growth through more mixed, multi modal developments
- Deliver sustainable and future proof parking facilities that are part of the solution for not only congestion but urban form

Policy Objectives

Parking Australia recognises that good taxation should not create a competitive **disadvantage** for particular sectors in terms of their economic development and, parking levies (taxes) if properly implemented can provide further solutions to congestion, sustainability and planning. We therefore advocate:

- Broad and well defined levies that spreads the financial burden across publically owned and private parking facilities
- A national review by Government of congestion to take into consideration the unfair application of parking levies with a focus on road pricing schemes.
- Local and state governments should review and increase their parking rates in line with market rates
- Parking levies should be hypothecated and publically transparent in areas that support an overall parking and mobility management program
- All parking stakeholders, including Parking Australia and the private parking operators should be part of any consultation and review process of levies.
- The formation of a levy evaluation committee in applicable states with Parking Australia represented to review the impact of the parking levies on supply, pricing and congestion.