

Keeping the wheels turning – Parking Congestion Levies and the COVID-19 Emergency

The Prime Minister, Premiers and Chief Minister say all actions amid the COVID-19 crisis must be geared to keeping Australians healthy and minimising the impact on the economy.

In that light, Parking Australia, the peak body for the parking industry, is requesting the New South Wales, Victorian and Western Australian Governments suspend their Parking Space/Congestion Levies on car parks to ease the burden on those who need to travel for work or seek essential medical services.

These are effectively levies designed to reduce congestion. As businesses respond to the crisis that pressure has temporarily eased.

We are proposing this suspension for three main reasons:

1. Help reduce human to human contact and the transmission of Covid-19 as many workers shift from public transport to private vehicles.
2. Reduce the cost to motorists who still need/want to attend work in the areas covered by the levies.
3. Assist car park owners and operators cash flow.

“This initiative would not significantly increase congestion as many corporations (eg Telstra) have already instructed employees to work from home,” said Stuart Norman, Parking Australia CEO.

“It would, however, enable individuals who do not have the option to work from home to work productively, at the same time minimising the risk of human to human interaction. Reducing the cost of parking should minimise any additional stress (financial and emotional) that they or their families have about contracting the virus when traveling to work.

“With the approval of our large public car park operator members, Wilson Parking, Secure Parking, Care Park and Ace Parking, Parking Australia has written to the Treasurers of NSW, Victoria and WA seeking their approval. Parking Australia is seeking to discuss the initiative further with the state governments with a view to enacting it as soon as possible.

“Suspension of the congestion levy would reduce the price of early bird parking by as much as \$6 in some areas. This would provide some financial relief to motorists and make it more affordable for the those who must or choose to go to work in our CBDs or need to have access to essential medical services, not available remotely.

“Parking Australia believes that, at a time of unprecedented risk to the nation’s health and the economy, state governments must enact measures to assist productivity and the economy. Helping those who must go to work is one such measure.”

Already, car park operators have reported a significant fall in casual parkers and a slight increase in all-day early bird parkers. Parking outside businesses hours has reduced significantly.

“Prioritising health is paramount. This proposal has significant health benefits as well as assisting the economy,” said Mr Norman.

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