

**Submission
No 65**

COMMUTER CAR PARKING IN NEW SOUTH WALES

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Legislative Assembly Committee on Transport and Infrastructure
NSW Parliament
Macquarie Street
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To the Committee

Submission to the NSW Parliamentary Inquiry into Commuter Car Parking in NSW

Since its inception in 1920, the NRMA has been a vocal advocate for improving transport services in NSW, both on our roads and our public transport networks. Improving the attractiveness of public transport to commuters by making it safe, affordable and, of significant importance to this inquiry, accessible, is key to reducing the rising cost of congestion on the NSW economy and the negative impact it has on the lives of our citizens.

The NRMA is a shared value organisation. As one of Australia's most well-known and respected Member-owned organisations, the NRMA has aligned our commercial operations to support not only better services to our 2.4 million loyal Members but better social and economic outcomes for the broader community. As part of our shared value commitment, we are dedicated to driving better outcomes in three core areas – *Safe Mobility, Access for All* and *Sustainable Communities*.

The NRMA believes that providing, improving and increasing commuter car parking facilities around transport hubs supports our shared values of *Safe Mobility* – investing in road and public transport infrastructure, protecting vulnerable road users and encouraging safer driving – and *Access for All* – connecting all of the community to safe, affordable and accessible mobility regardless of transport mode.

The NRMA response to the terms of reference:

1. Effectiveness of current State Government policies and programs covering commuter car parking

The NRMA has long championed the role of public transport – buses, ferries, trams and trains – in providing mobility solutions for our Members and the broader community. We need a holistic approach to transport in our cities that encourages commuters to select the most cost-effective and efficient mode of transport to reach their destination or achieve their travel intentions whether that is the movement of people or products and services.

Encouraging more people to use public transport, especially during peak travel periods of the day, is a common sense response to improve travel outcomes and reduce the cost of congestion on our economy. Accessing public transport interchanges either through active transport (walking, cycling) or by use of personal vehicles remains a stumbling block to further increasing public transport patronage and must remain a key priority in the Government's future transport policy development.

The NRMA is a strong supporter of the NSW Government's Transport Access Program (TAP) that has delivered upgrades to accessibility (lifts, stairs, ramps etc) at key transport interchanges and increased the stock of commuter car parking in proximity to key transport hubs. This program, implemented by successive NSW



Governments, has greatly contributed to making public transport safer, accessible and more attractive to commuters and will continue to do so as further projects in the current pipeline are completed.

The NRMA encourages the NSW Government to implement policies that support more commuter car parking being provided around transport interchanges through a range of measures including expansion of government-owned car parking, better utilisation and transparency of existing car parking assets for commuters through the use of smart phone technology, and partnering with the private sector on innovative solutions to open access to off-street parking in neighbouring commercial and residential buildings to transport hubs.

The NSW Government should consider the development of a holistic parking strategy for Metropolitan Sydney, Newcastle, Wollongong and other major commuting centres such as the Central Coast. This strategy would work towards the longer term benefits of optimising the utilisation of off-street parking as the preferred parking locations for vehicles to reduce the number of vehicles parked on the street. This would have the benefit of improving traffic flow on our road network, especially in the busy cores of CBDs, and potentially opening up opportunities for light rail routes and more active transport along these corridors.

2. Processes for selecting the location of commuter car parks

The NRMA supports a merit-based methodology that determines the expansion of commuter car parking in terms of greatest need and benefit to the largest number of commuters, and also takes into consideration the need to support public transport accessibility in outer suburbs and regional communities. The NRMA supports a decision making process for commuter car parking that uses an evidence-based approach to support the business case for public investment in these assets.

The NRMA wholeheartedly supports the NSW Government's approach of providing adjacent park and ride facilities at transport hubs as part of the expansion of the state's public transport network. The NRMA applauds the creation of 4,000 car parking spaces alongside the eight new stations of the Sydney Metro North West and the 900 car parking spaces being provided as part of the B-Line on the Northern Beaches. The NRMA supports the continuation of this park and ride policy for the construction of future transport projects including future light rail routes and the Sydney Metro West.

The NRMA recommends that the NSW Government actively considers the introduction of Connected and Autonomous Vehicles (CAVs) over the coming decades in their transport planning, and recognises the role and interaction of this new generation of vehicles with smart parking and transport hubs. A major report prepared by the NRMA on the future of car ownership highlights that the timescale for the introduction of autonomous vehicles onto Australian roads is far shorter than most people would anticipate.

The NRMA commends the work being done by Transport for NSW and the Smart Innovation Centre as part of the Future Transport Strategy to understand the rapid technology advances in mobility and to incorporate this revolution into future transport planning.

3. Potential for restricted assess or user pays commuter car parks

The NRMA recognises the significant financial demands for expanded public services – schools, hospitals, trains and buses. Additional commuter car parking competes for investment alongside other important public transport services. The NRMA notes that the NSW Government has invested \$1 billion as part of the Transport Access Program since 2011, providing 6,000 additional parking spaces and a further 8,000 to be delivered in the current pipeline.



The NRMA encourages and strongly supports the NSW Government working with non-government partners to implement car parking solutions that maximise the existing commuter parking pool of more than 30,000 spaces by linking access to car parking through the Opal card, leverages private off-street parking in surrounding residential and commercial buildings and introduces transparency and real-time information to commuters on car parking availability at local transport hubs. Research shows an average range of 50 to 65 per cent peak time utilisation of CBD office parking. As such, there is significant amount of unused car space available to be utilised by commuters.

As part of our shared value approach, the NRMA is determined to expand our role from only advocating on behalf of our Members to partnering with government and non-government enterprises to implement transformative solutions to the daily mobility challenges facing our Members and the broader community.

As an example, the NRMA has co-invested alongside other private sector partners in a parking solutions start-up company called Divvy. Divvy is an easily installed and accessible technology solution that gives a car park operator/owner full control and complete oversight of their parking assets. Divvy uses a reader device on a car park entry/exit and a smart phone app to allow authorised commuters access to the car park and provides information to the car park operator in real-time. The application of this new technology allows property managers and car park operators, and building tenants to better manage what is frequently an expensive and highly underutilised asset.

The NRMA believes that parking solutions such as Divvy would be a natural progression to assist the NSW Government and local councils to better manage and fully leverage commuter car parking to the benefit of commuters and NSW taxpayers. The application of these parking solutions means that the NSW Government can ensure that commuter car parks are in fact used by commuters and can be used to encourage stronger yield on each space by promoting carpooling and other sharing options to boost the number of people per vehicle. Introducing Opal-enabled access to commuter car parks could potentially provide the Government with a new revenue stream (non-commuters using the car park) to reinvest in parking facility maintenance or new stock. The NRMA encourages the NSW Government to consider trialling this technology on car park sites adjacent the transport network. The completion of the Sydney Metro North West and the B-Line are strong candidates for trial sites.

The NRMA supports a holistic view of parking solutions around major transport hubs that leverages both public and private car parking to boost supply and encourages more people to use public transport. The Government should investigate the opportunity to utilise surplus parking through P2P and B2B solutions like Divvy to significantly boost commuter car parking volumes around transport hubs.

4. Consideration of alternative modes of first mile/last mile travel, including point-to-point transport, active transport and on-demand buses

The NRMA supports a holistic approach to mobility that supports a wide range of transport modes. The combination of smart phone applications and the rapid advances in CAVs means that within the next decade commuters will be able to access Mobility-as-a-Service (MaaS), where a traveller will simply select a destination through a phone app and the most efficient route will be plotted regardless of mode. Such a journey might include several mode changes where a commuter is collected by a CAV (car or shuttle) or a driven on-demand/ride share vehicle at their home, ferried to public transport, and once again collected by a CAV to complete the 'last mile' of their journey. This door-to-door mobility solution would be packaged as an all-encompassing service that could be paid for as part of a monthly or yearly subscription or on a journey by journey basis. As an example of what is possible in this space, Uber partnered with the ACT Government during Christmas season in December 2016 in Canberra to be available for 'last mile' journeys from bus stops along Night Rider routes on Friday and Saturday nights to provide safer mobility during this busy period.



In the immediate term, on-demand buses/shuttles and the encouragement of active transport to transport hubs should be encouraged to reduce congestion while the Government continues to investigate and prepare for the CAV revolution. This transformation has the potential to drive significant efficiencies in mobility if the right policy settings are put in place to support behavioural changes towards community-sharing CAVs and shuttles/microbuses.

5. Any other related matters

The NRMA encourages the NSW Government to review its property portfolio to identify sites and parking spaces that may be underutilised and could be made available to commuters through the parking solutions discussed earlier in this submission. The NRMA believes that the Government, as a major lease holder in buildings across metropolitan and regional centres, is in a position to strongly advocate for private parking spaces to be added to the larger commuter car parking pool through the appropriate contractual agreements to lease these spaces to the public.

Conclusion

The NRMA commends the NSW Parliament for undertaking this timely inquiry into the status of commuter car parking and its willingness to look at innovative solutions to better leverage the investment the NSW Government has made in these assets to the benefit of commuters.

The NRMA strongly believes that there is an opportunity to use new technologies to give commuters greater transparency and confidence in commuter car parking, thereby encouraging more people to use public transport. There is also the potential to create a revenue stream through Opal-enabled access to car parking that could help to fund ongoing maintenance of car parking facilities and future expansion.

The NRMA is available to address the Committee to expand further on our submission and answer any further questions.

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Yours sincerely

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MATT GIJSELMAN
GENERAL MANAGER – PUBLIC AFFAIRS