

15 October 2015

Dear FSD,

Thank-you for the opportunity to comment on the Clayton Campus Access green paper. As the online survey only allows responses from individuals, I am emailing you with comments from the Monash Postgraduate Association Executive Committee on behalf of the MPA.

Regards,
Jenny Reeder
MPA Executive Officer

We appreciate the complexity of the challenges inherent in resolving the access issue, and simply request that you keep the following in mind when determining the outcome:

1. Postgraduate students are not eligible for travel concessions

The green paper mentions that there are a number of initiatives underway to "help improve the transportation experience for Monash students". Undergraduates and international students are eligible for student travel concessions but postgraduates are not, despite the fact that most research postgraduates survive on an income below the poverty line. If postgraduates were to receive a travel concession it is likely more postgraduates would choose to use public transport as it would be less costly than driving and parking, and we know that cost is a motivating factor for postgraduates given their low incomes. More postgraduates using public transport would provide some relief to the need for parking spaces on Clayton campus.

We would encourage the university to lobby state government to introduce travel concessions for postgraduates, with Victoria being one of only two states that do not grant such concessions.

2. Free inter-campus shuttle bus

Postgraduates, particularly coursework postgraduates are heavy users of the inter-campus shuttle buses. Many students have supervisors and/or classes on multiple campuses, as well as needing to access Clayton for the larger library collections and centrally-run activities such as the Monash Graduate Services training. The shuttle buses provide a fantastic service that is highly valued by postgraduates who have the need to travel frequently between campuses, and who may otherwise need to use a car. The students very much appreciate the support the university has shown in expanding this service in response to the MPA's requests. The MPA is keen to see the Clayton-Caulfield shuttle bus service extended to the week-ends, especially with the new residential buildings opening next year, potentially increasing the number of users. We are currently in negotiation with the university over this extension.

We would encourage the university to retain and expand this free service as an essential contributor to students' perceptions of their university experience, as well as an important form of sustainable transport.

3. Pay per use parking

The green paper suggests the possibility of replacing the permit system with a "pay per use" model for parking charges.

Of the entire university community, research postgraduates (HDRs) are the group who would spend the longest time on campus. Many HDRs work all through semester and Christmas breaks, seven days a week, late into the night. This is not always by choice as those running laboratory experiments are often required to be present for the length of specific experimental procedures.

Coursework postgraduates have peak periods leading up to assignment due dates and exams where they are also likely to be on campus working every day for long hours.

The cost of a blue parking permit is already a significant financial impost on postgraduates considering their relatively low incomes. If the change to a "pay per use" model resulted in postgraduates accruing higher charges for parking than are currently imposed, this would not be a good outcome for the students, nor would it be the right message for the university to be sending to students. It could also have the unintended effect of discouraging students in general to attend campus and become involved in the university community.

We would encourage the university to ensure that any parking charge model adopted would not result in higher parking fees for postgraduates.

The positive side of implementing a “pay per use” model would be for postgraduates visiting Clayton campus from other campuses and off-campus locations such as AMREP and MMC, where currently it can be extremely difficult to park at Clayton during peak hours if you are a visiting student without a permit.

4. Park and ride system

The MPA would support the idea of a park and ride system provided that:

- the shuttle buses between the parking lots and the campus were free and frequent; and
- the shuttle bus schedule allowed for postgraduates working late into the night, on weekends and out of semester; and
- The parking lot was well lit, properly secured and patrolled by security guards.

5. Bike stations

The MPA supports the bike share system and the establishment of bike stations to encourage the use of bikes as a form of sustainable transport. The green paper notes that the routes to the campus are not as bike-friendly as they could be. The MPA highlights Bayview Ave as one entrance to the university that has been reported to us as particularly dangerous for bike riders.

Submitted on behalf of the Monash Postgraduate Association Inc

For more information please contact the MPA Executive Officer, Jenny Reeder, x53198, jenny.reeder@monash.edu