

8th June 7, 2017

Attn: Ben Taylor
General Manager, Infrastructure
Northern Beaches Council.

Dear Mr Taylor

RE: Review of Manly Resident Card

I am writing to request that Council retain the Manly Resident Card, which provides cardholders an additional free hour of parking (total of 3 hours) in Manly's CBD carparks.

Some Background

- The Manly Resident Card was introduced to encourage locals to support Manly's CBD retail area, which continues to suffer from major competition from Stocklands, Warringah Mall and Rosebery Street shopping area (with Aldi soon to come), all of whom offer 3 hours free parking.
- Two hours free parking in Manly was found to be inadequate to encourage locals to spend time in the precinct, and the Manly Resident Card was introduced following discussions and agreement with the Manly Chamber of Commerce.
- Manly businesses effectively paid for the four CBD council car parks through levies. In the early 1960's, the local commercial ratepayers and businesses approached Manly Council to establish a fund to acquire land for additional parking in the CBD. A levy was initially used to acquire land in Wentworth Street, Central Avenue and Short Street. When all these sites were developed, public car parks were included. (i.e. Manly National Building, Pacific Waves and the Peninsula Development). In addition, these levy funds, combined with Parking Contributions received from Developers, were used to help fund the construction of the Whistler Street car park.

Why The Card Should Be Retained

While the Northern Beaches Council's approach of harmonising all fees and charges across the peninsula seems more fair and equitable, consideration needs to be given to "special cases" which simply don't fit this model. The Manly Resident Card is such a case. Here's why:

- It takes more than 2 hours for women to have their hair cut & coloured. Paying an additional \$12.50 in parking fees for the privilege of using a Manly hairdresser is not viable, so they take their business elsewhere.

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- A large number of locals volunteer in Manly. For example, as JPs at the Library, at the Manly Community Centre, Lifeline & Red Cross Shops, Nippers and surf clubs, and Church & community committees.
- Manly is a place where people like to linger. Do a yoga class then join friends for coffee; take the grandkids to the beach and stay for lunch; attend an appointment, do some shopping and have a coffee.
- All other areas on the Northern Beaches offer 3 hours free parking. Not only the commercial shopping centres but Council's community car parks including Dee Why.

Manly Chamber of Commerce

Following recent discussions with the President of the Manly Chamber of Commerce, the new executive (a number of whom were not aware of the reasons for the introduction of the Manly Resident Card), now support the retention of the Card.

\$100,000 in lost Revenue?

Council asserts that the Manly Resident Card is costing around \$100,000 in lost revenue. Parking Expert, Craig Smith former CEO of Wilson Parking until late 2015, whose advice we sought, says this is a simplistic assessment. The \$100,000 in lost revenue is a theoretical amount based on an unrealistic assumption that those using the card would pay the extra hour, regardless. If this was the case, we would have seen the revenues from the car parks decrease by this amount, immediately following the introduction of the Card. This would clearly be shown as a decrease in the vehicles staying between two and three hours at each car park. If this is the case, the data should be made available on a car park by car park basis.

Mr Smith advises that in practice what will happen is the increase in fees will simply alter parker behavior – rather than paying an additional \$12.50 they will seek alternate locations that offer a third free hour.

Finally, this ad hoc approach to parking, including the increase in rates across all car parks based on fixed increases rather than useage and demand, derogates from that asset's ability to properly serve the Manly community.

In Summary

It is clear from the research undertaken by Good For Manly that the cancellation of the Manly Resident Card will be detrimental to the businesses in Manly's CBD, most of whom rely on local patrons for the viability of their businesses.

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The removal of the Card is not “fair and equitable” as three hours free parking is offered by the Council elsewhere on the peninsula, such as at Dee Why, and by commercial shopping centres with which Manly competes.

There is no solid evidence that the removal of the Card will generate further income of around \$100,000 to Council.

The set-up costs of introducing the Card have already been met. All four car parks have the technology to accept the card, and the system is established.

While the Manly Resident Card should be retained, it would be reasonable to charge an annual fee (say \$40) to ensure its continuation.

Thanking you for your consideration,

Candy Bingham
Former Manly Councillor
President, Good For Manly
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