

PARKING PERMITS FOR TEACHERS

“We need to support our students and providing free parking permits to staff is an easy fix that can be addressed quickly by the council. It's low cost.”



Prepared by: Streets Alive Yarra Inc.

streets-alive-yarra.org

Foreword

Streets Alive Yarra is a non-profit, volunteer, resident and ratepayer action group with a [vision](#) for more trees, wider footpaths and vibrant businesses in thriving [neighbourhoods](#). We see our streets being used by people from [all ages](#), irrespective of whether they walk, roll on a wheelchair, cycle, use public transport or drive. Residents and shoppers should be able to move safely, comfortably, and conveniently around Yarra; and park near shops.



Image credit: OCULUS Landscape Architecture and Urban Design

Streets Alive Yarra was founded in 2017 and now has over 2,600 likes on Facebook. A network of local champions develops concepts and proposals for how to improve their local street or precinct. Streets Alive Yarra is also Yarra's Walkability Action Group (WAG) representative for Victoria Walks.

Further information is available at: streets-alive-yarra.org/about.

Summary

At the council meeting on the 4th of May 2021, petitioners from Princes Hill Secondary College asked council to supply free parking permits to teachers.

Some people, including some teachers, need to drive, and it's a core issue of social justice to ensure these people can find a park and avoid a fine.

Council can't offer free all-day parking to just one cohort of people, such as teachers from one school, because this discriminates against other workers, and council is not in a position to make value judgements about the the worth of one role compared with another.

Council can't offer free all-day parking to all workers, because there aren't enough car parks to go around.

Thus, to deliver social justice for teachers who need to drive and park, council needs to offer user-pays permits, priced at market rates, similar to those offered by the City of Moreland.

Context

At the council meeting on the 4th of May 2021, petitioners from Princes Hill Secondary College stated that for teachers who drive to school and park on nearby streets, parking restrictions require them to move their cars. They asked council to consider making free parking permits available to teachers, so that teachers would not have to disrupt their teaching duties to move their cars. Council resolved to receive the petition for officers to consider, including alignment with council policies.

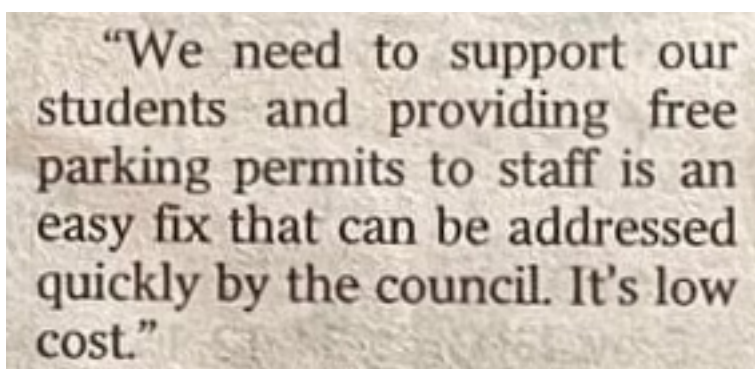
Petition to improve car parking arrangements for Princes Hill Secondary College staff

Petition summary and background	There are currently no designated parking areas for staff at the College. Staff are forced to park in two and four-hour car parks. As a result, they need to move their cars each day when they ought to be in class doing their job. Staff who don't are fined when inspectors arrive. This is untenable.
Action petitioned for	We, the undersigned, are concerned staff who urge our council leaders to act now to either grant PHSC staff a free parking permit or arrange for designated PHSC staff parking areas.

Image source: Cr Landes on Facebook

Media report

The issue was reported in the Herald Sun on Friday May 7th, including the claim that providing free permits is an “easy fix” that is “low cost”:



“We need to support our students and providing free parking permits to staff is an easy fix that can be addressed quickly by the council. It's low cost.”

Image source: Herald Sun Friday 7th May 2021

False claim

Petitioners claimed, at time stamp 48:15 of the archived webcast: *We're the only school that doesn't have a designated car parking area.* This isn't true - Richmond High School (also in Yarra) doesn't offer parking for teachers. In nearby Stonnington, Prahran High School chooses to not allocate space to parking.

Setting a precedent

If council makes free parking permits available to a certain group of people, e.g. teachers at Princes Hill Secondary College, it would create a precedent that would inevitably lead to similar demands from other cohorts of workers. For example, the queue of applicants could include:

- Teachers at other government schools
- Teachers at private schools
- Doctors and nurses at government or private hospitals
- Administration staff at schools and hospitals
- Doctors, physiotherapists or social workers who offer home visits
- Tradespeople who conduct urgent repairs
- And the list can go on...

Clearly, council doesn't have enough on-street parking to support free permits for all these cohorts, so setting a precedent is not a scalable solution.

Value judgements

If council makes free parking permits available to a certain group of people, e.g. teachers at Princes Hill Secondary College, but not to others, e.g. teachers at Richmond High School, or doctors or nurses at Epworth Hospital, then council is effectively making a value judgement about the worth of one job, compared with another. This isn't practical, nor is it ethical. Council should not differentiate or discriminate between different classes of work. All workers and commuters have equal rights to access public land for car storage.

The High Cost of Free Parking

Offering free parking to teachers is not “low cost”. There are high costs associated with providing free parking, as has been extensively documented in “The High Cost of Free Parking” by Donald Shoup.

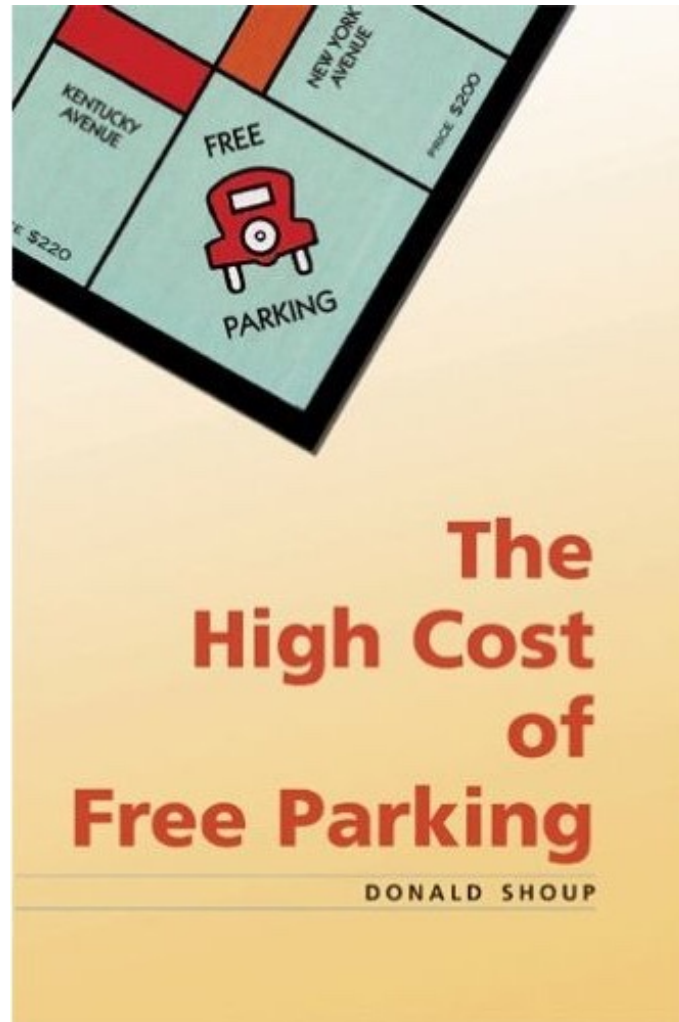


Image source: Planners Press / Routledge

Costs include:

- Increased vehicle kilometres travelled (more teachers would drive more often)
- Increased carbon emissions
- Increased toxic air pollution
- Increased levels of hazard for people walking and cycling (e.g. students)

Social justice

Council has adopted a social justice charter, which places the principles of access, equity and rights above the Council Plan and all other policies, strategies and plans.



Image source: City of Yarra Social Justice Charter

Some people do indeed need to drive, and it's a matter of social justice for council to ensure that these people can find a park and avoid a fine. Council can't deliver this social justice by offering free all-day parking, or by making free parking permits more broadly available, because most parking bays would then be occupied, thus denying social justice to the intended recipients.

To deliver social justice, council needs to manage parking so some spots are generally always available for those who need it. As council can't or shouldn't make value judgements on the myriad types of people or roles in Yarra, the best solution is for council to use pricing.

Yarra's Pricing Policy

Yarra has adopted a pricing policy, stating that if competitive neutrality applies (which it does for parking), then services should be offered at market rates (i.e. not for free).

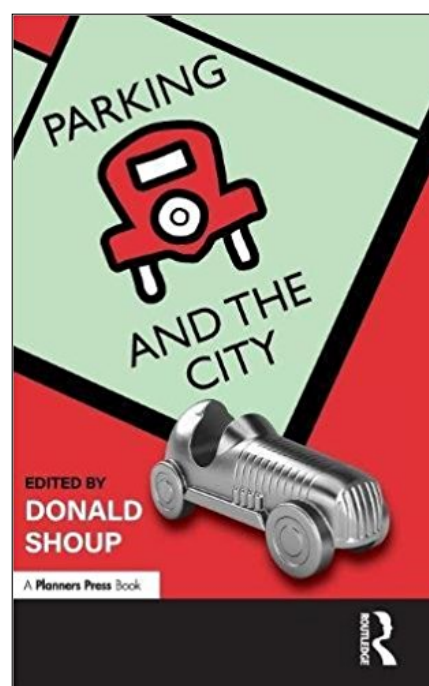
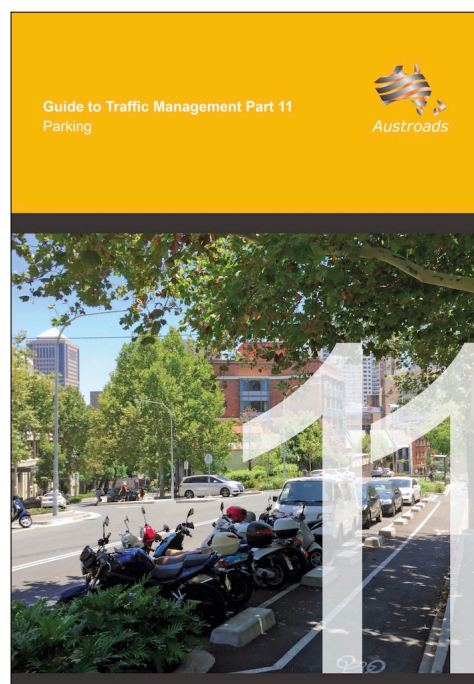
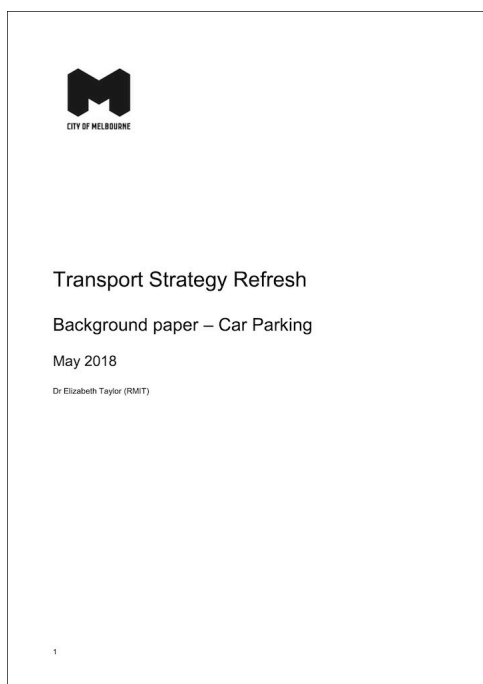


Image credit: City of Yarra

Best practice

The concept of using pricing to manage parking is described in multiple best practice guidelines and expert advice, including:

- [Transport Strategy Refresh Background Paper Car Parking](#), City of Melbourne
- [Guide to Traffic Management Part 11](#), Parking, Austroads
- [National Parking Management Guidance](#), New Zealand Transport Agency
- [Parking and the City](#), Donald Shoup



Parking reforms

Parking expert Donald Shoup writes:

...to distill the 800 pages of “The High Cost of Free Parking” into three bullet points, I recommend three parking reforms that can improve cities, the economy, and the environment:

- *Charge the right prices for on-street parking. The right prices are the lowest prices that will leave one or two open spaces on each block, so there will be no parking shortages. Prices will balance the demand and supply for on-street spaces.*
- *Spend the parking revenue to improve public services on the metered streets. Because everybody will see their meter money at work, the new public services can make parking meters politically popular.*
- *Remove off-street parking requirements. Developers and businesses can then decide how many parking spaces to provide for their customers.*

Donald Shoup, *Parking and the City*

Councils have avoided best practice reforms to the management of on-street parking for too long, and it's now time to act.

Solution

The solution is for council to standardise on:

- permit only parking bays, with
- digital permits, including
- a type of permit available for purchase by anyone, and
- enforcement using automatic number plate recognition.

The following table shows how several price levels could be offered, retaining existing pricing for existing types of permits:

	Residents & businesses who are eligible for existing permits	Residents & businesses who are at present ineligible for existing permits	Commuters & shoppers (non-residents)
Hourly (only for the shopping zone)	n/a	n/a	Demand responsive \$0 to \$10 per hour
Daily	\$2 (for visitors)	\$10	\$20
Weekly	\$10 (for visitors)	\$50	\$100
Monthly	\$30 (for visitors)	\$150	\$300
Yearly	\$41 (1st permit) \$100 (2nd permit)	\$1,500	\$3,000

Image source: <https://streets-alive-yarra.org/better-for-parking/>

Moreland already offers user pays parking

The City of Moreland already offers a user pays permit, available for any teacher, commuter or worker, for a price equivalent to \$3,400 per year.

<https://www.moreland.vic.gov.au/parking-roads/parking-permits/moreland-user-permit/>

First month within 12 month period	\$100
Subsequent months within 12 month period	\$300

Image credit: City of Moreland

Outcomes

If council offered user pays parking permits, then the likely outcomes would be:

- Some teachers would switch to walking, cycling or public transport
- Some teachers would purchase a permit and car-pool to reduce the cost
- Some teachers would purchase a permit and drive alone
- Teachers with a permit would be able to find a park and avoid a fine
- Local residents would not be overwhelmed with large numbers of commuters, so could also still find a park.

Concluding remarks

Some people, including some teachers, need to drive, and it's a core issue of social justice to ensure these people can find a park and avoid a fine.

Council can't offer free all-day parking to just one cohort of people, such as teachers from one school, because this discriminates against other workers, and council is not in a position to make value judgements about the the worth of one role compared with another.

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Thus, to deliver social justice for teachers who need to drive and park, council needs to offer user-pays permits, priced at market rates, similar to those offered by the City of Moreland.

Streets Alive Yarra would be delighted to provide further detail or explanation of the themes raised in this document.

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