ROAD SAFETY COMMITTEE

INQUIRY INTO PEDESTRIAN SAFETY IN CAR PARKS

Melbourne — 14 September 2009

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Mr S. Pearce, business manager, Wilson ParkWatch.
The CHAIR — Thank you very much for being here this afternoon.

Mr PEARCE — Thank you for the invitation.

The CHAIR — We are inquiring into pedestrian safety in car parks. As you can see, we are recording the evidence today. You will get a copy of the transcript, which you can correct as you see appropriate. You are protected by parliamentary privilege, but anything you say outside of this room is not protected by parliamentary privilege. Could you introduce yourself and proceed, and we will ask questions as we go?

Overheads shown.

Mr PEARCE — Probably the easiest way to do it is actually the first slide, which is actually a bit of a breakdown of my position with Wilson. I am here on behalf of Wilson Parking, and in particular our Wilson ParkWatch facility, which we operate out of Melbourne CBD. My title is business manager of Wilson ParkWatch. I manage a 24-hour, 7-day a week, 365-days a year customer service operation based at Melbourne Central tower. It was established in 2005 to support the Wilson Parking operations, particularly the automation of car parks. With technology and advancements in technology, automation and the cost savings associated with that enabled automation of particular car parks throughout Australia and things like that. Obviously with that, the customer service component needed to be upgraded as well and hence ParkWatch was born.

We currently monitor 71 sites nationally from Melbourne Central tower here in Melbourne — the sites range from sites in Perth, Swan Brewery, right through to the Sydney Opera House in Sydney. Most recently in Melbourne we have been looking after the Crown Casino entertainment complex multideck car park as well.

Mr LEANE — Can I ask you a question about that? When you are in that car park, you cannot miss a car coming because of the tyres making a noise on the paint. Is that on purpose or is that just a happy coincidence?

Mr PEARCE — That is just a happy coincidence. It is one of those scenarios; as you are aware, Crown operates its own car park and we are an external contractor that manages their customer service aspect as a backup. As a company, Wilson does not recommend the painting of the floors in car parks because of the wear and tear and the possible slipping and things like that that can occur. If it is a Wilson site that we have had for a long period of time, we tend to veer away from painting of vehicle thoroughfares only because of that fact. I do not know if you have been at Crown when it gets a little bit damp and cars are bringing water in, but it can get a little bit slippery on those thoroughfares. We tend to steer away from those.

In 2008 we won two national business awards from the Business Council of Australia which we have highlighted there. I have been in the role now for two years. We have grown from 50 sites to 71. With the economic climate that is going on, it is actually growing quite quickly at the moment.

To give you some background on Wilson as a company, we started in Perth in the 1960s and we have been in business for nearly 50 years. We have grown to become Australia’s premier provider of integrated parking security and access control technologies. We have a security business which we operate which provides security — I think you have actually got it here as well. We also provide Skidata access control equipment for our car parks throughout Australasia.

We currently operate in Australia, New Zealand and we also have Singapore, Korea and Hong Kong as part of the company business. Our operation in Melbourne — which is obviously what we are looking at with this committee today — involves 59 car parks throughout the Melbourne CBD. We have car park operations including open air, basement, event and multilevel car parks. We were the first to automate car parks which motorists both loved and disliked. Obviously we were the first ones to instigate remote monitoring of car parks in Australia. I have just highlighted a few of the portfolios that we have in Melbourne: Eureka Tower, which is the car park we actually own; Royal Women’s Hospital, which is a new one; Southern Cross station, Melbourne Convention Centre and the South Wharf precinct, which is due to open in less than a month.

With the guidelines and what we looked at today, my expectation was that by the time you got to us presenting, you would probably be well and truly aware of all the Australian standards in regard to multilevel and off-street parking. What we wanted to do was go through some of the advancements that have been made so we can see the sort of direction that we are heading in at this point of time as well. One of the things from a car park operator’s point of view is that we are often hamstrung when we take over a site because of the design and layout of the car park. We can make a lot of, I suppose, cosmetic changes to layout and structures within the car park, but we are quite often hamstrung by the actual design
and obviously the history of the site as well.
This is an example of construction changes that have obviously occurred. The left-hand car park is what is known as Scots Church, which is a heritage-listed car park in Melbourne’s CBD, which was built in 1938. It is the earliest example of multilevel car parking in Victoria. That is compared to the Southern Cross station car park, which is on the right, which opened in 2006.
One of the key things you notice in particularly the newer car parks from a pedestrian safety point of view and also from an operational point of view is car park facilities are now being custom-built; it is not a space that is being utilised for parking for building tenants or things like that. Quite often they are designed now as another revenue stream. There is a lot more emphasis being put on their design and a lot more facilities being built into these car parks.
The technology advancements in construction have opened up a lot of car parks from a point of view of particularly enabling wider car bays, dual direction lanes, improved lighting levels and particularly less impediments to visibility, and that is just through pure construction changes.

**The CHAIR** — Do you think that dual direction lanes are safer than single direction lanes?

**Mr PEARCE** — I do not necessarily think they are safer because of both directions. I think the safety factor is the wideness of the lanes, as opposed to a single lane. If you have got a one-way direction lane and people are walking down that lane, they almost have to stop or move to the side to let vehicles through in some cases, whereas a dual carriageway actually gives you a wider berth and a wider direction and increases your visibility, which is obviously something that is quite important for what we are trying to do in car parks, particularly with lighting and other considerations that we put into them.

**Mr WELLER** — Until you get a car coming each way.

**Mr PEARCE** — Exactly right. Again, it comes down to timing and those scenarios and moving along those, but from a visibility point of view the layout of car parks and the way that they are designed now, particularly from an architectural and design point of view is greatly improved on what we have had in the past.

Again, in terms of the distance between pillars, the weight bearing and also the ceiling heights, a lot of consideration is now being put into car parks in the design factor which from an operational point of view provides us with a greater emphasis to be able to develop a site into a safer alternative. Not only is a safe car park great for the pedestrians and also for vehicle users, but it is actually almost a competitive advantage for us from an operator’s point of view.
The better we can make a car park, the easier and safer we can make it for people to use, adds to our competitive advantage and that is something Wilson takes pretty seriously when it comes to those aspects, particularly when it comes to presentation, lighting and access, which I have touched on slightly there as well.

They are designed to create a safer environment, and we use a lot of lighting and a lot of techniques that we have developed to try and ensure our presentation standards assist. We have some examples here which are entry points of car parks which are traditionally the most highly congested area with shared access both from a pedestrian and vehicle point. I have included a few photos there during daylight and also at night. You can see that they have all got built-in separated entry and exit points for pedestrians and also vehicles to try and separate the two.
The benefits of those are twofold. One is obviously the internal safety of the car park but also pedestrian safety going past. Having such bright light, particularly at night, emanating from a car park — what we call a light bubble — out onto the footpath also alerts people walking past that there is activity there which obviously pricks up their interest and their awareness.
The thing about car parking is people tend to visit or revisit what they know and like and Wilson is quite intent on creating a brand which appeals to people from a safety point of view. Our corporate colours are red and white, and the white is very important when it comes to car parking for reflecting light and also for creating that ambient light that goes out into the street; that is what we use it for.

In newer car parks defined separation areas are again a lot easier to implement, and there are ways that we try and separate the different user groups, particularly pedestrians and bike riders from vehicle lanes, and where possible, even differentiate between cyclists and pedestrians. The reason being is that we actually probably have a greater incident of bike rider injuries within car parks than we do pedestrians and that is purely because of — I would be comfortable to say that 75 per cent of those instances are where bike riders have decided to flout the systems that are in place and have either entered through the vehicle access...
points or have come off their bikes at sharp turns and things like that. This is where I think part of the committee’s difficulty will be, in that some of these things that we put in place will also need a lot of buy-in from the pedestrians and other car park users to make them accessible and make them work. What we like to do in our sites, and what have done with a lot of our unmanned sites is create what we refer to as refuge points. The reason we try to do that is there are areas where people will be congregating — to make payments and to obviously wait for vehicles to be brought down by others and also at entry and exit points. The idea behind these refuge points is, one, obviously to separate vehicles and pedestrians, but also to enable people to make payments in safe spaces and also to allow people to not step straight out onto thoroughfares once payment has been made or these sorts of scenarios. They are also heavily lit and highly secure in regard to CCTV monitoring and also accessibility. They are located in high traffic areas of the car park particularly, so that you also add that security of people walking past constantly and constant movement within the car park and those points.

The CHAIR — Are those CCTVs manned, watching the — —

Mr PEARCE — Yes, that is monitored by the room that I control. We have camera access — at any point where there is congregation in the car park, whether it be entry, exits, pay stations, lift lobbies, those sorts of scenarios; anywhere we feel there will be a gathering of people. The refuge points, as I said, are designed also to give the user a clear access to be able to view either way before they need to step out into any thoroughfares, so they can make a safe assessment, similar to when crossing the street. You can actually be protected while you are making those decisions.

This just shows in the thoroughfares as such, and some of the different techniques we have used. There is a pedestrian crossing at the slowest exit point of the car park, which is the entry and exit point, where we anticipate that vehicles would already be slowing down. We have built that into the scenario and put it there. We have another couple of examples of refuges. The exit point of a lift lobby is the top left one. Instead of entering straight out into the car park, it enters out to the side so that the pedestrian steps away from the traffic and not straight out. Then there are a couple of other options that we have. We have a railing, down at the bottom right, and we also have a foot access point, at the bottom left. There are obviously pros and cons with both scenarios. The hand rail will protect the user from vehicles entering that zone. What we have found, though, is that there is a tendency for pedestrians to stay outside that railing, and then if something does happen they cannot get back into that safe zone, so to speak. I suppose it is a little difficult at the moment to judge the success of either option.

Mr LANGDON — Do you find the bollards more useful, because they can get in and out?

Mr PEARCE — Yes, the bollards are particularly more useful. The only issue we have with the bollards is, from a vehicle point of view, the amount of damage they cause. But if we have the space and the ability to, we tend to try to go with bollards as much as possible.

The CHAIR — Is that striped yellow section for pedestrians?

Mr PEARCE — Yes, that is for pedestrians. This is a video, which I do not think is going to play. I will try to get it to work — no; that is fine. It is a video we put in there to highlight the fact that people walk down that laneway while vehicles are coming the other way. It is a scenario where we do not have a railing, so people pass and cross past because of that. The idea behind that was to show people using that and how cars come back and forth along there anyway.

I will move on to the next one. The projector has frozen; I am sorry.

The CHAIR — Have you got a plan B?

Mr PEARCE — I have a couple of copies that I have also got there. We may need to close it and start again.

The CHAIR — We have all got the copies in front of us; no worries.

Mr PEARCE — Yes. That is fine. We will keep moving along anyway.

Obviously signage is a huge factor in what we use to educate the users, and there are a multitude. Depending on which company operates the car park will be the colour schemes and content. They are the four that we tend to try and stick to with Wilson, both utilising our corporate colours of red and white and
also a highly visible one for access points as well. They are straightforward. The issue with signage obviously is that it educates, but it does not hold people to it — so things such as barriers, speed humps, for instance, people cannot avoid. The difficulty obviously with speed humps is they need to be in a place where particularly we find people who are already obeying the speed limit to a degree. If you hit them at high speed you can lose control. The other issue you have with speed humps if there are not any cars parked along the side you obviously end up with people going around them. We try to maintain them in areas where people have no option but to progress over them, and we use them quite heavily around, again, areas of congestion — areas where people are going to be on foot and entry/exit points. The bottom right is actually the entrance for the Grand Hyatt down from what would be the valet entrance into that area. The reason that one is there is you have got foot traffic coming along what is the right-hand side of that picture, but also in front of that picture is also a crossing point towards pay stations. When we were asked to present there was a request made to discuss the Wilson ParkWatch brand and what the facility is, which is why I am here today presenting. It is probably a month early for what I would like to present, but in a month’s time we will open a new facility which we are currently custom building. The left-hand side is the current operating facility, and the right-hand side is the one that is being developed at the moment. That is something going forward as well — what we are looking at. To give you an idea of our ParkWatch facility as such and how it impacts on our operation — and obviously our safety and security of car parks — again, there are 71 sites. We have 36 car parks monitored in Victoria out of the 59. We have over 300 camera images coming back to the ParkWatch facility, over 340 customer contact intercom points, and we control over 36 000 car bays per day. On average we take 1100 intercom calls a day through our facility from car park users. They can range anything from questions on payment and questioning rates through to assistance in the car parks. Of those over 300 images that are maintained, every image is covered on a screen within every 22 seconds.

Mr WELLER — So those 1100 intercom calls are across your 71 parks?

Mr PEARCE — Correct. It is about 45 calls per hour we receive through our facility. Our facility monitors car parks ranging from shopping centres, which are extremely high turnover, through to staff-only car parks where everyone is in pretty much by 9 o’clock and out by 7 o’clock.

Mr KOCH — And principally calls relate to?

Mr PEARCE — Principally the largest number of calls we get are people who have lost their ticket. Obviously through our system we can recreate a ticket to a certain value or to a particular rate. We also get a particularly large number of calls from people disputing payment options. Unfortunately, of those 1100 calls a day, probably not many of them are complimentary. We do not get many people thanking us for the fee and keeping their car safe for the day.

The CHAIR — Not unless you pay the 30 cents for their phone call.

Mr PEARCE — It is free. Because they are intercom, it is all free, so it is a matter of pressing the intercom and we answer. We average a 24-second response time to any intercom call.

The CHAIR — In terms of the 71 car parks, in the last 12 months what injuries or accidents have occurred as a result that, both employee and non-employee.

Mr PEARCE — Obviously the employee ones are quite low, because the majority of those sites are now unmanned, so we do not have the employees on site as such. We experience slips and trips, like with any public area, and also because of the surfaces and things, being concrete surfaces. With injuries in car parks and accidents caused by vehicles in car parks, we have experienced three in the last 12 months. One of those was a staff member who fell when walking past a vehicle and broke his arm. The other two have been minor bumps. One woman was on a mobile phone and another guy actually dropped something and lost balance. To give you an idea of damages in vehicles, we get obviously traditional seasonal car break-ins, smash and grabs — those sorts of scenarios — depending on the car parks. We work pretty closely with Victoria Police. We have had undercover operations throughout our car parks at particular sites. We have also had one car theft of a vehicle in the last 24 months, from one of these unmanned monitor sites, and that is throughout Australia.
We have the ability in our ParkWatch room to watch what people do. We can do any action on site that a staff member on site could do. The only difference is they will not see us. We can talk to them, we can see what they are doing through the equipment — through the computers that we use as well — and also we can see them on camera as to what they are doing. It has cut down a lot of attempted misuse and a lot of claims by particular people when they realise what we can and cannot do.

Probably the most commonly asked question is: can you come and see me? — to which we respond, ‘No, we are not there; we are not on site, but we can dispatch somebody there’. Each state has a manager on duty who has a 24-hour role as well and who is our customer assistance, so to speak, on site. For instance, if an issue is about a credit card stuck in a machine or something along those lines, we can dispatch them and they are there normally within 7 to 8 minutes. That is depending on the time of day and things like that.

Also, of those 1100 calls a day, we are currently averaging a 94.5 per cent ability to resolve any issue. There are just over 5-and-a-bit per cent that we actually need physical interaction.

Mr LANGDON — I am following up your question, Chair. With the use of the cameras, have you spotted, particularly in a new facility you may have taken over, areas that you have found to be semi-dangerous, that because of the surveillance you have had you have implemented changes to prevent accidents? Has that occurred at all?

Mr PEARCE — Every time we take on a new site we go down and obviously review the operation of that site. Quite often part of tenders and things like that going forward will actually highlight areas of change which an owner would like to make. A lot of those come down to what complaints they have had in the past and areas of improvement. We will do a site inspection and identify what areas of a car park are covered by CCTV, and then we will actually ascertain, I suppose, a risk assessment of each site, which is done through our OH and S department and through our operations department. They will do a risk assessment on every site, whether it might be surfaces, opportunities to improve areas and things like that.

We do not have a camera on every level of a car park, so to speak. We will have them in what we class as areas of concern, whether they be entries or exits. We do have some lanes which we deem as dangerous in regard to blind turns and blind corners and things like that. Like red-light cameras at an intersection, you would love to have one on every level, but unfortunately that is not feasible. For the amount of traffic that comes through it would be too large to monitor.

Mr LANGDON — You spoke earlier, for example, about fixed rail, when we were walking over the side of it, compared to the bollards. I asked about the bollards.

Mr PEARCE — Yes.

Mr LANGDON — How did you find that out? Was it on the camera that showed you that or was it an accident in those areas?

Mr PEARCE — It is more reviewing of instances and observation. Again the number of injuries and incidents we have had in the car park has been quite minor. It is more along the lines of being on site and observing people and watching people as they leave. Quite often you will find that the entry point to a car park is on the wrong side for somebody entering the car park on foot so they will walk across the lane. We found that having hand rails as such stopped people from being able to get into that protected area. That is where bollards have become more favoured in the fit-out of a lot of our sites. They give people the opportunity to stay within that barrier and that access point and they give them the opportunity to move in and out of that quite easily. That is something we looked at.

To give you an idea of points of contact, the traditional car park always had a booth, predominantly at the exit point. So there was only ever one point of contact for somebody on site. It was an unusual to have more than one staff member on a lot of these sites. The invention of ParkWatch has enabled us to have more than one point of contact. We average just under five and a half intercoms per site depending on the location. This slide will give you a bit of a visual of that. The one on the left-hand side is a traditional car park with a booth at the exit point, and an entry and exit point at the one location. The site on the right — I have not put all the intercom points there because they double up — has 12 customer contact points. It is the Royal Women’s Hospital, which is a new site; obviously it was custom-built and designed. We have staff on site there who we can dispatch, but we have 12 ways customers can contact us for assistance or in an
emergency. In the past it would have been an operator in a booth who would lock the booth up to protect revenue et cetera and wander down. We believe improvements have been made.

We can control traffic flows in a car park through our automation. If a car park is full or there is what we deem to be too much traffic going around a car park, we can close the entrance point, thereby controlling how many vehicles come in and out. If there is an instance or an emergency where we need to get vehicles out of the car park, we can open gates and let people out quite freely.

We can dial into intercoms. If we see some suspicious activity around an intercom or around a point of interest, we can initiate a call by dialling in to speak to them, similar to a phone. We can respond to customer contact, we can monitor pedestrian activity at these points, identify suspicious activity — which we do — and contact emergency services via our control room.

The next slide will give you an idea of what we have picked up on there. We worked with Victoria Police to identify this gentleman, who was a bag snatcher. He was operating in the Flinders Lane region and took refuge in our car park. We were able to get Victoria Police there before he left the site.

We have had cars catch fire in a car park. This is another automated site. We contacted the fire brigade to get them down there; meanwhile we dispatched all our staff in the area to secure the site. Obviously that is some of the damage caused by the gentleman’s car; smoke was coming out of the bonnet so he took refuge in a car park. It was very kind of him.

This slide illustrates some of the other things we notice. This is a traditional Saturday night in Melbourne. People do not want to pay for their parking. As you can see, there are different rail systems that we use or the bollards.

Wilson uses these measures in its car parks and views them as a competitive advantage to what we do. However, we would like to see any recommendations or outcomes from this inquiry implemented across the board. When it comes to car parks, there are the big players such as Wilson, Secure, Premier at the moment, and then there are the small, one-off operations which do not necessarily abide by that competitive advantage because they are not interested in larger scale operations.

At our sites we try to maintain conditions similar to footpaths. Concrete surfaces are required for strength but can be dangerous when they are wet. We believe the surfaces should be roughened and where possible there should be a raised platform separating pedestrians from the vehicle thoroughfare. We have set aside a lot of our sites particularly for raised walkways and to create a rough surface. In winter heels are a problem and it can become slippery when people move from a dry surface to a wet surface.

We like to paint car parks, particularly around entrance points. We do not paint the road surface but we do paint roofs and walls. You would be amazed at the difference painting an entrance point or a roof can make, particularly with the paints designed specifically for use in car parks, which are reflective.

You can see in the bottom left of this slide that both those car parks are almost identical in design and equipment used on site and particularly the lighting level. You cannot quite see it on the overhead but the one on the left has painted walls and ceilings. The one on the right has a concrete finish; they have not painted the car park in any way. Concrete absorbs light, which means a lot more lighting needs to be installed or reflective light, particularly with the T5 tubes that are now on the market — the energy saver fluorescent tubes. They are great for the environment and are a cost-saver for us but they do not operate as well at reduced temperatures as the traditional fluorescent tube. We try to maximise the light output through the reflective measures we use.

The next issue is engineering controls. We utilise speed humps at a lot of sites and will continue to use them going forward. As I discussed earlier and illustrated with some photographs, we try to organise refuge locations and separation areas in vehicle areas. Again we would prefer to use bollards as opposed to hand rails to provide flexibility and accessibility for people as they go in and out. And the refuge areas should always be in a location that gives people the opportunity to view all areas of the car park where vehicles may come towards them.

There are recommendations for signage in the Australian standards but there is no requirement for specific signage such as for shared access or pedestrian walkways within car parks. We think VicRoads could incorporate car park signage in its educational material for learner or permit drivers. Currently there is no reference to shared access space or pedestrian signage in car parks. It is something that could be incorporated in driver tests where questions are asked about this type of signage because ultimately we all drive in car parks. The focus is on street signage, which it should be and we do not have a problem with that. But perhaps that is something that can be worked into that system of education.

Signage is not uniform in car parks. Wilson’s signs are red and white with black lettering; Secure signs have a tendency to be either orange or green; and then there are other signs which are different again. We
believe that no matter which car park you are in or which operator runs it, you should be able to identify the signage by its colour, design or something along those lines. I am sure a number of speakers have touched on the Australian standards in their presentations. The problem with the Australian standards is that they are literally standards and are not necessarily enforceable. They are recommendations which you can take on board or not. We believe any change to be implemented across the industry would require some sort of regulation and some sort of penalty for those who do not comply.

We, at Wilson, would be comfortable with saying that we would abide by as many Australian standards as possible. Again smaller operations with less revenue and less resources may struggle with that. However, as an operator, we believe it should be consistent across the board and all sites should operate at the same level to ensure pedestrian safety. There should be some enforceability of Australian standards which could incorporate more detail; off-street parking pedestrian safety is quite a small part of the Australian standards.

The CHAIR — Very good. Thank you.

Mr KOCH — Do Wilson principally manage or own parking areas?

Mr PEARCE — Manage or lease parking. We own only one site in our portfolio in Australia and that is at Eureka Tower. All other sites are leased or managed.

Mr TILLEY — I would like to thank you for your presentation, Simon. Wilson Parking certainly has a commitment to safe practice in its car parks and it has been demonstrated particularly well with the presentation you have given us today. What size operation does Wilson look at? You are talking about a capacity of more than how many hundred cars before Wilson would look at it?

Mr PEARCE — From a commercial point of view, we will look at car parks no matter how large or small they are. In our portfolio we have a car park in Queensberry Street which has 55 car bays right through to, for instance, Optus head office at North Ryde in Sydney which has 2500 bays. The size of the car park does not necessarily worry us, and we utilise the same principles no matter what and use our experience to control those car parks.

From a ParkWatch point of view, the issues are not necessarily related to the car park size. Quite often it is what is around a car park, such as 180 Russell which is surrounded by nightclubs and restaurants. It is particularly troublesome at night. We put security on to try to protect that site. We face all those sorts of scenarios. Pedestrian safety in car parks traditionally is not based on the size of the site, it is based on what is around the site and the type of clientele that it attracts. A CBD car park in Latrobe Street or Lonsdale Street would have more pedestrian traffic going through it between 5.00 p.m. and 7.00 p.m. at night than it will at 11 o’clock at night. Traditionally they are in better shape than those along Russell Street and similar areas. Again it comes down to what is around the site.

There is a discussion at the moment in regard to liquor licensing. There is a component in liquor licensing that refers to making the precinct safe. That is something which is not necessarily enforced, particularly in car parks. We are looking at that and working with club owners, restaurateurs and people like that to try to protect the precinct, because ultimately it is in our interests to make sure we provide a safe environment. But it is also in their interests because more people will frequent that area.

Mr TILLEY — On that, is the relationship between local government, for example the City of Melbourne with its system that was spoken about today — —

Mr PEARCE — The accreditation system?

Mr TILLEY — Yes, accreditation.

Mr PEARCE — Yes, we were involved in the process of developing and adding components to that. I suppose it is similar to the pedestrian safety option. The accreditation scheme will only work if everybody gets on board. Wilson, as part of the organising committee which came up with a lot of those recommendations, is behind it fully. We have embraced it; we have started the process in a lot of our sites and particularly with the ParkWatch component we have tried to identify how that works in with the accreditation scheme.
But if you have only one or maybe two operators utilising it, then it will not succeed. It is a matter of a buy-in of all operators. As it is a commercial system, any benefits that flow from it will entice other operators to come on board. Things like signage and the rating scheme need to be promoted so everybody is aware of them. As people choose those car parks as their preferred parking options, other operators will be pulled in. It then becomes an issue of if it is not followed through, it is not followed up.

Mr TILLEY — I have one more question, if I may. What are your thoughts on the ad hoc car parking places which pop up around town — the demolition sites that turn into short-term operations? How do you think we should deal with them?

Mr PEARCE — How do we deal with them? They are always going to pop up. I was here for the end of the presentation by the urban planners. Whenever there is an unused or an available space, you will always get people trying to make a dollar out of it. Car parking is the easiest option because often it requires the least amount of infrastructure. You can get away with someone standing with a bag and lining cars up and whatever else. How that is enforced or structured would be down to the permit area of government: ‘We will give you that land for a period of time but before you can operate it as a car park, you need to set up this and this’. They would be the things that you would be looking at.

Often they are an ad hoc operation. They pop up overnight and they are gone just as quickly. It is a planning and probably a city council issue in regard to what is available and what is not. From an operations point of view, I have run car parks throughout the CBD. All of a sudden two doors down the line, where construction was due to start, I have a competitor because there has been a postponement for six months while something happens. Wilson would tend not to get involved in short-term things like that, but some of the smaller operators, obviously, see some easy money to be made in those.

The CHAIR — Thank you very much.

Mr PEARCE — Thank you.

Witness withdrew.