

Sydney needs to park this bad idea

Paul Nicolaou



If there was a prize for bad idea of the week, City of Sydney Greens councillor Matthew Thompson would be a strong contender.

Cr Thompson's idea of whacking SUVs and larger vehicles with punitive parking charges defies the commercial reality of our city's economy.

He's not alone of course in wanting to maintain the rage against motor vehicles coming into the city.

As a study commissioned by the NRMA, Business Sydney and Business Western City showed, Sydney is already paying far more for parking than comparable cities in Australia and the US. Cr Thompson could do well to visit CBD parking stations in the very early hours of the working day.

He would soon see who owns the so-called supersized vehicles that he wants to hit with parking fees as high as \$24.60 per hour.

He would observe a daily procession of tradies taking advantage of early bird parking rates or kerbside loading zones, where available.

We should be encouraging our tradies to come into the city to work on the big construction projects and to carry out repairs on existing buildings when things go wrong.

When the plumbing backs up, who are you going to call?

Charging tradies more to park would just add to the cost-of-living crisis and to the cost of doing business. Our tradies would just have to pass higher parking fees on to their customers.

As Business Sydney has stated, three words sum up parking in our city. It's expensive, scarce and the system is broken.

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It's the sort of broken system where, for example, we can end up with a kerbside parking fee of \$9 an hour on Mrs Macquarie's Rd.

It is also crazy that Sydneysiders, who prefer to drive into the city or have to do so for the benefit of disabled or elderly family members, can be paying up to \$100 a day to park.

Something has to give on parking fees. Sydney is not a city designed exclusively for bike riders or compact cars.

There is nothing to be gained from making it too hard for tradies and others to do business in our city.

Paul Nicolaou is executive director of Business Sydney