

Motorists pay high toll

City to get thousands more parking meters



Opposition . . . Clovelly residents protest against parking meter proposals yesterday.

Picture: TOBY ZERNA

By KARINA DUNGER
and KELVIN BISSETT

MOTORISTS face an explosion in parking meter numbers over the next 12 months as councils consider wiping thousands of free parking places off streets from Epping to Maroubra.

Sydney councils generated more than \$30 million in revenue from meters last year — but this figure could escalate beyond \$50 million as tolled parking sweeps into more suburbs.

A *Daily Telegraph* investigation has revealed Parramatta, Randwick, Ryde, Lane Cove, Sydney City and Newcastle councils are all either installing meters for the first time, proposing expanding present numbers or increasing hourly charges.

Parramatta City Council will tonight debate plans to take meters to Granville, Westmead, Harris Park and Epping.

The council is already proceeding with 800 meters in Sydney's second CBD, all expected to be operational by the end of this year.

If Parramatta goes ahead with plans for other commercial centres the scheme could generate up to \$8 million in revenue.

Parramatta lord mayor David Borger said parking meters were good for retailers as they helped turn over patrons and "promote an active street life".

He said meters were sensible in Westmead, Harris Park and Granville to help stop an expected spread of vehicles from the CBD, although he personally opposed meters in Epping.

"Every major city anywhere now has parking meters so it makes sense to have them in Parramatta," Mr Borger said.

Also tonight Sydney City Council will consider a possible inquiry into putting meters into city residential precincts with "unique parking problems".

These areas include parts of Paddington, Chippendale, Darlinghurst, East Sydney, Kings Cross, Moore Park, Darlington, Surry Hills, Elizabeth Bay, Woolloomooloo, Potts Point and Rushcutters Bay. The council already generates \$16.5 million a year from parking meters in 7300 spots.

Clovelly locals compared parking meters to poker machines yesterday as they rallied against plans to place a levy on 1400 spots in their suburb.

Protest organiser Karon Lekew said Randwick Council could not prove there was a need for the machines at Clovelly.

It was a quiet area without hotels or large numbers of licensed premises, she said.

"It's a predatory and anti-social form of tax," Ms Lekew said.

"Parking meters are like poker machines for councils."

She said the meters posed problems for visiting family, friends and tradesmen to the area.

Retailers in suburbs with meters already in place said the devices were strangling their turnover.

Balmain Spitroast proprietor Manfred Freinkel has taken to putting coins in meters himself to keep patrons coming to his business on Darling St.

"The meters have killed business, absolutely slaughtered business," he said. "[The council] is punishing people for enjoying their shopping time."

Retailers in Oxford St, Paddington and Double Bay argue the devices are a huge disadvantage when Westfield Bondi Junction offers two hours free parking.

What you pay for a space

Pittwater

□ 1997-98: 4000 spaces, up to \$4 Monday to Friday/\$8 weekends. Income: \$586,193.

□ 2004-05: 2772 spaces, \$2 an hour. Income: \$650,200

Warringah

□ 1997-98: 1940 spaces, \$3 a day weekdays/\$6 a day weekends. Income: \$260,000.

□ 2004-05: 1000 spaces, \$2 an hour or \$6 per day weekdays/\$12 weekends, public holidays. Income: \$241,000

Manly

□ 1997-98: 578 spaces. \$1-\$3 an hour. Income: \$350,000.

□ 2004-05: approx. 600, first two hours \$6 and \$12 per day. Income: \$241,000

Willoughby

□ 1997-98: 831 spaces, 50c to \$2 an hour. Income: \$1.3m.

□ 2004-05: 3098 spaces, \$2.20-\$4.40 per hour. Income: \$1,882,119

Mosman

□ 1997-98: 617 spaces, up to \$8 a day on weekends. Income: \$243,000

□ 2004-05: 619 spaces, \$10 flat rate and weekends/public holidays \$5 first two hours up to \$15 max. Income: \$322,356

North Sydney

□ 1997-98: 2300 spaces, 50c to \$4 an hour. Income: \$4.02m

□ 2004-05: 2350 spaces, 50c to \$5 per hour. Income: \$5.25m

Waverley Council

□ 1997-98: 1670 being installed, \$1 to \$3 per hour. Income: \$85,000

□ 2004-05: 2260 spaces, \$1.50 to \$4.50 an hour. Income: \$2.2m

Sydney City Council/South Sydney Council

□ 1997-98: 7126 spaces, up to \$4 an hour. Income: \$12.3m

□ 2004-05: 7367, CBD \$4.40 an hour weekdays, \$1.10 evenings and weekends, cheaper Glebe and Redfern. Income: \$16.5m

Woollahra

□ 1997-98: no meters

□ 2004-05: 391 spaces, \$2.50 to \$3.20 an hour. Income: \$1,113,334

Randwick

□ 1997-98: No meters

□ 2004-05: Council debating it

Leichhardt

□ 1997-98: No meters

□ 2004-05: 2045 spaces, \$1.10 to \$2.20 an hour. Income: \$1.3m