



02nd August 2022

Ms Reeta Lad
Manager – Transport, Services
BPD, Monash University

Dear Reeta,

I am writing this letter with regards to the repeated parking fines that higher degree research students are facing with the new parking system application CellOPark. Some of these concerns were brought up at last year's AGM by a number of students as well as having been raised anecdotally at recent MGA events and through the GRC student representative. As an HDR student myself, I can speak to the difficulties that students may face and how problems can affect our studies in a significant way since we often plan our research experiments weeks in advance. Hence, I stress that resolving the issues outlined below would greatly benefit HDR students.

One dilemma that students have encountered is when they arrive on campus and stay overnight at their laboratory/workspace and forget to start a new parking session or the application had technical errors the next day which resulted in a fine. The second problem is that students received only one warning last year after forgetting to start a parking session, and in the following year have not been given the courtesy of any warnings.

HDR students live on a stipend that is currently below minimum wage and often work longer hours than research staff. Therefore, a fine of \$109 once or twice a year is a substantial amount to an HDR student compared to a salaried staff member. On top of the cost is the worry and anxiety that students face having to lodge an appeal to get the fine revoked, sometimes only to find their appeal denied without being supplied any concrete reason for it. According to data collected by the MGA through surveys, for those who it was applicable, 56% of graduate students limited their attendance at on campus social events and 43% were less likely to attend lecture and tutorials due to the costs incurred by parking. Given the immense mental and financial strain that HDR students are already under, the MGA would like to introduce a few measures to combat these issues.

We ask that you consider the following requests:

- Give HDR students the option to buy the 28-day monthly parking pass that is available to staff members.
- Ensure that a student's record for parking offences be reset every semester, such that the first parking offence for every semester would be a warning.
- Require Cellopark to report to students the reason for any rejection of an appeal.

These measures would significantly reduce the risk of HDR students being fined due to forgetting to start their parking session or from the application itself crashing.

As BPD has informed us that their parking fines cannot be reduced and the CellOpark application cannot be altered to include a timer for HDR students to remind them to extend their session, I urge you to consider these measures as a way of settling the above problems that students face without significant cost or effort to the BPD.

Thank-you for your consideration of these requests and please feel free to contact me if you would like to discuss this matter further.

Kind Regards

Sahampath Hettiarachchi

Research Education Officer

Monash Graduate Association Executive Committee