

2009

**THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR THE
AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY**

TABLING STATEMENT

Government Responses to:

- **Standing Committee on Climate Change, Environment and Water:** Report No 1 – Report on Annual and Financial Reports 2007-2008
- **Standing Committee on Education, Training and Youth Affairs:** Report No 1 – Report on Annual and Financial Reports 2007-2008
- **Standing Committee on Health, Community and Social Services:** Report No 1 – Report on Annual and Financial Reports 2007-2008
- **Standing Committee on Justice and Community Safety:** Report No 1 – Report on Annual and Financial Reports 2007-2008
- **Standing Committee on Planning, Public Works and Territory and Municipal Services:** Report No 1 – Report on Annual and Financial Reports 2007-2008
- **Standing Committee on Public Accounts:** Report No 2 – Report on Annual and Financial Reports 2007-2008

**Presented by
Mr Jon Stanhope MLA
Chief Minister**

15 / 10 / 2009

Mr Speaker, I am pleased to present the Government's Responses to the reports of all six Assembly Standing Committee reports on the 2007-2008 Annual and Financial Reports of ACT Government agencies.

In keeping with past practice, I am tabling the responses to all six Standing Committee reports together. This is because the Standing Committee reports generally cover more than one Minister and more than one portfolio and, in some cases, issues raised in the reports apply across departments and agencies.

Annual and financial reports are prepared by agencies in accordance with the *Annual Reports (Government Agencies) Act 2004*, the *Financial Management Act 1996* and the Chief Minister's Department *Annual Report Directions*. In this regard, the Government seeks to ensure that annual and financial reports are continually updated to reflect best practice and full accountability.

The Standing Committees made 73 recommendations. The Government has agreed in full, in principle or in part to 35 recommendations, has noted 30 recommendations and not agreed with eight recommendations.

Mr Speaker, I commend the Government's Responses to the Assembly.

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**THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR THE
AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY**

**GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO THE
STANDING COMMITTEE ON PLANNING, PUBLIC WORKS AND
TERRITORY AND MUNICIPAL SERVICES
REPORT NO 1**

REPORT ON ANNUAL AND FINANCIAL REPORTS 2007-2008

**Presented by
Mr Jon Stanhope MLA
Chief Minister**

15 / 10 / 2009

Government Response

Standing Committee on Planning, Public Works and Territory and Municipal Services
Report No 1 – Report on Annual and Financial Reports 2007-2008

Introduction

The Annual Reports of All ACT Government agencies are referred to the Standing Committees of the ACT Legislative Assembly for examination and report.

The Standing Committee on Planning, Public Works and Territory and Municipal Services reviewed annual reports for:

- ACT Planning and Land Authority;
- ACT Public Cemeteries Authority;
- Department of Territory and Municipal Services; and
- Land Development Agency.

The Committee made four recommendations.

Response to Committee Recommendations

Recommendation 1

2.40 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government continue to pursue options with regard to wheelchair accessible taxis.

Government Response

Noted.

Under the regulations there are 26 Wheelchair Accessible Taxis (WAT) licences available to give priority to WAT bookings. From time to time it is possible that not all these vehicles are operating, due to mechanical breakdowns or driver availability. There are 10 larger WAT vehicles capable of carrying two standard or larger motorised wheelchairs and fifteen 15 smaller vehicles that can accommodate one wheelchair. The RTA currently holds one surrendered licence.

To encourage the use, and increase the number, of wheelchair accessible taxis operating, the Government released five conditional licences in a ballot in May 2008, subject to the condition that the vehicles used must accommodate at least six passengers and be wheelchair accessible. The conditions of the licences include:

- a reduced licence fee of \$10,000 per annum, reflecting the high purchase/operating costs of the vehicles;
- that the vehicles must be a people mover (must have a carrying capacity of six passengers); and
- the vehicles must be wheelchair accessible (either single or dual) but not required to give priority to WAT hirings (i.e. the vehicles would not be regulated as WATs).

These vehicles were gradually put into services from September 2008. In another ballot in October 2008, operators were given the choice of putting on either a standard taxi or a conditional taxi at the lower lease fee. There are currently six conditional vehicles on the road capable of assisting with wheelchair hirings.

A number of incentives have also been implemented to maintain the wheelchair accessible fleet. These include a lift fee of \$11.90 paid to wheelchair accessible taxi operators "for the time it takes to actually lift the person into the vehicle and unload the wheelchair at the end of the journey." A Christmas incentive payment of \$150 per day plus an increase in the Lift Fee from \$11.90 to \$25.00 per hiring has also been provided for the last two years to encourage drivers to work over the Christmas period and this initiative has also been expanded to include five other significant family days, including Mothers and Fathers days, Good Friday and Easter Sunday and Anzac Day.

The Government also introduced an increase in the WAT Lift Fee from \$11.90 to \$25.00 for WAT hiring that are undertaken between the hours of 9:00pm until 6:00am everyday.

Wheelchair accessible taxi licences are only \$1,000 for a dual and \$3,000 for a single WAT, compared to \$10,000 for a conditional taxi which is wheelchair accessible and the \$20,000 annual cost of a standard taxi licence.

Recommendation 2

3.17 The Committee recommends that ACT Planning and Land Authority ensure appropriate mechanisms are in place to make officers aware of their delegations. Staff responsible for processing payments should also be made aware of the agency delegation schedules.

Government Response

Agreed.

All financial delegations have been reviewed and updated, and all officers who hold delegations have been informed of their responsibilities. In addition, staff responsible for processing payments have also received appropriate instruction.

Recommendation 3

3.23 The Committee recommends that ACT Planning and Land Authority comply with the Chief Minister's 2007-2010 Annual Report Directions with regard to reporting of Government Contracting.

Government Response

Agreed.

ACTPLA has implemented steps to ensure that the Chief Minister's 2007-2010 Annual Report Directions with regard to reporting of Government Contracting are adhered to.

Recommendation 4

4.15 The Committee recommends that the Land Development Agency consider implementing a variety of additional methods to consult the community on future land release programs.

Government Response

Agreed.

The Land Development Agency (LDA) has been developing an enhanced consultation strategy to identify the range of consultation activities that would be appropriate for any particular future land release. This strategy will be used to inform the release of Greenfields land and individual blocks in infill locations.

The LDA currently consults the community through:

- community engagement programs including in the design and development of new areas;
- conduct of and participation in forums and seminars with community groups and business, industry and professional associations;
- contributions to community newsletters and publications; and
- participation in and support for specific community events.

The LDA will add other forms of community engagement using an engagement and consultation matrix it has prepared. The matrix is based on the nature of the project, assessed levels of impact and the composition of the community involved.

Community/neighbourhood profiles will also be used to identify people groups (including special interest groups or neighbourhood groups) to be consulted, as well as engagement options with other agencies.

All LDA projects will be scoped taking to account their objectives, timeframe, resources, issues, stakeholders, budget and internal engagement options. The level of impact of the project on the community will then be assessed in terms of having a high impact across the ACT or a low impact on a localised area. The matrix will then determine the level of engagement required, i.e. informing, seeking information, involving or partnerships. The matrix will also determine the type of engagement linked to the level of impact.

The LDA will then formulate an action plan for the chosen type of engagement and engagement with the community will follow. The approach taken will be monitored and modified, as appropriate, throughout the engagement process.

The matrix is based on the attached four impact levels, which reflect the assumption that any project, issue, service or action will have some real or perceived impact on the community. Once the LDA has determined the level of impact, it will assess the level of community engagement appropriate for the project taking into account specific legislative requirements and relevant Government policies.

A specific level or levels of community engagement will then be utilised based on the attached four levels of involvement. The LDA will assess each level of community engagement according to the benefits and constraints involved.

Once the community engagement process has been completed, key findings from the engagement methods will be analysed and priorities for action identified, including action to be taken by service providers or community groups. The LDA will then implement monitor and evaluate the above processes, with all parties being informed of the outcomes.

RESPONSE RE: RECOMMENDATION FOUR
LAND DEVELOPMENT AGENCY COMMUNITY CONSULTATION METHODS

Impact levels matrix

Level 1 High—high level impact on the whole or a large part of the ACT Criteria examples (one or more of the following): • high level of real or perceived impact across the ACT • any significant impact on attributes that are considered to be of high value to the whole of the ACT such as the natural environment or heritage • any impact on the health, safety or well being of the community • potential high degree of controversy or conflict i.e. aged care, detention facilities • removal of a facility or service catering to the community e.g. library, swimming pool, carpark, public school • provision of a public facility i.e. skate park, sports centre community meeting hall.
Level 2 (High—Local)—high level impact of a local nature Criteria examples (one or more of the following) • high level of real or perceived impact or risk on a local area, small community or user group of a specific facility or service • the loss of or significant change to any facility or service to a local community • potential high degree of controversy or conflict at the local level • removal or relocation of a local playground or preschool/kindergarten • change to or loss of valued activity or program eg local youth activity • re-development of a sportsground • local street road closure and • increase or removal of car parking in a local shopping centre.
Level 3 (Lower)—a lower level of impact on the whole or a large part of the ACT Criteria examples (one or more of the following) • lower, although still some real or perceived impact or risk, an example of this is where an existing business perceives the release of additional retail space in their centre as a threat to their and like businesses across the precinct and • potential for some controversy or conflict (social issues).
Level 4 (Lower – Local)—a lower level of impact of a local nature Criteria examples (one or more of the following)

- lower level of real or perceived impact or risk on a local area, small community or user group of a specific facility or service
- only a small change or improvement to a facility or service at the local level
- low or no risk of controversy or conflict at then local level and
- changes to an activity.

Levels of community consultation

Informing

- advising the community of a situation or proposal
- informing the community about a decision or direction
- providing advice on an issue
- no response is required, although people are free to seek a further level of participation.

Seeking information

- undertaking market research to identify needs or issues
- seeking comment on a proposal, action or issue
- seeking feedback on a service or facility
- requiring a response, but limited opportunity for dialogue and
- option for people to seek a further level of participation.

Involving

- involving the community in discussion and debate
- ensuring informed input through briefings and information
- meetings/sessions that encourage participation
- involving at different times in the planning process, e.g. keeping informed and
- enabling further comment
- identify any opportunities for hands-on involvement in implementation
- whether consultation could be included as part of a community activity such as a workshop, meeting or neighbourhood activity.

Partnerships

- establishing a structure for involvement in decision making, e.g. committee
- enabling ongoing involvement and keeping informed
- allocating responsibility in achieving initiatives
- identify any opportunities for hands-on involvement in implementation
- whether consultation could be included as part of a community activity such as a workshop, meeting or neighbourhood activity.

