

2020

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

**GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO THE
STANDING COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT, TRANSPORT AND CITY SERVICES
REPORT NO 12**

REPORT ON ANNUAL AND FINANCIAL REPORTS 2018-2019

**Presented by
Mr Andrew Barr MLA
Chief Minister**

Introduction

On Thursday, 24 October 2019, the 2018-19 Annual and Financial reports of all ACT Government agencies were referred to the relevant Standing Committees of the Assembly for inquiry and reporting.

The following annual reports, or sections of annual reports, were referred to the Standing Committee on Environment and Transport and City Services (the Committee):

- Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate (Environment Protection Authority, Sport and Recreation);
- Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate;
- Office of the Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment; and
- Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate.

Response to Committee Recommendations

Recommendation 1

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government includes a breakdown of complaints data in its Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate annual report to demonstrate how many complaints led to infringement notices, Environmental Protection Orders or prosecutions for breaches of the *Environment Protection Act 1997*, and how many were dismissed.

Government Response – Agreed.

The Environment Protection Authority (EPA) supports this recommendation. This breakdown will be provided in the EPA's Annexed Report to the CMTEDD Annual Report in the future.

Recommendation 2

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government includes information in its Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate annual report that specifies whether a noise complaint prosecution recorded in one financial year stems from an infringement notice issued in the previous financial year, so it is clear the data is in relation to an ongoing matter that has crossed reporting periods.

Government Response – Agreed.

The Environment Protection Authority (EPA) supports this recommendation. This information will be provided where relevant in the EPA's Annexed Report to the CMTEDD Annual Report in the future.

Recommendation 3

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government considers installing temporary signage in areas where there is a high number of collisions between vehicles and kangaroos to warn motorists of the increased wildlife presence within the city during times of drought.

Government Response – Noted.

Transport Canberra and City Services (TCCS) no longer installs 'wildlife on road' warning signs. Research undertaken by Parks and Conservation has shown that installing signs has no benefit in protecting the wildlife. Wildlife, particularly kangaroos, are not predictable in their behaviours and can roam over a large area.

TCCS will review the need for more signs informing road users how to contact wildlife services in the event that they do find injured animals on the road.

Recommendation 4

The Committee recommends the ACT Government considers revisiting Community Zero Emissions grant recipients 12 months after grants are issued to track the outcome of the relevant projects and consider further opportunities to promote these initiatives to the broader public.

Government Response – Agreed.

The Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate (EPSDD) tracks all Community Zero Emissions grants to ensure milestones are met, final reports are submitted, and funding is acquitted. EPSDD will continue to promote the benefits of these grant projects through its communications channels to the broader public.

Recommendation 5

The Committee recommends the ACT Government considers incentives for community organisations and businesses to be involved in temporary car-free initiatives, such as granting permits for street closures without an associated fee.

Government Response – Agreed.

The Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate is working to develop a program that considers incentives for alternative travel including car free days. This will include discussion with Transport Canberra and City Services to understand opportunities of waiving fees for street closures associated with temporary car free days.

Recommendation 6

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government shares the Government's Climate Change Action Toolkit with a sample of sporting groups to allow them to apply and evaluate its usefulness and report findings back to the committee in the 10th Assembly which has portfolio responsibility for climate change policy and programs at the next Annual and Financial Reports hearings.

Government Response – Noted.

The development of a Climate Change Toolkit was proposed in the Commissioner for Sustainability and Environment report *Heat, Humanity, and the Hockey Stick: Climate Change and Sport in Canberra 2019*. This approach will be considered in development of future climate change approaches including effective community engagement.

Recommendation 7

The Committee recommends the ACT Government considers further opportunities for the cost-effective enhancement of ovals, such as planting more drought-resistant plants or re-wilding the area.

Government Response – Agreed.

Planting sites are being identified on oval surrounds across the ACT. Species are selected from the *Municipal Infrastructure Standards 25: Plant Species for Urban Landscape Projects* list which has been assessed for suitability in a report by the ANU and EPSDD, Urban Forest Tree Species Research for the ACT.

Recommendation 8

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government undertakes regular enforcement of organisations and businesses parking mobile advertising trucks on public unleased land without approval to send a deterrence message.

Government Response – Agreed.

Transport Canberra and City Services (TCCS) has utilised the Compliance Targeting Team (CTT) to proactively identify and enforce compliance with unauthorised public land use including movable signage.

In 2019-20 to March 2020, TCCS officers have issued 5 infringement notices to corporations and 8 infringement notices to individual businesses relating to mobile billboards (i.e. vehicles, trucks and trailers).

Additionally, 33 infringement notices have been issued to corporations and individual businesses for breach of “movable signs Code of Practice’. Further targeted enforcement of both movable signage and mobile billboards is ongoing.

Recommendation 9

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government reviews the number of corporate infringements issued to organisations and businesses parking mobile billboard advertising trucks on public unleased land without approval and considers increasing corporate infringements as a deterrence measure.

Government Response – Agreed.

Currently an individual faces an infringeable fine of \$440 or a court-imposed penalty of up to \$3000, and a corporation faces infringeable fine of \$2200 or a court-imposed penalty of up to \$15000 for a breach of section 43(1) of the *Public Unleased Land Act 2013* (the Act) (Use of public unleased land without a permit).

Consideration to creating an offence for advertising on public land without a permit, which captures the use of vehicles etc. will be considered in a future review of the Act.

Recommendation 10

The Committee recommends the ACT Government investigates a swap-and-go system of vessels to collect containers at all the Container Deposit Scheme locations.

Government Response – Noted.

The ACT CDS Network of Collection Points is operated by Return-It, not the ACT Government. Return-It has expressed that this option is not feasible and that the costs of implementing such a system would be significant. The current COVID 19 situation further reduces the feasibility as the risk of cross contamination could potentially increase community transmissions.

Recommendation 11

The Committee recommends the ACT Government updates the recycling webpage where advice has changed on recommended recycling habits and explain why this advice has changed, and do this on an ongoing basis.

Government Response – Agreed.

The Recyclopaedia website is updated regularly to maintain the currency of advice provided to the community on recycling and disposal options. In addition to ongoing maintenance, the Recyclopaedia will highlight any significant changes to recycling practices and outline the reasons for this change.

The Recycle Right Campaign is supported by a Frequently Asked Questions page outlining why recycling rules have changed. The Recyclopaedia web page has a new section titled 'Canberra's recycling story' which provides an update on the challenges faced by the sector and what is being done by the various levels of government to address these issues.

Recommendation 12

The Committee recommends the ACT Government continues to investigate the feasibility of pedestrian countdown timers in the ACT and how this technology may interact with the ACT's existing adaptive signal technology.

Government Response – Agreed.

TCCS has a pedestrian countdown timer currently installed at the Federal Highway/Barton Hwy intersection and is monitoring the performance.

TCCS has undertaken initial investigation for the installation of countdown timers at the Northbourne Avenue / Alinga Street intersection on a trial basis. Works to install the additional signalling and adjust the controllers will be undertaken once all traffic signals are returned to Roads ACT control following completion of the light rail stage one works.

Recommendation 13

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government makes publicly available the updated 'list of tweaks' made to Network19.

Government Response – Agreed.

The 'list of tweaks' has been published on the Transport Canberra Website.

Recommendation 14

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government publishes the costs of Light Rail Stage 2A and 2B, as well as the detailed costing for the use of 'wire free' technology.

Government Response – Agreed in principle.

The ACT Government is not releasing project costs at this stage ahead of the Light Rail Stage 2A project's procurement process. To achieve the best value for money for the Territory in negotiations with Canberra Metro, cost and financial figures have been redacted in the publicly available Light Rail Stage 2A Business Case. A business case for Stage 2B will be considered in

the future once the Commonwealth planning processes are further progressed. The ACT Government expects to release project costs once commercial negotiations are complete.

Recommendation 15

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government further explores options for the procurement of electric buses made and designed in Australia.

Government Response – Agreed.

A Zero Emissions Steering Committee has been established to further explore options for the procurement of electric buses made and designed in Australia.

Recommendation 16

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government explains the delay of the delivery of a new integrated ticketing system, and releases an indicative timeline for the delivery of this ticketing system.

Government Response – Agreed.

The Minister for Transport wrote to the Chair of the Committee, Mrs Vicki Dunne MLA, in relation to this matter on 18 March 2020.

Recommendation 17

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government holds more frequent recruiting rounds for bus drivers, and publishes the results of the recruitment rounds every month.

Government Response – Agreed in principle.

Transport Canberra already has in place a 12-month rolling recruitment round for bus drivers with new applications received every fortnight. The process can take a number of months as applicants are required to undertake a number of internal and external assessments. Offers of employment are not made until all assessments are successfully completed and the applicant has then successfully completed basic driver training. Additionally, recruitment and training has been redesigned to ensure social distancing requirements are met, resulting in the process slowing down. Given this, it is recommended that reporting be produced every six months.

Recommendation 18

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government increases targeted driver recruitment for women to reduce attrition rates and ensure an adequate supply of drivers to meet original weekend reliability targets.

Government Response – Agreed in principle.

Targeting the recruitment of more women is likely to increase the participation of women in the workforce and broaden the pool from which TC can recruit. While this will help, it does not follow that this will necessarily reduce attrition or meet original weekend reliability rates.

Recommendation 19

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government considers introducing a feedback mechanism for any ACTION recruitment activities to provide more context about the conversion rate of initial responses to formal applications or new recruits.

Government Response – Agreed in principle.

There are many reasons why applicants do not progress to becoming a new recruit, including being ineligible to apply, driving history, not passing the medical requirements, criminal history, not passing the training. It is recommended that these reasons be anonymously incorporated into the six-monthly reporting identified in Recommendation 17.

Recommendation 20

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government makes publicly available a definitive date as to when weekend service reliability will begin to be incrementally restored to its original frequency.

Government Response – Agreed in principle.

The ACT Government announced an update to Network 19 which included an incremental increase to weekend services.

Due to COVID-19 the network update has been delayed to ensure that the focus is on maintaining services and safety, and not creating confusion for passengers. Transport Canberra will continue to operate the current bus and light rail timetable for the time being, with planning underway to support a safe recovery plan for passengers. The weekend service incremental increase will be undertaken at an appropriate time in the future.

Recommendation 21

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government continues advocating for the installation of a MyWay ticket vending machine at Westfield Belconnen and:

- considers introducing a time limit for negotiations with Westfield and, if unsuccessful within this time period;
- considers installing a ticket vending machine at an alternative location, such as the Belconnen Community Station.

Government Response – Agreed.

A MyWay Ticket vending machine has been installed at Belconnen Westfield.

Recommendation 22

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government procures and expands the available stock of MyWay vending machines that can be purchased by small businesses and reduces the red tape for businesses applying to purchase these machines, given the extension of the MyWay contract to 2022.

Government Response – Noted.

The MyWay system was purchased as a commercially available “off the shelf” product in 2009. In 2016/17 the manufacturer ceased the manufacture of this product. The Terminals are no longer available for purchase. Currently some parts are still available to support existing operational terminals.

Recommendation 23

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government reviews outbound bus services from the city to Belconnen (specifically buses 2, 3 and 4), which currently leave from platform one (stop 3419), and considers relocating at least one service to a more central part of the City Interchange as to assist commuters with mobility issues.

Government Response – Noted.

Platform changes will be undertaken as part of the Network 19 update – however, grouping of Belconnen bound services together is important for the service levels to the Belconnen interchange.

Services can also be taken from the Legislative Assembly stops on London Circuit, which are accessible from the Canberra Centre.

Recommendation 24

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government considers further information and education opportunities to help make commuters more aware of their bus travel options, including instances of multiple services to individual locations and alternative bus stops along a single route.

Government Response – Agreed.

Transport Canberra will continue to improve signage and wayfinding across the network, make continual improvements to journey planning options for customers and introduce route changes as part of the Network 19 update (currently postponed due to COVID 19).

Recommendation 25

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government considers providing more detailed information in its *Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate Annual Report Volume Two: ACT Public Cemeteries Authority* about the cost and revenue of various products and services (including allotment, maintenance, burial, sale of plaques and memorials) to include a breakdown of the number of each service or product category.

Government Response – Agreed.

This issue has been discussed at the ACT Public Cemeteries Authority Finance Subcommittee and Board Meetings.

Future reports will include a breakdown of the numbers of each product/service contributing to the total amount in the cost of sales note in the financial statements.