

2015

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

**GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO THE
STANDING COMMITTEE ON PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND TERRITORY AND
MUNICIPAL SERVICES
REPORT NO 7**

REPORT ON ANNUAL AND FINANCIAL REPORTS 2013-2014

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

Government Response

Standing Committee on Planning, Environment and Territory and Municipal Services Report No 7 – Report on Annual and Financial Reports 2013-2014

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, Environment and Territory and Municipal Services reviewed annual reports for:

- Economic Development Directorate (sport and recreation services/ venues and events services);
- Environment and Sustainable Development Directorate (including: ACT Heritage Council, ACT Planning and Land Authority, Conservator of Flora and Fauna, Environment Protection Authority);
- Land Development Agency;
- Office of the Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment; and
- Territory and Municipal Services Directorate (including: Arboretum, ACTION, ACT Public Cemeteries Authority, and Animal Welfare Authority)
- Capital Metro Agency.

The Committee made 11 recommendations.

Response to Committee Recommendations

Recommendation 1

3.15 The Committee recommends that the Land Development Authority review its processes around joint ventures to ensure that all contracts that fall within the provisions of the Government Procurement Act 2001 are appropriately reported.

Government Response - Agreed

The Land Development Agency has reviewed its processes around joint ventures and has taken steps to ensure that all contracts are appropriately reported pursuant to the *Government Procurement Act 2001*.

Recommendation 2

4.9 The Committee recommends that the Minister for the Environment update the Assembly on the results of water quality monitoring of Yerrabi Ponds by June 2015.

Government Response - Agreed

The Minister for the Environment has provided an update to the Assembly on 4 June 2015.

Recommendation 3

4.22 The Committee recommends that when work is planned on ACT landfills that may result in increased odour the ACT Government alert nearby residents prior to the commencement of work.

Government Response - Agreed

The direction and distance over which odour could travel is primarily dictated by the weather, and therefore, “nearby residents” is not an easily determinable or accurately targetable demographic.

ACT NOWaste will implement a comprehensive communications plan including publishing on the TAMS website, and issuing press releases communicating the reasons for, and timing of, proposed work.

Recommendation 4

4.26 The Committee recommends that the Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment update the Committee during its 2014-15 annual report hearings on progress on defining ecologically sustainable development for annual reporting requirements.

Government Response - Agreed

The Commissioner will respond in the Office of the Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment's 2014-15 Annual Report and provide an update during Annual Report estimates in November 2015.

Recommendation 5

5.8 The Committee recommends that the Minister for Territory and Municipal Services update the Committee during its 2014-15 annual report hearings on efforts to facilitate community involvement in the maintenance and enhancement of playgrounds.

Government Response - Agreed

The TAMS website provides information on playground upgrades, which is updated as required to provide details of current works. Community consultation is routinely undertaken when a full playground is planned. Community feedback guides the design of each play space and may be sought on a range of issues such as type of equipment, art work, design theme, etc.

Rotary, community volunteer and 'friends' groups are involved in park improvements across Canberra, including input into playground maintenance and renewal works.

Recommendation 6

5.11 The Committee recommends that TAMS review the policy around abandoned shopping trolleys, including the level of fine to owners, to encourage owners to take further steps to prevent theft.

Government Response - Agreed

The policy around shopping trolleys will be reviewed internally in 2015 with a view to improving the process around the management of shopping trolleys and making clearer the responsibilities of owners.

Recommendation 7

5.14 The Committee recommends that TAMS review its Bushfire Operational Plan performance indicator and the way it is presented to ensure that it provides an accurate impression of the work done by the Directorate.

Government Response - Agreed

This was a direct recommendation from the Auditor General's report handed down in 2014. Work has been undertaken in conjunction with the ESA and the outcome is that 5 Performance Indicators have been approved and are in place for this financial year. Performance against this recommendation is included in an ESA lead summary which is reported back to the Auditor General at regular intervals.

Recommendation 8

5.18 The Committee recommends that TAMS amends its policy to ensure that victims of attacks by dangerous domestic animals are promptly informed in writing of process in deciding the fate of the animal and any conditions imposed on the release of the animal.

Government Response - Agreed

Work has begun on ensuring that victims of attacks are made aware of the processes followed after an attack, including the conditions associated with the release of any animal involved in an attack, and informed of their review rights in respect of any decisions made under legislation.

A review of the standard operating procedures at Domestic Animal Services will be finalised by 2015 and these requirements will be included in standard operating procedures relevant to attacks.

Recommendation 9

5.21 The Committee recommends that Libraries ACT update the Committee during public hearings into annual reports 2014-15 on progress in formulating a digitisation policy for the Heritage Library.

Government Response - Agreed in principle

The ACT Heritage Library is participating in an evaluation of the Rosetta Digital Preservation system in partnership with the State Libraries of Queensland, South Australia and Tasmania and the Northern Territory Library with a view to a national digital preservation scheme. Preliminary findings will be available in November 2015.

Recommendation 10

5.26 The Committee recommends that the Chief Minister report to the Assembly by June 2015 on progress on creating a comprehensive government bill and payment portal.

Government Response - Agreed in principle

It is not an accurate description of current initiatives to describe them as a dedicated “online payment portal” for the ACT Government.

The ACT Government has a mature online payment service for its customers accessible predominately through Access Canberra but also through various other ACT Government websites. The ACT Government is committed to enhancing digital service delivery and has invested \$85 million to that end as announced in the 2014/15 budget. A key program in this vision is the iConnect Program which is focused on delivering a more sophisticated, customer centric web presence, offering more services online including payments, and ultimately reducing the cost of service delivery.

The Government will provide the Assembly with an update on progress with the iConnect program in the second half of 2015, which will be the appropriate timing in the context of related procurement activities.

Recommendation 11

5.39 The Committee recommends that Roads ACT report to the Committee during its 2014-15 annual report hearings on the actual number of vehicle movements on Allara Street during morning peak hour following the conclusion of road works and the impact of the road works on residents and drivers.

Government Response - Agreed in principle

Roads ACT have committed to monitoring the traffic using the Parkes Way/Allara Street connection for the first 3 – 6 months following the completion of road works. These observations will be compared with the predicted usage and anticipated impact on the local residents.

Roads ACT will brief the Government on the findings following the observation period. Given the timing of the completion of this connection, data collection and analysis of the observations may prevent a report being provided for the 2014-15 annual report hearings. Roads ACT have been in continuous consultation with Allara Street residents through the planning and rollout of these road works.