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**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR THE  
AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY**

**GOVERNMENT SUBMISSION TO THE PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE  
CONCERNING  
THE AUDITOR-GENERAL'S PERFORMANCE AUDIT REPORT  
NO 3 OF 2013**

**ACT Government Parking Operations**



Presented by  
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# **GOVERNMENT SUBMISSION TO THE PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE CONCERNING THE AUDITOR-GENERAL'S REPORT No. 3/2013: ACT GOVERNMENT PARKING OPERATIONS**

## **Government Response to Recommendations**

### **Recommendation 1**

The Environment and Sustainable Development Directorate, Justice and Community Safety Directorate, Territory and Municipal Services Directorate and Chief Minister and Treasury Directorate should work together to strengthen 'One Government' governance arrangements for parking operations by:

- a) improving coordination, communication and consultation processes between agencies; and
- b) documenting roles, responsibilities, inter-relationships and accountabilities.

**Government response:**       Agreed.

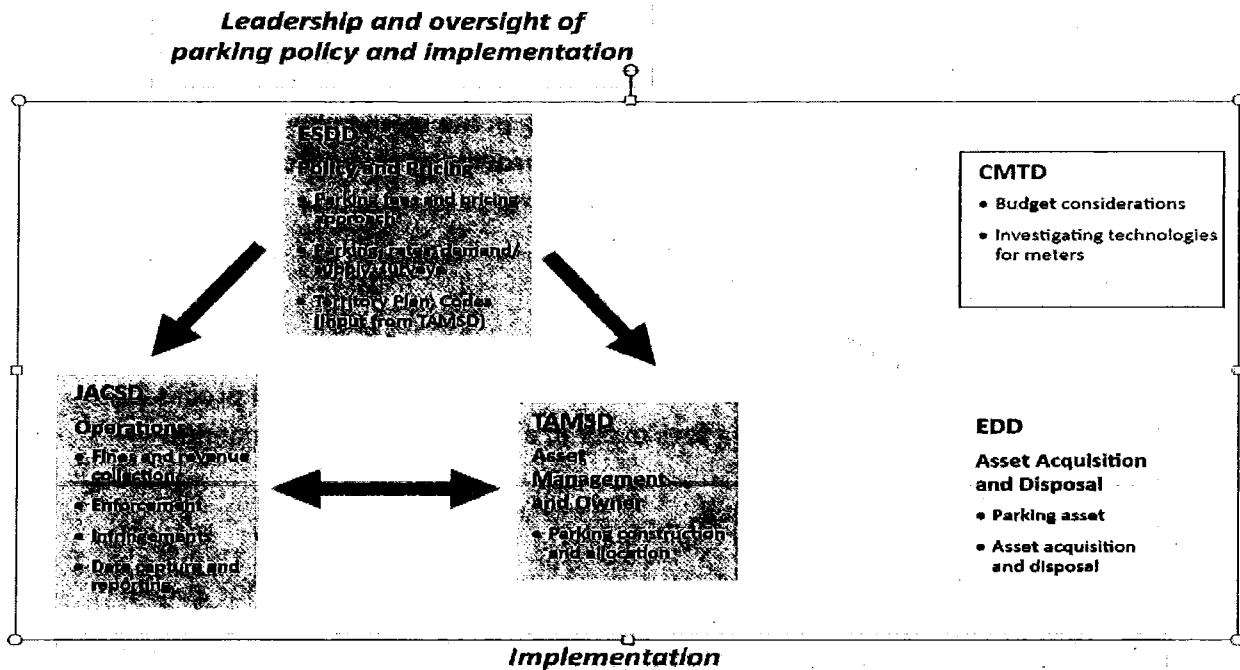
The Government supports the strengthening of 'one Government' governance arrangements for parking operations by improving existing cross directorate coordination mechanisms, communication and consultation processes and confirming cross-directorates responsibilities.

Parking policy and operations are conducted across a group of Directorates in the ACT Government. This cross-agency delivery reflects Directorates' specific capabilities and regulatory authorities in: (i) strategy and policy development and coordination; (ii) enforcement operations; (iii) asset management and planning; and (iv) capital investment management.

ESDD maintains leadership of parking policy and strategy across the ACT Public Service and will lead Government's response to the Auditor-General's recommendations.

A parking coordination group (PCG) of senior executives from the relevant directorates has been established in response to the Auditor-General's report. The PCG will be led by the Environment and Sustainable Development Directorate (ESDD) and will provide executive oversight of parking coordination, communication, consultation and projects. The PCG will meet bi-monthly to ensure ongoing coordination, communication, consultation between the relevant directorates and to track the progress of the suite of parking projects being undertaken across Government. The PCG will provide quarterly reports to the Directors-General meeting on the implementation of the Auditor-General's recommendations. ESDD will lead the PCG and provide secretariat support.

The PCG will function consistent with the responsibilities, inter-relationships and accountabilities based on the diagram below.



**Responsibilities for ACT Parking Policy and Operations across the Service**

**Recommendation 2**

The Environment and Sustainable Development Directorate should:

- a) update the *Transport for Canberra Implementation Tracking* document with respect to parking operations;
- b) develop and publish key performance indicators and supporting targets to guide the delivery of strategic objectives in the Strategic Parking Framework;
- c) use the *Transport for Canberra Implementation Tracking* document as a basis for developing an integrated implementation, monitoring and evaluation plan for the Strategic Parking Framework; and
- d) work with the National Capital Authority, other relevant Commonwealth Government agencies, and the ACT community to implement the Commonwealth Government's 2013-14 budget initiative to introduce paid parking in the Parliamentary Triangle Zone.

**Government response:**      Agreed.

The *Transport for Canberra Implementation Tracking* document, maintained by ESDD, is currently used by the inter-directorate committee for regular monitoring and reporting of actions listed in *Transport for Canberra*.

The tracking document will also be used by the parking coordination group for the regular monitoring and reporting of actions related to parking.

The ACT Government currently liaises at a policy and operational level with the National Capital Authority (NCA) on parking matters. This intergovernmental liaison will continue on the implementation of the Federal Government's budget initiative to introduce paid parking to the Parliamentary Triangle Zone.

The ACT Government will also seek to align parking operations and enforcement across Canberra. The NCA is currently participating in the work being undertaken by ACT Government agencies to select a supplier to provide appropriate technology to replace existing parking ticket machines and meters.

### **Recommendation 3**

The Environment and Sustainable Development Directorate should consult with other directorates and the Attorney-General to establish a timeline and process for ensuring annual changes to parking fees occur in a routine and timely manner.

**Government response:** Agreed.

The Government supports the establishment of a timeline and process for annual changes to parking fees. The timeline and process will be developed by ESDD in consultation with the parking coordination group formed in response to Recommendation 1.

### **Recommendation 4**

The Environment and Sustainable Development Directorate should finalise and release the ACT Government Transport Pricing Policy. The policy should include:

- a) criteria for the determination of parking fees;
- b) a requirement for:
  - criteria mentioned in (a) to be explicitly addressed in recommending changes in parking fees to the Attorney-General; and
  - a mechanism for using revenue data collected by other ACT Government agencies, in particular the Justice and Community Safety Directorate, in determining parking fees; and
- c) the timeline and process for making annual changes to parking fees (refer to Recommendation 3).

**Government response:** Agreed.

Further refinement of ACT Government transport pricing policy is underway, led by the ESDD and working with the Justice and Community Safety Directorate (JACSD) and the Territory and Municipal Services Directorate (TAMSD).

The objective of the Transport Pricing Policy is to manage travel demand by pricing transport, including parking, efficiently and equitably. The Transport Pricing Policy will consider how to:

- a) include appropriate criteria for the determination of parking fees;
- b) require explicit consideration of these criteria in recommending changes to parking fees;
- c) use demand and revenue data to help inform the determination of parking fees.

### **Recommendation 5**

ESDD should review and document its management of parking demand surveys and in so doing:

- a) outline the processes used for undertaking surveys and spot checks;
- b) define the frequency and timing of surveys;
- c) guide how information from demand surveys is shared with other directorates, in particular Territory and Municipal Services Directorate; and
- d) ensure that information on short term, long term and disability parking demand is separately collected.

**Government response:** Agreed.

The progressive introduction of new smart ticketing machines from 2014 will improve data collection on parking demand and revenue.

ESDD will, with oversight by the PCG, establish an approach to the process for surveys and spot checks, frequency and timing, and how this information is disseminated to directorates.

Parking surveys will continue to be undertaken by ESDD to survey parking spaces not covered by ticketing machines, such as privately provided off-street spaces, tenant spaces and on-street parking spaces. Future surveys will ensure that the matters raised by the recommendation are fully addressed.

### **Recommendation 6**

The Territory and Municipal Services Directorate should:

- a) develop an administrative procedure to guide how it will achieve the Transport for Canberra Plan objective of prioritising short stay parking allocations over long stay parking allocations; and
- b) review the disability parking allocations and, if necessary, develop an administrative procedure to guide the implementation of disability parking spaces, in accordance with the Government Parking and Vehicular Access General Code.

**Government response:** Agreed.

TAMSD will develop and document administrative procedures on the prioritisation of short stay over long stay parking allocations and disability parking allocations. TAMSD will work towards achieving a minimum of 3% of spaces provided in both new and established publicly owned car parks. The initial priority will be the City and the town centres followed by group and local centres over time.

### **Recommendation 7**

The Justice and Community Safety Directorate should review the allocation of disability permits to members of the ACT community.

**Government response:** Agreed.

The Government will review the system for issuing parking permits for people with disabilities, noting that the disability parking permit scheme follows a national approach to the issue.

### **Recommendation 8**

The Justice and Community Safety Directorate should develop a robust data capture process for ticket machine fault complaints and repair information, which includes regular reconciliation of the source data to improve the completeness and integrity of reported information.

**Government response:** Agreed.

The Government supports this recommendation, noting that the proposed replacement of existing parking meter and parking ticket machine technology will assist with source data capture and analysis. This functionality (essentially a 'back to base' reporting capability) will be factored into tender assessment for the replacement of the pay parking equipment.

### **Recommendation 9**

The Economic Development Directorate, when developing parking arrangements with private sector entities, should:

- a) base arrangements on actual revenue and car park use, rather than estimated revenue and car park use; and
- b) evaluate the results of all future parking arrangements with private sector entities and determine whether revenue predictions have been realised.

**Government response:** Agreed.

To the extent possible, data on car park usage and revenue will form the basis of future assessments and evaluations.

### **Recommendation 10**

The Justice and Community Safety Directorate should:

- a) review the sanctions for non-payment of fines in accordance with the Road Transport (General) Act 1999; and
- b) develop and implement a process to recover revenue from interstate and diplomatic fines.

**Government response:** Agreed in part.

In relation to Recommendation 10(a), the Auditor-General's report notes that 6,454 ACT resident client identification numbers with infringement debts did not have a corresponding sanction on a driver's licence or vehicle registration. The report suggests that enforcement action has not taken place with respect to members of the community. It also notes that in some instances, a statutory declaration may have been received nominating an individual residing in the ACT or elsewhere without an ACT licence or registration, which could impair enforcement action.

There are many reasons why enforcement action does not occur, including:

- a reminder notice may have been "returned to sender", in which case the sanction will not be imposed due to lack of knowledge of the licensee;
- notices may be on hold pending court action or review; and
- the infringement may have been issued to a corporate registered vehicle, with no individual licensee.

Sanctions for payments of fines are administered in accordance with the *Road Transport (General) Act 1999*.

It is worth noting that the accumulated debt relating to non-collection of fines represents amounts accrued over a period of 23 years from 1989, when the Territory became a self-governing entity. It is not the amount attributable to the year in which the audit took place (2011-12). The debt accrued during 2011-12 was \$634,000, which is 2.6% of revenue received during that time from Parking Operations.

### **Recommendation 11**

The Justice and Community Safety Directorate should:

- a) map the number and location of all parking bays that are being patrolled by its Parking Inspectors (including known parking spaces and parking spaces subject to Traffic Control Devices forms);
- b) analyse and identify the optimum number of Parking Inspectors required to provide adequate coverage in the ACT (this may be affected by Recommendation 12);

- c) improve the training of Parking Inspectors by including modules in their training on topics such as conflict resolution, detection of forged disability permits and how to effectively work with the police; and
- d) develop a formal risk-based plan to guide the activities of Parking Inspectors e.g. patrol areas, rosters.

**Government response:        Agreed in part.**

In relation to Recommendation 11(a), it is not possible to identify an exact number of parking spaces enforced by Parking Inspectors. This is because in on-street areas where no bays are marked, the number of vehicles which can be parked varies with the size and mix of vehicles on any given day and time. This does not mean that there is no coordination of parking inspections.

The figure of 62,000 car spaces in the Auditor-General's report relates to parking spaces in the major centres excluding off-street and on-street ticket machine bays. This figure also includes tenant parking, rather than publicly available parking only. The estimate is that there are around 40,000 publicly available time-zoned or free parking spaces (excluding pay parking spaces) in total in the major centres. These are subject to enforcement action by Parking Operations staff.

There are many tens of thousands of off-street spaces in group centres (other than Kingston, Manuka and Dickson where there is pay parking), local centres, industrial areas and in residential streets for which Parking Operations staff have an enforcement role.

An important function of routine patrols is to ensure that vehicles are not inappropriately parked on streets. This includes patrolling areas where no parking is allowed, and areas that are loading zones. This is an important road safety and traffic function undertaken by Parking Operations.

To facilitate this important function, Parking Operations uses maps of patrol areas, which identify streets to be patrolled, rather than having detailed maps of car park locations. The patrol maps identify car parks included in the patrol area and identify and note the location of ticket machines.

It is not clear how mapping the location of individual car parking spaces (on and off street), together with loading zones, taxi ranks and no parking areas would enhance the work of Parking Operations.

Parking Operations routinely patrol areas of the Parliamentary Zone at the invitation of the NCA. It is expected that this may change once the NCA introduces pay parking into the Parliamentary Zone, Barton, Russell and other areas for which it is responsible. The NCA is expected to establish its own enforcement body.

The Auditor-General's report notes that there is no documented risk based approach to guide the activities of parking inspectors. It also notes that there are no risk assessments or risk management plans that support Parking Inspector rosters.



While those projects will be progressed in the near future, the finding could lead to an inference that there is no planning of rosters or coverage. If that is what is inferred, then it is not correct. Standard operating procedures exist that establish locations of routine daily patrols, responding to complaints and patrolling areas such as schools.

However, Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) have been prepared to detail parking inspector patrols and responses to complaints and requests. While these SOPs have been developed over a number of years by experienced parking inspectors, there is no documented risk-based approach to guide the activities of parking inspectors.

Parking inspectors are provided with de-escalation training prior to being permitted to conduct daily duties. This includes ways to resolve conflict and what to do if assaulted.

### **Recommendation 12**

The Chief Minister and Treasury Directorate should, in cooperation with the Environment and Sustainable Development Directorate and the Justice and Community Safety Directorate (via the Transport for Canberra Inter-Directorate Committee), continue to work to:

- a) identify smart car parking payment technology options which have the capacity for:
  - accepting coins and notes, credit cards and electronic payment methods including consideration of use of MyWay cards (in accordance with the Strategic Parking Framework in the Transport for Canberra Plan);
  - providing an increased level of management information, including information on the use of parking facilities and statistics that assist in monitoring the performance of the machines and meters;
  - incorporating enforcement technology to support efficient compliance processes and improve the safety of Parking Inspectors; and
- b) advise the ACT Government on whether or not smart parking technology should replace existing parking meters and ticket machines, and if this is to occur what kind of technology should be used.

**Government's response: Agreed - this will be progressed with planned replacement of pay and display machines.**

The Chief Minister and Treasury Directorate, in co-operation with TAMSD, ESDD and JACSD, have commenced work on the process for the acquisition of new parking ticket machines in the Territory progressively from 2014.

A request for tender will be released shortly outlining the specifications required. This technology will allow 'back to base' reporting functionality for improved data management to assist in future planning and allow for a range of payment options, including a pay by phone option.

It is noted that, as part of the 2013-14 Budget, the Commonwealth has decided to implement pay parking in the Parliamentary Triangle and other areas for which the NCA is responsible. The ACT Government is working with the NCA to facilitate a consistent approach to the market.