

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **Introduction of License Plate Recognition (LPR) Technology – Bathurst Regional Council Mobile Parking Patrol**

Bathurst Regional Council Rangers have used a vehicle equipped with a camera and computer to monitor parking restrictions within the Bathurst Regional Council area since February 2014.

#### **Why has Council introduced this new system?**

As part of its 2013 Bathurst CBD Car Parking Strategy, Council reviewed its parking enforcement activities. A number of submissions to the strategy from businesses and local shoppers recommended improvements to inconsistent parking zones around the CBD. As a result, Council made a determination to update the existing foot patrols to the new Licence Plate Recognition Technology which, with more consistent parking zones, would allow more efficient monitoring of all restricted parking zones. Council currently has responsibility for monitoring 2260 on street car spaces in the CBD and almost 2000 off street car parking spaces.

#### **What is Licence Plate Recognition (LPR) and how does it work?**

A camera and computer are fitted to a vehicle marked Bathurst Regional Council Mobile Parking Patrol driven by a Council parking ranger. A second parking ranger operates the computer inside the vehicle. As the vehicle passes stationary vehicles parked in restricted parking zones, a photograph is taken of the license plates of the parked vehicles. The exact time, date and location of the parked vehicles are recorded on a computer. The Mobile Parking Patrol vehicle will patrol the area until the parking zone time has expired. The LPR system automatically compares the multiple images taken on patrols. The photographic evidence will determine if a car has parked over the allocated parking time.

It is estimated around 1000 to 1200 vehicles per hour could be monitored by this technology, which is significantly higher than the number of vehicles able to be monitored on foot.

#### **What are the benefits of using Licence Plate Recognition (LPR) over existing foot patrols?**

- Improved management of parking enforcement
- Increased turnover of parking spaces
- Ability to provide patrols in all weather conditions resulting in a fairer system of enforcement
- Better use of staff resources
- Safer working conditions for parking rangers in particular in regards to Work Health and Safety conditions.

### **Why do Council staff patrol car parks and streets?**

Parking patrols ensure drivers comply with relevant parking restrictions throughout the city. These laws are in place to allow pedestrian and vehicle movements to be completed with safety not just in time restricted areas but also in, mobility parking scheme (MPS or “disabled”) parking areas, bus zones, no stopping and loading zones. Efficient parking patrols allow members of the community better access to shops, businesses services around the city.

### **What areas will the mobile parking patrol be monitoring?**

Most restricted parking areas around the city are monitored by Council parking rangers. This includes on-street and shopping centre car parks and other parking stations. A map of these locations and parking time zones has been developed for our website.

### **What does the new Licence Plate Technology look like?**

The LPR system is fitted to a Hyundai Sante Fe. The car will be marked with the Bathurst Regional Council logo and a sign “Mobile Parking Patrol.” The camera is fixed to the left side of the vehicle and the technology requires two staff to operate it effectively – one driver and one system operator. The Mobile Parking Patrol car is easily noticeable when it is in the area.

### **How will I know if I have been detected?**

You will not be aware if your vehicle has been photographed by the Mobile Parking Patrol vehicle. No chalk marks or other indicators are left on the vehicle or the tyres.

### **What happens if I think my vehicle has been detected?**

It is the driver’s responsibility to ensure a vehicle they are driving does not exceed the prescribed time limit or is not parked in a restricted area without appropriate authority e.g. mobility parking scheme (MPS) permit, loading zones etc. If your vehicle is detected as having exceeded the prescribed time limit or parked in a restricted area by the Mobile Parking Patrol, you will receive a paper infringement notice on the windscreen of your vehicle as is current practice. The difference is it will be a printed ticket, not handwritten. An infringement notice may be posted to the registered owner of the vehicle if an offence has been detected and the vehicle leaves the area before an infringement notice is able to be issued by a parking ranger.

### **Where will the parking rangers park to place infringement notices on vehicles?**

In most cases, because of the increased vehicle movements that result from the introduction of the LPR system, parking rangers will park in an available car space near the area where they will issue the infringement notice. They will not be double parking to issue parking fines. If a car park is not available nearby, they are allowed to pull into a loading zone briefly to allow a parking ranger to alight from the vehicle. The mobile parking patrol

vehicle will then move on while the parking ranger is delivering the infringement notice to a vehicle.

**If I move my vehicle and park in the same place how will the LPR detect I have moved?**

It is anticipated that motorists will come and go from restricted parking areas. The LPR has a GPS and sophisticated photographic equipment that will most likely detect if a vehicle has been moved. However if you do move your vehicle from a restricted area within the prescribed time and return within the same timeframe it is not advisable to park exactly in the same place you just moved from.

**Do I have a right of appeal against a penalty?**

A motorist's right to appeal a penalty issued by the LPR system is the same as other penalty notices. Appeals or representations should be sent directly to the NSW Office of State Debt Recovery at the address stated on the penalty as is the current practice.

**Will the Mobile Parking Patrol be able to see my mobility permit?**

Yes, as part of the detection for alleged parking offences, parking rangers will be checking for mobility permits on parked vehicles. Should a mobility permit be lawfully affixed to the front window and displayed on the vehicle then no infringement notice would be issued.

**How much does this new LPR technology cost Council?**

As part of its 2013/14 Delivery Plan, Council voted to include a \$100,000 allocation for the purchase of the new Licence Plate Recognition system. It is expected that this cost will be recovered in 2-3 years through the portion of income received from parking fines. Any surplus funds will then be returned to Council reserves for future improvements to parking or other infrastructure projects. Council is required to pay approximately \$20.00 per infringement notice issued as a processing fee to the NSW Office of State Revenue.

**Who sets the parking fine fees?**

The amount for parking fines is set by the NSW Government not by Bathurst Regional Council. Penalty Infringement Notices are standard across NSW.

**Will parking time zones be changing as a result of the LPR introduction?**

There will be some changes to parking zones around the CBD that will come into effect in January and early February 2014 which have been approved by the Traffic Committee. These changes will all be finalised prior to the introduction of the new LPR system. The changes will see for the most part this will see an increase in parking time on streets and allow for more consistent time zones in sections of the street. A map of these zones and locations will be included on our website once the changes are completed.