

Making A Space

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GROUP



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ALL
SUBMISSIONS
WELCOME

TV MEDIA BEAT UPS - AGAIN

Recently, the media got on its high horse about Parking Officers and their quote: "bag of dirty tricks". And once again it was a couple of poorly researched and twisted beat-ups by Channels 7 and 9 in a start to the new years ratings war. The innocent victims of this war between "A Current Affair" and "Today Tonight" were the Parking Officers out there to enforce Government legislation in a fair and unbiased manner, to the best of their ability.

On "Today Tonight" the vision accompanying the claim of a Parking Officer "hiding in the bushes for unsuspecting motorists" was clearly that of an Officer battling road side vegetation to place a PIN on an offending vehicle.

Other claims of Parking Officers parking illegally, showed either a total lack of research, or a deliberate attempt to tarnish the work ethics of the Officers. A simple telephone call to just about any Council would have resulted in the quoting of Rule 307 of the AAR's exempting Officers in the course of their duties. All the footage shown was of Officers performing their jobs in a safe and legislatively appropriate manner.

The footage of an Officer having a smoke did not bother to suggest that perhaps he was actually on his break! Even if he wasn't, they didn't bother to show footage of the thousands of office workers who regularly slip out of the office for a sly smoke to feed their habits. And what about camera operators and journalists who sneak a sly five minutes for a cigarette?

Many Councils around the country are trying hard to raise a positive profile of Parking Officers, who are providing a valuable service to businesses, and the community, in policing illegal parking which inhibits kerbside turnover, causes traffic problems or creates unnecessary risks. They are also the eyes, ears and face of the Council with customer contacts such as dog control, tourist information, special events assistance, reporting dangerous situations in the public realm, and numerous other services.

Programmes such as those seen recently, have the potential to do significant harm to the efforts of those Councils. Fortunately, the public's memory of such shows seems to be short lived in most cases, but the cumulative effect of repeated distortions could make it harder to combat.

Therefore, Councils need to be proactive and take the producers to task when these shows display an unfair bias. Constant re-butts just might slow them down a bit. [The Editor](#)

From the Editors Desk

I would like to say a big thank you to all those readers who have sent in bits and pieces over the last couple of weeks. It is much appreciated. I have actually had to add a couple of pages to this issue, and I still have a few things up my sleeve for the next issue - but, don't let that stop you from sending in more!!!!

I have vented my spleen about the television media on the front page. It was just so much rubbish - and I will leave it at that. Perhaps you have an opinion on the programmes you would like to send me?

On page 4, we have an interesting article written by a repeat offender, giving her experiences working off her fines. Don't know about you but it makes me wonder.

There are a couple of funny stories from WA on page 10, followed by a more serious subject from Perth on page 11, National Qualifications.

There are plenty of other tid-bits, so I hope you enjoy the read.

10TH ANPSG WORKSHOP

I can confirm that the 10th ANPSG Workshop will be held in *Hobart*, at the *Grand Chancellor Hotel*, from the *22nd to the 24th of November 2006*. It is anticipated that the cost per head will be under \$600.00 for twin share accommodation, all meals, workshop and dinner.

So, now is the time to budget for this worthwhile exchange of information. More details as they come to hand.

9TH ANPSG WORKSHOP FEEDBACK



On the Parking Workshop:

It was a very valuable couple of days. I think it would have been more valuable had more time been allowed for discussion of some matters touched on during the workshop (instead of one of two of those guest speakers!).

The Q & A forum of previous years was something of value which I missed this year. However I did pick up many good ideas; now I have to take some time to sort them out and do something with them!

Brett Christensen
Greater Dandenong, Vic

HAVE YOU ALREADY INVENTED THE WHEEL?

As I have said in a previous editorial, why re-invent the wheel? There are fellow municipal employees out there looking for answers to common problems, and that others may have already encountered and overcome.

This column will be the vehicle for questions, and hopefully answers, to some of these problems. Feel free to send me your problems for publication and see what sort of responses we get.

Robert Wilson of Darebin Council has started the ball rolling - who can help him out with ideas? Please forward suggestions to me so that I can publish them for others who may also benefit.

In Victoria, the 'Worksafe' authority are running an audit here at Darebin Council regarding 'Occupational Violence'. One of the glaring issues recognised was the absence of some type of 'Duress' alarm that the officers could use to indicate that they were in trouble, and at the same time pin pointing their location, so assistance could be administered as soon as possible.

I was wondering if any of our members have embraced any type of technology to assist with officer safety.

Thanks,
Robert Wilson
Team Leader Darebin Traffic Services
Web: www.darebin.vic.gov.au

NIMBY MADNESS

Last year during the heat of November, I received a telephone call from one of our residents, in the suburb of Unley, to complain about a snake in her back yard. She demanded that I send one of our Rangers around to remove it.

I explained to her that our Rangers are not trained in the removal of snakes, and that she should call one of the professional snake catchers. She then wanted me to call them, so I explained they would charge her a fee for removal. At this, she started to complain about paying rates, but then she suddenly stopped and said "Wait a minute, its gone into my neighbours house, its OK now", and hung up without giving any particulars.

Now that's a real case of Not In My Back Yard!!

Michael Joseph
Unley City Council, SA

TICKETS TO TROUBLE

On any given day in Victoria nearly 2000 people are doing community work to pay off their accumulated parking fines, in some cases up to \$20,000 worth. *Daniella Miletic* knows how it feels.

Each year, disheartened consumers donate box loads of stomach strengthening exercise contraptions to the Salvation Army centre in St Kilda. It's easy to spend a shift at the Salvos wondering how many people bought the exercise machinery while watching Bert Newton's *Good Morning Australia*. Did they get up, fumble for their credit cards and dial the number straight away? Did they really believe they would use them?

During a shift, these thoughts are easier to turn over than others - such as, "Why am I at the Salvos in the first place?" There are three kinds of workers at the Salvos in St Kilda - paid employees, volunteers and people on community-based orders. People on community-based orders are known as CBOs, and I was one of them for a good chunk of 2004. For 248 hours I was working off my car fines, more than \$10,000 worth.

Every year, about \$100 million worth of parking fines are issued in Victoria, of which \$25 million worth are not paid. David Dale, head of Community Correctional Services Victoria, estimates that each day there are about 1700 people across the state working off their parking fines. "There are cases of people paying off \$10,000 to \$20,000. What that tends to be is an aggregate of lots and lots of fines over a period of time. But the average amount is \$700 to \$1000," he says.

Most CBOs working off their fines wipe off \$20 an hour. Many opt for op-shop or outdoor work. "I guess what people tend to like is outdoors things, especially rail trails - everyone loves that - and restoration projects that come along," Dale says. "Another one people like is horse riding for the disabled. People feel good about that."

Sandra, who was working off about \$2000 worth of fines, is a single mum aspiring to be a fashion designer. She chose the Salvos in St Kilda because she believed that branch had the biggest intake of clothes. More than 90 per cent of the items on the racks she and I hung and counted were female clothing. More than you would expect still had the price tag on them.

David worked in construction during the week and at the Salvos on the weekends to pay off a similar amount. It was his second bout of community work, as he had accumulated more fines since he was last there, but was adamant he wouldn't "give a single cent" to the government. He has two young daughters and missed spending time with them on the weekends, but only had three months to work it off. He liked to pick out clothes and toys for them in the children's section.

Most of us couldn't afford to pay off our fines. None of us really wanted to be there.

TICKETS TO TROUBLE CONT.

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When people ask me how I got so deeply into debt, I don't really know how to answer. I bought a bomb of a car at 18 and gradually began accumulating parking fines. Most were for exceeding time limits, a few were for parking in clearways. I never parked in disabled car spots. When I didn't pay, those fines incurred additional charges and within a year I had so many I couldn't afford to pay them off.

After you have created that initial pool of debt, the parking tickets left on the windscreen become little pieces of paper that you throw away. For me, they had lost their power to evoke a response; they weren't translating into money any more. As to why I didn't pay them in the first place, I guess it was a combination of being broke, resistance to filling council coffers, and laziness.

When Claire the sheriff first visited me she said that my fines had been handed over to the Sheriff's Department and told me how much I owed - at that point I had no idea. She also inspected my car, but decided it was not worth seizing. Claire told me my options included paying them off, going to jail, or doing community work. She said the community work wouldn't be recorded against my name and that I didn't have to go to court.

Although I sometimes felt ashamed of my predicament, I took comfort in the fact that I was not alone. I was in a clothes boutique one day when the shop assistant got a parking ticket. She went on to tell me she had collected upwards of \$20,000 worth of fines in her 20s. In one of her old apartments, she had almost covered one of the walls in her bedroom with parking tickets. She had since moved so many times the authorities had stopped sending her letters.

Anita Harris, a senior sociology lecturer at Monash University, says the phenomenon is part of the wider issue she terms "incidental" debt. It is, she says, a social issue rather than a personal one. "There are lots of people out there who rack up all this debt and just don't know quite how it's happened, and then the consequences are really quite enormous." Harris believes that there is a wider perception in society that it is "OK" to be in debt.

"We live in a debt culture where it is seen as acceptable to have debt. In that situation, why would you pay off something when it seems meaningless to you? And I think there is a strong perception that things like parking fines are just revenue-raising for councils; that paying them isn't seriously making a contribution to your community, but also perhaps a feeling that debt doesn't catch up with you and that there won't be consequences. It just becomes a piece of paper. It doesn't mean anything."

She does believe, however, that the issue of parking fines is not only a concern for young people. "I think it's a whole society thing. I think it's the culture we are encouraged to participate in. But the difference is the consequences," she says.

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TICKETS TO TROUBLE CONT.

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"I mean that sort of behaviour in an older person might be seen as forgetful, or that they are a bit of a duffer. But in a young person they are really seen as irresponsible."

Back at the Salvos, Sandra and I would often hide from people we knew who would come into the shop. Other times, I would help a customer who would pat me on the shoulder and say: "God bless you. How long have you been a volunteer?" I'd smile, tell them I wasn't and get back to putting away clothes.

Perceptions and responses to parking fine defaulters vary. Some view us as slack, self-obsessed parking space hoggers. Others are sympathetic. Some people are so surprised they have difficulty taking it in.

When I started researching this piece, I called Monash University's media department. I told an employee there about the story, and she asked who my case study was. I told her it would be a first-person piece.

"You're kidding," she said.

"No, I'm not."

"You're kidding!"

This continued.



Photo: Andrew De La Rue

It's interesting to watch people's responses. I had friends who thought it funny. Others were relieved I was finally doing something about it. One friend had given me a book about Karyn Bosnak, a shopaholic who, drowning in \$20,000 of credit card debt, asked strangers for money online. Her website asked for donations to help her get out of debt. After four months of internet panhandling and selling her possessions on eBay, her debt was gone. I visited the website one day, and found that Bosnak had received emails from people all over the world, either confessing their own debt-ridden lives or criticising hers.

Theodore Chia has been a parking inspector for five years. Sometimes he notices repeat offenders. "When I first started, that happened a lot. The same cars moved to a different illegal spot each day," he says. "I thought getting one (ticket) would be enough, but when you get two or three or four, you would be thinking something's off."

It's usually something different about the car, rather than the car itself, that will trigger some recognition for Chia. "I can never remember the plates, but sometimes you look inside and you sort of recognise the objects in there, what's hanging inside of them, or if they have a broken tail-light or something like that." Chia smiles as he remembers two particular cars that used to display their vast array of tickets on the dashboard. "I would be looking at it, thinking, it is like this guy is collecting stamps. He's collecting parking tickets."

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TICKETS TO TROUBLE CONT.

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Chia says his initial thoughts of people who collect parking tickets were that "they weren't with the program". But, he says, the more years that go by the more he believes that "there are some people out there that just don't pay their parking fines. Some people get their tickets and say: 'Thank you. I will add that to my collection.'"

It was the allure of a job outdoors that first attracted Chia to the job - a job that sees him abused regularly. "Some of the officers will experience abuse on a daily basis. I don't think it happens as often to myself because I am more approachable. I try to calm them down," he says.

The worst experience was when someone tried to choke him, he says. "He grabbed me by the throat and pushed me and shoved me over the car. I was shaken, but I know that I can't physically retaliate otherwise I will get myself into bigger trouble."



Photo: Estelle Grunberg

Does he ever get booked himself? "I have gotten more parking tickets after I started this job than before," Chia says. "I sort of began to understand how the system works and because I have more knowledge of it, sometimes I gamble. I just take the chance and I say, 'I am going to rush to the ATM, or I am just going to rush around the corner, they are not going to come in three minutes.' If there is a 5 per cent chance, I take that chance."

This confession makes me smile. I can definitely say that my time as a CBO won't stop me from getting another parking fine. I have already received two since I finished. Yes, and I paid them off. But I can't quite express the relief that comes with freeing myself of the burden of debt that I carried for too many years. It's a feeling worth remembering.

So too is the time I spent at the Salvos. I learnt to love going through people's boxes. One box I opened had more than 20 sculptures and figurines of dragons. Paintings of dragons, dragon books and dragon fortune cards filled another. I set up a dragon display in the shop, next to the *World Book Encyclopedia* set being sold for \$25.

I loved the old Greek man who came into the store on Saturdays. His wife had kicked him out and burnt his clothes, he told me. Everything he was wearing, except his underpants, he'd bought in the store. On the day I first met him he was distressed because there was nothing he liked. "Nutt-ting," he said.

Some of the names in this story have been changed.

RANGER INVENTION LIFTS WORKPLACE SAFETY

The launch of Innovation Week at the City of Gosnells led to some terrific suggestions from staff to improve performance and customer service. The winning idea from Rangers Services is raising public awareness of the Ranger's role in the community, demonstrating concern for health and safety and actively showing the City is 'doggone' friendly when it comes to concern for animal welfare. The mobile dog catching unit, developed by the City of Gosnells, could benefit Local Governments across Australia. Backed by the City, Rangers Services has created a tray housing transport module that can be fitted to any standard issue Council utility.

The tray, which houses two removable wheeled cages, is fitted with a hydraulic tail lift that raises and lowers cages containing impounded dogs. This simple but ingenious invention reduces the risk of Rangers incurring work place injuries as a result of lifting large dogs. There is also less physical handling time, which can reduce stress on the handler and dog. The transport module for captured dogs is fully mobile, interchangeable between Council vehicles, easy to use and safer for animals.

The prototype was designed by Rangers' Coordinator, Malcolm Bennett. A Ranger Services' employee for more than 20 years, Malcolm said the idea came about as part of the City's continuous improvement strategy, as well as a need to improve workplace safety for rangers handling stray dogs, particularly large or aggressive dogs.

Workers compensation reports indicate that the majority of workers compensation injuries in Local Government are related to strains and sprains - predominantly to the back.

The Ranger Transport Module can transport several small dogs or up to four larger dogs at once. It comes with wheel attachments and a hydraulic tailgate, enabling rangers to safely move dogs on and off a vehicle. The unit's hydraulic lift, which can be installed on most tray back vehicles, significantly reduces the risk of injury to rangers lifting large dogs into traditional transport cages. The mobile units minimise the need for catching poles, as they provide rangers access to difficult terrain or hard to reach areas, such as the side of a property, shopping centres and other public places.

After capture, the units can be wheeled safely into a kennel for the dog's release. A standard tray back vehicle can accommodate two removable cages, plus modules for transporting smaller animals and equipment storage.



Testing the new Ranger Transport Module... this simple idea has revolutionised the task of capturing runaway pets for Ranger Nick Simpecas (pictured) and his City of Gosnells' Rangers Services team mates.

From Local Government Focus web site - <http://www.loc-gov-focus.aus.net/index.shtml>

AWARDS FOR SERVICE

The **Town of Victoria Park's** Ranger Services team was awarded a High Commendation by the Customer Service Council of Western Australia at an awards night held in December. Situated immediately south of the City of Perth, Victoria Park is bordered by the Cities of Perth, South Perth, Belmont and Canning. Covering an area of 18 square kilometres, the Town has a population of just over 28,000 people.



(l-r) Allan Lantzke, Allan Bancroft, Russel Fishwick (Manager Administration & Ranger Services), Jason Moynihan, Matt Bull and Jenni Brown.

The award recognises the high quality of customer service provided by the Ranger Services team to the community of Victoria Park. Victoria Park CEO, John Bonker, said the award was testament to the dedication and strong principles adopted by members of the Ranger Services team and a reflection of the organisation's high service levels.

"Our entire organisation has a commitment to always doing the right thing, ethically, morally, legally and professionally," he said. "We know our community and value their views and involvement in the work we do on a daily basis. By keeping one step ahead of emerging trends, needs and opportunities and providing very professional service, the Town's staff have established themselves as leaders in the provision of quality customer service. "Victoria Park is very proud to receive this award, and we will continue to enhance service levels across the organisation for the benefit of our customers."

Adelaide City Council (ACC) recently won the Local Government Association of South Australia's 2005 Service Quality Leadership Award - Best Customer Service Team. The Customer Service Centre has been recognised for its high quality and efficient customer service by the Service Quality Network for Local Government and the Benchmarking Australia Quality Assurance Program. Adelaide City Council CEO, Mal Hammerling, said that staff have been recognised for their commitment to deliver quality customer service.

"The ACC provides excellent customer service to anyone contacting the Council," the CEO said. "This national recognition proves we are achieving this aim. "The ACC Customer Service staff continually look for ways to achieve greater service productivity." Team Leaders, Katherine Hann and Debbie Shuttleworth, head up Council's multi skilled Customer Service Team which handles between 750 and 900 phone calls per day, in addition to numerous front counter inquiries. Customer Service Officers (19 EFT) operate the very busy call centre, rotating between face to face front counter service and handling telephone contacts. "This ensures staff have a full range of skills in meeting our customer needs," Katherine Hann said. "We are committed to ongoing training, but the most important reason for our success is a culture of ensuring that we have fun, that we rely on each other and work as a team."

Adelaide's Customer Service staff use an innovative Call Centre Management System, TeleVantage, which assists them to improve quality customer service through call coaching, effectively managing Call Centre queues and improving statistical performance reporting. "Its windows based, Excel reporting system is particularly useful for identifying any training requirements," Katherine Hann said.

The system also enables calls to be recorded for training purposes which is beneficial in equipping staff to handle the occasional difficult caller. TeleVantage, developed by CPS Technology Group, provides a range of accurate and current reports enabling staff to measure their performance, increase productivity, improve service levels and enhance customer relations. Adelaide's Customer Service Team is now in the running for the Australian Teleservices Association Award to be announced in February 2006.



Customer service is tops at Adelaide

STORIES FROM LAST CENTURY

Now this is the all time classic story. There was a parkie working at Perth who was once a British professional rugby player, tough and built like brick dunnie. The parkie was on the corner of Adelaide Tce near the old Taxation office doing clearways.

This young guy was sitting in his car on the clearway waiting for his girlfriend to leave work. The parkie goes over and tells him it's a clearway and he cannot wait there. The bloke says he is waiting for his girlfriend. The parkie say, "Sorry you will have to move". The guy gets really angry and roars off around the block. He comes back and stops on the clearway but the parkie is still there and tells him to move again. The young guy goes ballistic and roars off around the block again.

The parkie thinks this is good so he stays put, and in the mean time a police officer that the parkie knows turns up for a chat. The parkie tells the cop all about this young guy going nuts because he keeps getting moved off the clearway while waiting for his girlfriend.

Next thing he comes around the corner in his car and starts abusing the parkie for still being there. The young guy gets out of his car and is going mad. The parkie says to the cop, "See what I mean about this guy".

The cop starts dressing this guy down and got him calmed down. The cop has his back to the parkie as he's talking to the driver, the parkie looks over the cop's shoulder at the driver and mouths with his lips but no voice, "Wanker"! The driver explodes going feral and the cop starts to warn him about his behaviour.

The parkie says to the cop, "See what I mean". The guy is starting to quieten down again so the parkie looks over his shoulder again and puts his hand up to his head and does the "dickhead" sign at the driver.

The driver explodes again, so the cop tells him to get in his car and leave before he gets arrested which he does. After he is gone the parkie says to the cop, "Don't worry about him. We meet people like him every day".

The hit squad were down at the Entertainment Centre on Wellington St one day checking the car park. As they were standing around the van, a smart arse guy came walking by and said, "You guys are such wankers. See my car over there with the German Shepherd in it? Well if you go near it my dog will tear you a new orifice", and off he went with a smug look on his face.

Is that right thought the parkies, so they all went over to check for a valid voucher. They knew what would happen. The dog went absolutely ballistic at all these parkies, barking and scratching holes in the seats, dash and window tinting.

As the parkies left the car, they said to each other, "Who's the wanker now"?

WA NATIONAL QUALIFICATION PROJECT

My name is Gordon Urquhart and I am the Field Coordinator of Compliance Services Parking with the City of Perth. I recently presented a report at the 9th Annual Parking and Traffic Workshop on the City of Perth National Qualification Project and, for those of you who were not fortunate to be able to attend, I have been asked to provide you with some information on how the National Qualification Project has been achieved the WA way here in the City of Perth. Firstly some background.....

Background

The Australian National Training Authority (ANTA) sponsored three separate action learning projects in the parking and traffic industry throughout 1995 to 1997. Those projects took place in Brisbane, Melbourne and Hobart City Councils. The projects were aimed at clarifying the language and literacy training needs and appropriate training responses for this group of employees.

The increased emphasis on general skills was identified as having emerged from a shift to customer service, multi-skilling, team approaches to work, and for some organisations... a competitive tendering environment. The project teams also appealed to the importance of national standards and career mobility for parking and traffic employees.

Hobart City Council's project team made a decision to draw on the experience of the other teams and states. They provided an opportunity for representatives from each state to attend a forum in Hobart in 1997 to explore a way forward at the national level. The initial forums provided a framework and priority projects for the national group. The forums also established that a national effort needed to be inclusive of the individual needs and wants of each state organisation.

In 1999, at a National Conference sponsored by Perth City Council, the project was endorsed and a National Steering Group was established which had a responsibility to oversee the implementation of the National Qualification Project.

The City of Perth National Qualification Project

The City of Perth National Qualification Project is about recognising the existing skills and qualifications which Parking and Information Officers possess and also having these skills recognised nationally as a portable qualification.

Nationally recognised and portable qualifications are important to both employees and to the organisation as they provide evidence of employees' knowledge and skills. All organisations are striving for higher quality and more relevant training experiences in the workplace and career pathways for their employees.

WA NATIONAL QUALIFICATION PROJECT

The Compliance Services unit investigated the different methods of application by which this qualification could be achieved. These ranged from:

- 1) Becoming a Registered Training Organisation (RTO) or,
- 2) Contracting the training of staff to an outside organisation or,
- 3) Coordinating the assessment and training in conjunction with an RTO.

The third of these options was selected as the most suitable. This decision was made based on the feedback obtained from Adelaide, Canberra, Hobart and Melbourne City Councils who had previously embarked on the National Qualification Project.

The Certificate IV in Local Government (Governance and Administration) was selected by the City of Perth as the preferred level of qualification for Parking and Information Officers. This is a qualification which is recognised throughout Australia and is a portable qualification across the country.

In May 2003 the City enlisted the services of Sharleen Jordan, who is the Co-ordinator of Local Government Studies, at C. Y. O'Connor College of TAFE, Northam, Western Australia to assist staff with their progression towards this qualification. Sharleen has over 10 years of extensive experience in this field and was able to coordinate the City's requirements, including the ability to assess staff on their existing Recognised Current Competencies (RCC). She has also worked with the City of Fremantle, Shire of Swan and many other Local Authorities and State Government Departments.

The Certificate IV in Local Government (Governance and Administration) was accredited by the Australian National Training Authority (ANTA) and consisted of a minimum of 15 units of which the six Local Government Common Core Units were a mandatory requirement. The remaining nine units were drawn from a number of options but must include a minimum of four of the Local Government Common Elective Units.

The 15 units in the City of Perth Certificate IV in Local Government (Governance and Administration) have been detailed below.

LGA 40100 Certificate IV Local Government (Governance and Administration)

comprised of the following units

LGACORE102A	Follow Defined Occupational Health & Safety (OHS) Policies and Procedures
LGACORE104A	Work Effectively in the Local Government Context
LGACORE105A	Work with Others in Local Government
LGACOM406A	Investigate Alleged Breaches of Legislation and Prepare Documentation
LGACOM404A	Establish Cooperative Arrangements with Other Organisations
LGACOM408A	Represent Council at Legal Proceedings

WA NATIONAL QUALIFICATION PROJECT

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LGAEHRR303A	Monitor Areas under Council Jurisdiction
LGAGOVA413A	Promote and Maintain Positive Employee Relations
BSXFMI402A	Provide Leadership in the Workplace
BSXFMI404A	Participate in, Lead and Facilitate Work Teams
BSXFMI405A	Manage Operations to Achieve Planned Outcomes
BSXFMI411A	Contribute to the Development of a Workplace Learning Environment
SRXEME003A	Respond to Emergency Situations
	Municipal Law Enforcement A
	Municipal Law Enforcement B

The units that were selected, to create this particular qualification, were developed by using the Australian National Training Authority guidelines and after full consultation with representatives from management, staff and the union.

One of the benefits of enrolling for this qualification was the provision for the Recognition of Current Competencies or as it is known RCC which means that if you already have the skills, then they can be formally recognised without actually having to study.

The City estimated that 18-20 officers would enrol in the project that was initially offered to all existing employees on a voluntary basis (enrolment later became an obligatory requirement for all new employees). However the Parking and Information Officers embraced this project with such a degree of enthusiasm that currently there are 31 of the City's Parking and Information Officers enrolled in the project.

Twenty three of these officers recently graduated and are proud of their achievement in having gained a Certificate IV in Local Government (Governance and Administration). Two of these officers have taken the time to put pen to paper and share their story with you of how it was to be part of the National Qualification Project and their personal insights are include later in this article.

It is also my understanding that, we in the City of Perth Compliance Services Parking, have qualified our Parking and Information Officers to a higher Certificate level than any other local authority in either Australia or New Zealand. In doing so we have displayed that it is not only practical and feasible but it is also affordable (The cost of this project to date, for the 31 officers over the two year period, is only \$26,000) to achieve this level of qualification and I would encourage other local authorities to investigate this for their staff.

The opportunity to become involved in this National Qualification Project was also offered to the staff in the Ranger/Security, Surveillance and Parking Administration sections of Compliance Services of the City of Perth and the staff in these areas have recently commenced progressing towards this qualification.

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WA NATIONAL QUALIFICATION PROJECT

How did it work?

There were various methods of application which were used whilst progressing through the units of the Certificate IV. These included recognising existing current competencies (RCC) by Workplace Assessments and also attending Group Workshops (including Municipal Law A & B). The skills learnt in these workshops were then assessed by Individual Assessments and/or Simulated Work Environments.

It may be best if I were to let Tess Milner and Tony Holmes, City of Perth Parking and Information Officers, provide their versions of how this part of the process was for them.

National Qualification Project (My Story by Tony Holmes)

When I was first asked about the course my reaction was "After 20 years in the job what could I possibly get out of it?" The feeling was "This had to be some sort of a joke or punishment for past misdeeds". "What could they possibly teach me that I did not already know?"

My curiosity got the better of me, so I nominated to enter the course and see what it was all about, thinking I would just sail through and just have an entertaining time.

When we first started I thought it was fairly basic and going to be fairly boring. A lot of it was dealing with work practices. (Out on the street with Sharleen Jordan) observing what we did. How we did it. How we handled customers in different situations and our overall grasp of the job.

As we progressed we dealt with our understanding of By-Laws, customer relations, strategies for dealing with difficult people, a lot of which I was already using, not necessarily understanding the philosophy of it. We dealt with job planning, team working, management of jobs, costing, time factor, using resources available etc.

We then came to changes in By-Laws and Acts which brought our knowledge of the laws we work with up to date. This included general knowledge - court procedures which provided a better understanding of the court system and how it works.

I have found I have gained a lot from the experience and it has given me a whole new understanding of the job and what it is we are actually doing. The course has gone through a lot of phases, from intense and boring to enjoyable and fun.



Tony receiving his certificate from Peter Harding (C Y O'Connor TAFE), with Garry Dunne and Dennis Stevens (City of Perth)

WA NATIONAL QUALIFICATION PROJECT

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It was first put to me in July 2005 to make a comment on the course which I have now completed and I should be eating humble pie for my opening remarks. This course has given me a much wider understanding of our role in the City of Perth organisation and what is required of us. The tasks and procedures we performed have been verbalized. There is a lot more to the job than just issuing parking infringements. We have quite a range of complex tasks and issues to deal with.

Sharleen Jordan has done an excellent job putting the course together. It has been informative, creative, humorous and fun to participate. It brought people together in a team situation where we had to work together to plan, implement and carry out tasks to an end result.

I have now been with the City of Perth for 23 $\frac{1}{2}$ years. They have been an excellent employer and I have thoroughly enjoyed my time with them. This was written while of sound mind and under no pressure or duress.

National Qualification Project (My Story by Tess Milner)

In July 2003 my colleagues and I were approached about embarking on a venture involving studying, concentration and excessive use of brain power over a two year period.

Initially I must admit I was dubious about the whole thing, as my days of studying and hitting the books into the wee hours of the morning, are well and truly behind me. Although, once the course outline had been explained my attitude began to change and I became excited about this new challenge and was looking forward to its commencement.

The first couple of units were fairly straight forward and quite tedious, just walking around my beat with Sharleen Jordan, showing her how to infringe a vehicle. The next few units included: responding to emergency situations, investigating alleged breaches of legislation, occupational health and safety and monitoring areas under council jurisdiction to name but a few.

These proved to be a bit more exciting, but the highlight for me was Municipal Law A and B. Law A was hard work and involved a lot of information crammed into a short space of time with tests every hour or so - very much a brain drain for everyone!

Law B was more "hands on" learning how to prepare a court brief with everyone playing a character involved in the incident. We all worked as a team and pooled information culminating in a positive outcome for all. We learned a lot and had great fun along the way!



Tess receiving her certificate from Peter Harding (C Y O'Connor TAFE), with Garry Dunne and Dennis Stevens (City of Perth)

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PRESENTED BY THE
TEAM AT ADELAIDE
CITY COUNCIL

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NEEDED!

All contributions
gratefully accepted.

Long, short, or tall, it
doesn't matter.
Photos are great!

Come on put pen to
paper, or fingers to
the keyboard, and
send me something
about your Council,
something funny, un-
usual, or even outra-
geous!

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I have recently completed all units and our graduation ceremony was held in November. I've become good friends with our trainer Sharleen, and have even considered further study in the future with a view to participating in the development of the multi-skilled officer. My last two years certainly weren't wasted. I'm now more qualified than ever and am looking forward to the next challenge in my career.

Graduation November 2005

The City of Perth Parking and Information Officers are pictured below with their Certificates at the recent Graduation Ceremony which was held in Council House in November 2005.



**Sharleen Jordan of C Y O'Connor TAFE (seated, front row)
with a proud group of graduate Officers.**

I would like to thank you for taking the time to read this article and for giving me this opportunity to provide you with some information on a subject that I have been very proud to have been involved with.

*Gordon Urquart
Field Coordinator
Compliance Services, Parking
City of Perth*