

## Frequently Asked Questions about the 2021-2022 parking fees

City of Hobart recently made some changes to parking fees across the CBD. These new charges came into effect from 1 July 2021.

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This FAQ provides answers to a range of frequently asked questions about the City of Hobart's 2021-2022 parking fees.

### **Have you recently increased parking fees?**

Yes. We have been completely open about that.

City of Hobart has endorsed new fees for parking from 1 July.

The changes continue to offer affordable parking while supporting turnover, funding for ongoing parking infrastructure maintenance and the delivery of services to the community.

### **Is Hobart City council price gouging by increasing parking fees?**

Absolutely not. We only increase prices to meet the increased cost of delivering the many services which the people of Hobart rightly expect. This is done as part of the overall Council budget process.

There were no price increase for any city parking during the whole of 2020-21.

The most recent rises are reasonable and still make Hobart one of the most affordable capital cities in Australia for CBD parking.

City of Hobart is also operating in a competitive market for parking. It is just one of many parking providers in the city and drivers can choose to use the services of other providers if they wish to.

### **Are you using parking to boost your coffers because of the impact of COVID-19?**

We've been very open about the serious impact that COVID-19 has had on our budget, and therefore the funding available to provide services to our community.

We are not alone in experiencing a significant impact on our bottom line because of this pandemic.

Parking income is one part of overall Council income and therefore increasing parking charges is part of a bigger effort to respond to the unprecedented financial impacts of COVID-19.

The budgeted difference for parking income between 2019-20 and 2021-22 is less than 3% of the overall Council budget – or less than 1.5% per year.

### **Are our parking prices as high as other capital cities?**

No. Even after the most recent rises Hobart is still one of the most affordable capital cities in Australia for CBD parking.

Take Melbourne as an example. In our multistorey car parks the first hour is free, while Melbourne Council's car parks have no free parking at all.

And while four hours in one of our CBD car park costs just \$8, in Melbourne it would set you back between \$14 and \$55.

### **Why is metered parking so expensive?**

The City operates 2487 metered and unmetered bays.

Almost one in five of those – 440 – are completely free.

The remaining 2047 paid parking spaces have an average cost of just \$3.61 per hour.

In total 60% of all paid parking bays are priced between just \$2 and \$3 per hour or part thereof.

Only 40%, 828 bays, are charged at the maximum tariff.

This year, the maximum hourly rate for paid meters increased from \$3.50 to \$5.00/hour.

#### **Has the cost of all metered parking gone up?**

No. It's a mixture. Some have stayed the same. Some have gone down. And some have gone up.

The price of parking at 153 bays remains the same. No change.

A further 105 bays have had a price drop of 50 cents per hour.

More than 1500 parking bays have incurred a price increase of between 50 cents and \$1 per hour, based on modelling of occupancy, turnover and usage patterns.

Premium CBD short-stay parking spaces have increased from \$4 per hour to \$5 per hour. These are spots in high demand where turnover is important so that more people can find a parking spot when they need one.

#### **How do you decide how much to charge at each meter?**

Prior to the pricing changes, council officers conducted a review of parking usage patterns and identified high and low-demand areas across the city.

Prices were then set based on detailed bay-by-bay analysis of supply and demand.

This is to encourage turnover and equitable usage so that more people can find a parking spot when and where they need one.

#### **Why have you increased the charges for off-street car parks?**

The population in Hobart swells considerably every day. All parking, whether Council

parking or one of the many private operators, is a user pays service model designed to meet the demands of the city.

In some cases there has been no increase. In others, the increase is minimal.

The first hour of parking in our off-street carparks remains completely free.

And the cost of 4 hours parking has not increased at all.

Only the second and third hour parking fees increased.

Staying for 2 hours now costs \$4.00, a \$2.00 increase, while 3 hours parking has also increased by just \$2.00 to \$6.00.

The maximum fee for day parking is fixed at \$23 and the maximum fee for 24-hour parking is \$31 which includes the overnight fee.

Sunday parking will also be free for the first hour and then cost just \$2 for each hour after that up to a maximum of \$10.

#### **How is off-street parking different?**

The City's off-street car parking services provide longer time at a lower cost for visitors to our city than short-stay on-street parking bays as a way to encourage visitors into our CBD throughout the week.

Off-street car parking services encourage a longer stay in the CBD and ensure those people coming into the CBD are not financially disadvantaged.

The car parks operate at optimal occupancy (between 85-95%) on weekdays for the majority of the business day, typically from 10am – 4:30pm.

#### **What about the elderly?**

City of Hobart's pensioner voucher scheme makes parking cheaper for all older people in our city.

The scheme offers a book of parking vouchers to eligible Pension Card holders.

These vouchers entitle Pension Card holders to four hours free parking in any of our multistorey carparks on any one day per week. At the expiration of the four free hours normal rates apply.

City of Hobart is committed to helping our older people to access the CBD, which is why we issue in excess of \$1million of free parking vouchers to pensioners every year.

### **Are your parking charges discouraging people from staying in the CBD?**

No. Even after the most recent rises Hobart is still one of the most affordable capital cities in Australia for CBD parking.

It's also worth remembering that on-street parking is designed for high-turnover short-duration stays.

The reason for that is so that more people can find a parking spot more often, when and where they need one.

Pricing is purposefully designed to keep one or two spaces vacant in any one block at any one time to avoid congestion, queuing, tailbacks and people driving around and around trying to find a spot.

People wanting to stay longer in the CBD can use our off-street multi-story carparks.

The City of Hobart provides more than 2500 parking bays in off-street parking in and around the CBD.

This is cheaper than on-street parking and includes free parking for the first 60 minutes.

### **What has happened to parking in North Hobart?**

After significant consultation with residents and retailers, Council began metered parking in the main Elizabeth Street strip of North

Hobart but only in peak lunch and evening periods (11am-2pm and 5pm-8pm).

It remains free, though time controlled, at all other times.

Council has also removed the fees in Condell Place and Lefroy Street carparks from 6pm and made them free to support customers and traders.

The side streets in North Hobart between Federal Street and Burnett Street have had line-marking and sensors installed.

As with the meters, these traffic controls were only implemented after significant consultation with residents and retailers.

They have been warmly received by many residents in the area.

Since the policy changes in North Hobart, both precinct occupancy and compliance have increased, meaning more access for more people and fewer infringements.

Parking on the high street is more readily available, even for short stays to pick up a paper or a take away in peak times – 10 minutes costing just 37c using the EasyPark app.

### **Why are you charging so much for parking when public transport is not a good alternative?**

Firstly even after the most recent rises, Hobart is still one of the most affordable capital cities in Australia for CBD parking.

(And we aren't charging so much!) see section Why is Parking So Expensive.

Secondly, the City is always changing and we recognise that parking is just one piece of the puzzle. Therefore we are actively supporting other operators in the city to improve public transport through access to roadways in peak times while also exploring other modes of active transport for those living within an

active commutable distance to the city or suburban destinations.

### **Are your parking charges hurting local businesses?**

No. Even after the most recent rises Hobart is still one of the most affordable capital cities in Australia for CBD parking.

The operational parking policies put in place are designed to support and increase retailers and traders while also providing equitable access to all services and reduce traffic congestion.

Council is focused on maintaining and building vibrant CBD and suburban precincts.

### **Why have you reduced the amount of time that parking is free in the multistorey carparks?**

We continue to offer free parking in our carparks, unlike other capital cities in Australia.

From 1 July 2021 each car park offers free parking for the first hour.

This year Council returned to the “first hour free” offer that was first introduced in the mid-1990s.

The free period was increased from 60 to 90 minutes around 2009 in response to the unique challenges presented by the Myer fire in 2007 and the Global Financial Crisis of 2008.

### **Are parking rates increasing by as much as 40 per cent?**

Some individual spaces have. The majority have not. Many have gone down. And many have remained the same.

The overall budgeted difference for parking income between 2019-20 and 2021-22 is less than 3% of the overall Council budget – or less than 1.5% per year.

### **Will this make people go to other places like Moonah, Glenorchy, Eastlands, and Kingborough?**

Hobart is our capital city. It is a great place to visit, to shop and to do business.

People will always want to come into our beautiful city.

We are one of many operators to provide ample parking to encourage people to do that.

And we charge fees on a user pays basis that are reasonable, affordable and help us maintain both parking facilities and many other Council services.

### **Are there cheaper alternatives to on-street parking?**

Yes. We provide more than 2500 parking bays in off-street parking in and around the CBD.

This is cheaper than on-street parking and includes free parking for the first 60 minutes.

### **Why does the City of Hobart have parking traffic controls?**

We’re required to have parking controls under State legislation.

Without controls, drivers would take CBD parking spots every morning and stay all day.

That would prevent other people from parking in the CBD and cause considerably more congestion and other social and amenity problems.

### **How does the City of Hobart use parking charges?**

Parking charges fund ongoing parking infrastructure maintenance and the delivery of parking services to the community.

As a source of revenue for the City, the funding is also used to provide the high-quality services that the people of Hobart expect, like good roads, accessible bushland,

enjoyable parks, emergency management and essential waste and stormwater services.

#### **Why do the prices increase each year?**

They don't. There were no price increase for any city parking during the whole of 2020-21.

When parking charges do rise it's because the cost of delivering services has increased. For many years pricing was capped at just 10c and 20c. This was unsustainable.

That might be increasing insurance rates, new legislated safety requirements, staff costs and the higher price of materials.

#### **Are the City's Parking Officers encouraged to book vehicles?**

Absolutely not.

Our Parking and Information Officers are not incentivised to book vehicles, nor are they sanctioned for not booking vehicles.

There are no quotas, no targets, and no benchmarks for Parking and Information Officers.

#### **Why are Parking Officers so hard line?**

They are not.

In fact our Parking and Information Officers are primarily encouraged to provide information and guidance to motorists

And that is reflected in the fact that parking compliance has increased in Hobart by almost 3% over the past 12-months.

#### **Do Parking Officers give fines as soon as the meter expires.**

No. They always offer a grace time of several minutes for all overstay and non-payment before issuing an infringement notice. This is built into the system in order to remove bias.

The grace time ensures that there is sufficient time to make a payment and in recognition

that, now and again, we all get held up for a little while before returning to our vehicle.

More than 2.5 million free minutes were provided in the last 12-months (the difference between what was paid and how long customers stayed).

#### **What happens if I return to my vehicle in the grace time?**

If a motorist returns to their vehicle during the grace time, our Officers provide guidance on parking restrictions and signage in preference to issuing an infringement, unless a clear breach has occurred, such as drivers ignoring requests to move on or continuing to sit in their car to eat lunch or have a cigarette or making a phone call.

Our records show that the shortest time between a meter expiring and an infringement being issued is 3 minutes. Where it is found an infringement is incorrectly issued, they are withdrawn on request.

The average time that vehicle overstays before a ticket is issued in Hobart is more than 26 minutes.

Council provided over 2.5 million minutes of grace in the last 12-months.

#### **Why did you remove early bird parking from the multistorey carparks?**

The early bird parking system was unfair. City of Hobart was effectively subsidising all-day parking for fewer than 300 drivers.

Removing early bird parking has effectively created the equivalent of over 2,000 additional spaces in the CBD for more drivers to use which is a far more equitable system.

People wanting to use early bird parking can get that service from several private providers.