

## **Smart parking trial confirmed for Manuka shopping precinct in early 2016**

The Canberra Times September 23, 2015 [Henry Belot](#)

ACT Chief Minister Andrew Barr has confirmed the Manuka shopping precinct will host a one year trial of smart parking technology in 2016.

The trial, which is likely to result in more fines for motorists and improved convenience, will see the installation of car park sensors, real-time traffic signs, and smart phone applications.

A free Wifi network will be introduced in the precinct before the smart parking trial begins, although a launch date has not been announced by the government.

Mr Barr said the Manuka shopping precinct had been chosen because it provided a mix of on- and off-street parking as well as paid and time limited parking.

Retailers and local businesses will be consulted on the scale and design of the trial in coming weeks with the trial set to begin in the first quarter of 2016.

"Smart parking will use innovative technology to save drivers time, reduce traffic delays and provide a better overall user experience during the trial in Manuka," Mr Barr said.

"Drivers will be able to use a smart phone app, as well as intelligent, real-time traffic signs, to be guided to an available parking space.

"Real-time information on parking congestion will be captured through in-ground sensors and relayed to the app and signs."

Mr Barr said procurement had already begun and a successful vendor for the trial would be announced in coming months.

The smart parking trial was due to begin in 2015 although the government were forced to wait until the feasibility of a free Wifi network in the precinct could be determined.

The technology will be designed to reduce road congestion and save time, while reducing the cost of municipal parking enforcement and increasing the issuing of fines.

Inner South Community Council president Gary Kent said residents and traders in the area would welcome the trial if it improved parking and congestion.

"It would be good to see the benefits of intelligent parking come to Canberra, including signs alerting people to have many spaces are available in the multi-storey facilities," Mr Kent said.

Mr Kent said he hoped the trial would not reduce the number of short-terms parks available in the precinct or become a revenue raising exercise.

"The arrival of a free Wifi network in Manuka is fantastic news and I know the government has been talking with the Manuka Business Association and that's very important as they are the people on the ground," he said.

A study found smart-parking technology in San Francisco reduced the time that drivers spent searching for a park by 43 per cent.

Once the success of the Manuka trial has been judged, the government will consider expanding smart parking as part of a five-year implementation plan linking it to free Wifi networks.

The trial may also see the introduction of dynamic pricing, where parking is more expensive at peak times and cheaper during off-peak times.

Technology would be integrated with the existing Duncan MX parking meters in use around Canberra.

"One of the priorities for my government is a comprehensive reform of transport in Canberra – from light rail and buses to better roads and active travel," Mr Barr said.

"Smart parking is an example of our commitment to making Canberra an easier place to get around and reducing congestion in our town centre."

Property Council of Australia ACT executive director Catherine Carter has also welcomed the smart parking trial in Canberra.

"While we must embrace public transport, we must also provide options for people who want to drive into our city and town centres," she said.

"With our low population and wide geographic spread, car parking is an important quality of life issue in Canberra."