

## **What is Automatic Number Plate Recognition?**

Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) is a technology used to automatically read motor vehicle number plates by use of optical character recognition (OCR). The data obtained is referred to as Number Plate Information (NPI). NPI can come from a fixed ANPR camera or a mobile ANPR camera. ANPR cameras will capture NPI for every vehicle that has a number plate that can be read, logging a date and time stamp.

Police own some fixed and mobile ANPR cameras. Our main source of NPI is from fixed cameras owned by a third-party. Police have access to two approved platform providers that allow us to quickly request number plate information from ANPR cameras that are owned by third parties such as retailers, petrol stations and other government agencies.

ANPR databases store the images captured by the cameras as well as the text from the license plate.

## **Why do Police use ANPR?**

ANPR is an important tool used to support crime prevention and resolution in New Zealand and overseas. This technology supports Police to prevent and address crime and harm so everybody in our communities can feel safe and be safe.

Police uses ANPR technology and the number plate information it provides for a range of enforcement, staff safety and public safety purposes:

Use of retained (i.e. historical) reviewable data for investigative, evidentiary and intelligence purposes for the investigation of crime or harm.

Use of real-time (or as near real time as possible) data which provides alerts for crime prevention, staff safety, public safety, and immediate response activities.

## **How long has this technology been used by Police in New Zealand?**

New Zealand Police have used ANPR capability for more than fifteen years with its use expanding and evolving over that time.

## **What was the purpose of the audit?**

The audit sought to verify that authorised Police staff are accessing externally provided ANPR data in appropriate ways.

## **What did the audit find?**

The audit involved examining and cross referencing over 350,000 ANPR queries from 2018 to 2022.

The audit confirmed that the vast majority of Police are using this tool within Police guidelines.

The audit also included some opportunities to better prevent misuse and errors, as well as making it easier to detect if action outside of Police policy happens in the future.

**What are the next step Police is taking following this audit?**

The audit has provided valuable insights into the use of the ANPR platforms to better prevent misuse and errors in use, as well as making it easier to detect if action outside of Police policy happens in the future.

Progress is already being made with representatives from the platform providers on ways to further strengthen these controls, such as reinforcing expectations around responsible usage.

Findings from this audit have been proactively shared with the Office of the Privacy Commissioner and the IPCA, as well as a number of other stakeholders.

Repeat audits of Police staff use of ANPR platforms will be included in Police's programme of internal audit and assurance work.