

Public Accounts Committee

ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES FOR DECISION-MAKING FOR THE DELIVERY OF
MAJOR INFRASTRUCTURE, CONTRACTING OF PUBLIC SERVICES AND/OR THE
PRIVATISATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS IN NSW

Public hearing: 11 June 2024

Witness: Assistant Commissioner Stacey Maloney APM
Commander, Technology and Communication Services Command, NSW Police Force

Responses to Questions taken on notice

QUESTION 1**Page 10 of Transcript**

The CHAIR: Do you have any information from when the CCEP business case was being put together and the user requirements were being negotiated with each of the ESOs, including the NSW Police Force? Do you have any insight as to whether it was understood by the NSW Telco Authority that the NSW Police Force may not sign onto this completely, and that very high standards in terms of the capability of the network were required before you would do so, including the encryption capability?

STACEY MALONEY: I will take that on notice, just to give you the clarity for that question, other than to say the position has always been same, if not better. But I do believe that there were requirements given to the TA. However, as I said, I would like to take that one on notice to have some proper clarity to provide to the Committee.

ANSWER

In 2016, the NSW Police Force (NSWPF) provided the NSW Telco Authority (NSWTA) with a complete set of requirements to migrate to the (then) Government Radio Network (GRN). Implicit in this, and as conveyed in subsequent engagements with the NSWTA, is the NSWPF expectation that these requirements be satisfied prior to the NSWPF migration to the GRN. These requirements would ensure the delivery of a GRN (PSN) that was of equivalent standard to the NSW Police Radio Network and in turn of a standard to provide for the safety of NSWPF officers and the wider public it serves. The NSWPF has not been seeking to migrate to the GRN (PSN) until its completion.

The NSWPF specialist units have been using the GRN (PSN) since 2014 in a limited capacity and only following an assessment of the network limitations. The NSWPF has been vesting sites to the NSWTA since 2019. The NSWPF notes no timeframe to migrate to the GRN is imposed by the *Government Telecommunications Act 2018*. The NSWPF understands that voice encryption is available through the PSN. The NSWPF position remains that the PSN, once fully delivered, would meet the requirements provided in 2016.

QUESTION 2**Page 11 of Transcript**

The CHAIR: So your understanding is there was a condition as part of the legislative requirements that, for the police at least, the capability of the PSN had to be the same if not better? Otherwise there wouldn't be a requirement to migrate across.

STACEY MALONEY: I'm not aware, so I'd have to take that one on notice—if there was a condition expressly made. But certainly it was the NSW Police Force position that unless it was same if not better there wouldn't be a migration.

ANSWER

The NSWPF is not aware of any condition or legislative requirement that the PSN had to be the same, if not better than the NSW Police Radio Network. The NSWPF will not risk the safety of officers or the public through the migration to a network that does not yet meet requirements. As stated, the NSWPF position remains that the PSN, once fully delivered, would meet the requirements provided in 2016.

QUESTION 3

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Dr DAVID SALIBA: So in 2016 everyone came to the table with respect to this program. Eight years later I'd imagine that there would've been synchronisation meetings between the different stakeholders to talk about the product scope, its delivery aspects, issues pertaining to whatever may be brought about from it all. Did that happen or not? Do you feel that the New South Wales police were properly engaged over the past eight years pertaining to the scope and user requirements?

STACEY MALONEY: I'd have to take that one on notice, given I didn't commence in this role until 2021, but, as I said, my understanding was—and I will take that on notice—that there were requirements provided by the New South Wales police to the Telco Authority. I have not seen those personally—so outside of 2021.

ANSWER

In 2016, the NSWPF provided the NSWTA with a complete set of requirements to migrate to the (then) GRN. The NSWPF has been represented at the CCEP Steering Committee since its inception. The NSWPF has maintained active participation on various NSWTA chaired committees around CCEP including:

- NSWTA Board
- Program Steering Committee
- Program Control Group
- Service Delivery Group

The NSWPF has been heavily engaged with the NSWTA over its requirements since 2022 in the proposal for migration to the PSN in the Greater Sydney Area.

QUESTION 4

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Ms JENNY LEONG: My final question goes to the legislative requirement about everyone moving on. I think you said the NSW Police Force position was it needs to be the same, if not better. I'm happy for you to take it on notice, but I'm just really unclear: I don't think the NSW Police Force has the ability to go against a legislative requirement. I'm just really curious to know where that position was formed and how that sits with the legislation. It would be great if you could let us know how or where that decision was made as a NSW Police Force decision, and how you would see that interacting with the legislative requirements. That would be really helpful.

STACEY MALONEY: Yes, I'm happy to take that on notice. But, as I said, I suppose government took on board our concerns around safety to the public and community, and our workforce as well, if it was not a network that was at the same level as ours.

ANSWER

In 2016, the NSWPF provided the NSWTA with a complete set of requirements to migrate to the (then) GRN. Implicit in this, and as conveyed in subsequent engagements with the NSWTA, is the NSWPF expectation that these requirements be satisfied prior to the NSWPF migration to the GRN. These requirements would ensure the delivery of a GRN (PSN) that was of equivalent standard to the NSW Police Radio Network and in turn of a standard to provide for the safety of NSWPF officers and the wider public it serves. The NSWPF has not been seeking to migrate to the GRN (PSN) until its completion.

The NSWPF specialist units have been using the GRN (PSN) since 2014 in a limited capacity and only following an assessment of the network limitations. The NSWPF notes no timeframe to migrate to the GRN is imposed by the *Government Telecommunications Act 2018*.

QUESTION 5

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Mr CLAYTON BARR: Assistant Commissioner, you've used language about "us building" and "our towers". I asked Mr Rogers a similar question to this: Do you own and construct towers that specifically belong to New South Wales police?

STACEY MALONEY: Yes, we did. But, obviously, we're not doing that anymore, given the legislation requirements. We have vested about 100, and I can get that exact number, to TA. So obviously looking at ensuring that this infrastructure is not going to waste—and certainly, where TA wanted to have those towers vested across, it's not wastage. They're still fully functional. I think they really only needed to just build huts next to those towers. But, outside of that, we have obviously stopped building any more infrastructure that would be owned by New South Wales police in terms of cooperating and collaborating with TA and complying with that legislative requirement.

Mr CLAYTON BARR: Of the 590 sites, do you have any idea how many were owned and constructed by New South Wales police, as opposed to leasing space on someone else's tower?

STACEY MALONEY: I'd have to take that on notice.

ANSWER

In 2013, the NSWPF owned 244 of the then 591 sites it occupied. Since 2019, it has been divesting sites to the NSWTA.

QUESTION 6

Mr CLAYTON BARR: We are led to believe that, back in 2015-16 when the original business cases were being put together, the different service agencies agreed that that original \$400 million, which would only cover 45 per cent of land and 96 per cent of population—we are led to believe that the ESOs jumped on board and supported that and agreed to that. I know it's before your time, but it just strikes me that only 45 per cent land coverage for New South Wales police would not be where you want to be or where you already were.

STACEY MALONEY: I'd have to take that on notice but I would say that, from a wireless network group perspective, they have always taken the position that our network was going to be significantly better than what was going to be delivered in the PSN.

ANSWER

The estimation of 45% was provided by the NSWTA. In 2016, the NSW Police Radio network consisted of 590 radio sites. The NSWPF understands that at the same time, the GRN consisted of 131 sites - the NSWTA will be able to confirm this.

At the time the NSWTA developed the CCEP Business Case, it estimated that the NSWPF land coverage was 40%. As of 2022, the NSW Police Radio Network coverage was 55.52%. The NSWPF strives for radio network coverage for all populated areas, road corridors, indoor coverage and places of mass gathering.

QUESTION 7

Mr CLAYTON BARR: Do you have any idea, with your 590 sites, what percentage of the land of New South Wales gets coverage on your network?

STACEY MALONEY: We do have that. I'd have to take that on notice. I don't have that with me today.

ANSWER

As of 2022, the NSW Police Radio Network coverage was 55.52%. The NSWPF strives for radio network coverage for all populated areas, road corridors, indoor coverage and places of mass gathering.

QUESTION 8

Dr DAVID SALIBA: I have some follow-on questions. In terms of these dual systems, I'd imagine that's not the best case—say in 2027 there's no or minimal migration. Has there been any assessment pertaining to cost or ongoing costs relating to that? You probably wouldn't know that now, but just on notice—unless you know it.

STACEY MALONEY: On notice, yes. It's certainly something that we are looking at because, at the moment, it's subscription based. If we looked at, for example—and the NPP had three recommendations put forward, and I'll offer that to the Committee, of course. But certainly one of the models would be that subscription basis, which would require our specialist commands that are currently using the network at that \$1.6M at the moment, and then we would have to consider the Greater Sydney area cost for the use of the PSN, and then the maintenance and ongoing operations for the rest of the State using our police radio network. So it would come at a cost. However, I'll take that on notice to ensure—in terms of a comparison to what would be required for a core user fee, that's what we would compare it to.

ANSWER

The NSW Police Radio Network operating costs for FY 2023/24 were \$15.287 million. When the NSWPF becomes a PSN core user, it will pay an annual flat rate for PSN access for all NSWPF radios and dispatch channels/areas. The NSWPF understands this fee to commence at around \$40 million per year although the funding model for the Greater Sydney Area proposal and timings for the introduction of any fee are to be confirmed. An NPP submission regarding funding is currently with the NSW Treasury. Other future projected Police Radio Network costs include the Grafton Network Refresh (2025-2027, approximately \$8 million) and the Western Region Network Refresh (2027–2029, approximately \$21 million).