

**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**

**NSW SES Responses to Supplementary Questions**

**Time delay**

1. How does NSW State Emergency Service monitor and report on the impacts of the Critical Communications Enhancement Program (CCEP)?

**NSW SES Response:** NSW SES has representatives on CCEP Working Groups and the CCEP Steering Committee. Representatives receive CCEP meeting papers and have access to dash boards and relevant information to progress, risks, issues and out of session decisions/ feedback. Deputy Commissioners, Assistant Commissioners and relevant stakeholders are provided with regular updates with program impacts raised at Strategic Leadership Team meetings and the Stay Safe & Keep Operational Steering Committee. During NSW SES led operational events regular situation reports on network performance, impacts etc. are received from the NSW Telco Authority (TA) and a Liaison Officer from TA will form part of the State Command Centre team providing information on the Public Safety Network (PSN) and managing communications between agencies. NSW SES also provides feedback via the half yearly iNSW Gate Reviews.

**ESO costs**

2. How has the delivery of the CCEP reduced NSW State Emergency Service's costs to maintain its own communications system?

**NSW SES Response:** NSW SES has seen a small reduction in operating costs of Land Mobile Radio (LMR) networks as the agency moves to the PSN in some areas. The agency still maintains LMR networks in areas such as Murray and Murrumbidgee where the PSN is yet to expand into. It is anticipated that by the end of the CCEP program NSW SES will have migrated off all LMR networks with lease and maintenance costs of those networks ceasing.

3. Since the start of the CCEP, have your agency's core user charges increased? If so, are these increases matched by enhanced service?

**NSW SES Response:** NSW SES has seen an increase in year on year fees relating to the growth in coverage as new sites are added to the PSN. NSW SES has experienced enhanced operational communications where this growth aligns with key operational risk areas and/or black spots in radio network coverage, for example in the Northern Rivers area when the service has moved from legacy networks to the PSN.

Future access cost predictions are contingent on NSW Police migrating to the PSN and becoming an ESO CORE access user, alongside NSW SES, NSW RFS, FRNSW & Ambulance NSW.

**Benefits realisation**

4. How does NSW State Emergency Service measure and report on whether the proposed benefits of the CCEP have been realised?

**NSW SES Response:** NSW SES tracks the CCEP progress through working groups and the steering committee. Local volunteer units test and provide feedback on coverage and the

quality of radio communications which assist in developing the program schedule and the areas where the agency moves across to the PSN. Any financial savings resulting from migration will not be realised until Agency Private Mobile Radio (PMR) site decommission works have been completed.

5. What is NSW State Emergency Service's view on the public reporting on the benefits realisation for the CCEP?

**NSW SES Response:** NSW SES supports public reporting on the benefits realisation for the CCEP as it demonstrates the Government's commitment to providing a fit-for task Mission Critical Communications Network that provides coverage across the state, particularly as the PSN expands into regional and remote areas.

6. Is there anything that is not currently reported to the public or to NSW State Emergency Service, that NSW State Emergency Service think should be reported?

**NSW SES Response:** NSW SES believes current reporting is sufficient.

### **Authentication**

7. Page 6, of the Auditor-General's report to Parliament, Management of the Critical Communications Enhancement Program, noted that all ESOs required that the enhanced Public Safety Network should have the capability to authenticate terminals to prevent cloning of terminals. What risks or adverse outcomes could your operations face if unauthorised persons are able to clone terminals and access the Public Safety Network?

**NSW SES Response:** Authentication of terminals on the PSN is critical to network security and integrity. Without terminal authentication cloned devices can have unauthorised access to agency Talkgroups and may contribute to unpredicted site loading and traffic management issues.

All NSW SES Terminals are authenticated on the PSN and NSW SES requires that any agency utilising NSW SES Talkgroups (via an authorised Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)) must utilise device authentication to eliminate any potential Talkgroup misuse. Device authentication on the NSW PSN is essential for maintaining a secure, reliable, and compliant network infrastructure that supports Public Safety Operations effectively.

### **Governance arrangements**

8. Page 6, of the Auditor-General's report, noted that ESOs will decommission their own radio communication networks and migrate entirely to the PSN. The Committee understand that this means ESOs will depend entirely on the NSW Telco Authority to provide their primary mission critical communications.

**NSW SES Response:** To enable the NSW Government to realise the Whole of Government predicted savings from agency PSN consolidation, all NSW ESO's will need to shut down and decommission any incumbent PMR networks and exit from any "site hold" lease agreements between ESO's and Tower / site owners. The Committee is correct in its assumption that this will result in the ESO's being 100% reliant upon the NSW Telco Authority to deliver resilient and fit-for-task Mission Critical Communications Infrastructure.

Does NSW State Emergency Service have any concerns regarding governance arrangements after its radio networks are decommissioned and your agency completes its migration to the PSN?

**NSW SES Response:** NSW SES does not have any concerns with governance arrangements as the agency migrates to the PSN.

#### **Other**

9. The Committee understands there is a self-service portal linked to the CCEP project schedule database that allows stakeholders to access project data at any point in time. Does your agency interact with this portal and what has been your experience with it?

**NSW SES Response:** NSW SES Operational Communications subject matter experts have used the portal to substantiate Unit, Cluster and Zone migrations onto the PSN. Given the dynamic nature by which site build delays manifest and are subsequently mitigated, the portal allowed for real time state based assessment without the need for customised agency specific reports to be generated.

There were some initial access issues, but once resolved access to the Portal has been invaluable.

10. The Auditor-General made several recommendations to the NSW Telco Authority as outlined on page 8 of their report. Is NSW State Emergency Service satisfied that these recommendations are being addressed?

**NSW SES Response:** NSW SES is satisfied that NSW TA are implementing the Auditor-General's recommendations and agency representatives have the ability to raise any concerns through the various governance forums relating to the CCEP.