



Department of Justice

Secretary



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Judge Jennifer Coate
Victorian State Coroner
Level 11, 222 Exhibition Street
MELBOURNE VIC 3000


Dear Judge Coate

RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATIONS 2,3,6 AND 7 OF THE FINDINGS OF THE INQUEST INTO THE DEATH OF SHANE BENNETT

I refer to the letter from the Coroner's Registrar dated 23 March 2012 enclosing a copy of the findings of the Inquest into the death of Shane Bennett seeking a response to recommendations 2, 3, 6 and 7 of that report. Set out below are interim responses to recommendations 2, 3, 6, 7, 8 and 9 which are relevant to the Department of Justice.

Recommendation 2

Recommendation 2 relates to technological systems designed to provide accurate and timely recording of speeds undertaken by police vehicles, including when involved in pursuits. Implementation of recommendation 2 will not be without its challenges both in the long and short term.

Victoria is currently planning for future technology needs as highlighted in the Emergency Services Communications Strategic Framework (ESCSF) and supported and referenced by the Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission (VBRC).

It is Victoria's intention to continue the use of GPS capable devices in the field, such as is currently utilised through the Mobile Data Network (MDN) by Victoria Police. Victoria will continue to deploy systems of similar capabilities into the foreseeable future to ensure the business needs of its emergency services agencies are met.

Victoria recognises that mobile broadband has immense potential to improve public safety outcomes across Australia and will work collaboratively with the Commonwealth and other state and territory governments to seek access to sufficient bandwidth to allow this to occur. It will improve the

effectiveness of public safety agencies' day-to-day operations, and help the nation collectively respond to large scale emergencies. Issues relating to expanded access to sufficient bandwidth are under consideration by the Standing Council of Police and Emergency Management (a Ministerial Council).

However, I understand that this project will take approximately two years to be fully developed and at this time therefore, the Government is not in a position to provide a final response to the Coroner's recommendation. The Coroner's recommendation will be further considered once access to expanded bandwidth becomes available.

Victoria Police has indicated that as part of its MDN Program of Works:

- the frequency of automatic position reporting to ESTA dispatchers and Victoria Police's data feed will be increased; and
- access to spatial data through a Track Log Report capability via the MDN Performance Management System (PMS) and the MDN and CAD Patrol Activity Collation (MACPAC) Track Log reports will be made easier.

Victoria Police has also advised that several initiatives that will enhance technology used during police pursuits are under development and will be implemented subject to the availability of funds and appropriately skilled resources. These include:

- development of GPS mapping standards and processes for general use, investigation and evidence;
- GPS accuracy parameters;
- real time reporting/tactical pursuit tracking; and
- dead reckoning to improve GPS.

Recommendation 3

Victoria Police advises that further analysis of the funding requirements relating to this recommendation will be undertaken over the forthcoming year.

Recommendations 6, 7, 8 and 9

Recommendation 6 is consistent with recommendation 8 of findings of the Inquest into the death of Tyler Jordan Cassidy (the Cassidy Inquest), for which the Department of Justice is also responsible.

In March 2012, the Department wrote to you explaining that recommendation 8 of the Cassidy Inquest is under consideration with a response expected to be delivered by 30 September 2012. It is necessary to consult with Victoria Police, the Victorian Bar Council, the Office of Police Integrity and other relevant bodies to:

- consider models for the administration of an independent legal observer at the interview process with Victoria Police following a police related death;
- consider funding implications of such a model; and
- consider training requirements required by such a model.


The response provided to Recommendation 8 of the Cassidy Inquest will also include the response to Recommendation 6 of this Inquest.

Recommendations 7, 8 and 9

Recommendations 7, 8 and 9 build on and are contingent upon Recommendation 6. Accordingly, the Department will not be in a position to respond in relation to these recommendations prior to 30 September 2012.

If you require further information, the relevant departmental officer is John Frigo who can be contacted by telephone on 8684 1027.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a stylized 'P' followed by a long, sweeping horizontal line that ends in a small loop.

PENNY ARMYTAGE
Secretary