

29 November 2024

Senator Polley
Chair
Parliamentary Joint Committee
on Law Enforcement

Via email: le.committee@aph.gov.au

Dear Senator Polley

IDCARE's response to written questions on notice from the inquiry into the capability of law enforcement to respond to cybercrime on 14 November 2024

Thank you for the opportunity to attend the above inquiry to expand on our submission.

Please find below IDCARE's response to your questions in relation to the trial with law enforcement under the Cybercrime Capability Fund to support cybercrime victims that is coming to an end in January 2025 and the funding will not be renewed.

I'd like to correct the record as the funding will end on 10 February 2025. In addition, I'd like to mention that the Agreement refers to this engagement as a "pilot" not a "trial".

Question 1: Could you please provide further information about this trial?

Response:

In early 2022, with endorsement from the Australian Transnational Serious and Organised Crime Committee (ATSOCC), Victoria Police successfully obtained funding from the National Cybercrime Capability Fund (NCCF) on behalf of all Australian police agencies for:

- a. cybercrime victim support through IDCARE for victims who report online via ReportCyber and are referred by ReportCyber or who are referred directly by any Australian Police Agency.
- b. police access to IDCARE cybercrime intelligence reporting to better inform policing responses.
- c. evaluation research into the effectiveness of IDCARE services to reduce repeat cybercrime victimisation.

A Memorandum of Understanding between Victoria Police and the Attorney-General's Department (AGD) manages the funding from the NCCF. On 11 November 2022, a Service Agreement between IDCARE and Victoria Police was executed for that day to 10 February 2025; two years and three months from execution. Victoria Police manages the project on behalf of the Australian Police Agencies.

The trial was to support 49,725 victims during this period. To the end of Oct-2024, 40,653 Australians received case management victim support from IDCARE under this pilot. In the last year, 33,116 victims asked for IDCARE support when they submitted

their report to police using the ReportCyber platform, which reduced referral workload for police.

The services are provided digitally or by phone and include specialist case management and counselling services for victims of cybercrime, scams and identity crime. IDCARE has pioneered these services globally and continues to achieve satisfaction ratings from those engaged that surpass any other organisation in the response ecosystem. In many cases a community member's engagement with an IDCARE Case Manager is the only point in their journey where they receive specialised cybercrime and scam counselling, focused on the confidential and personalised delivery of practical, behavioural and technical support.

Under the Agreement IDCARE receives referrals from all law enforcement jurisdictions and has a direct feed from ReportCyber for those who wish to be contacted by IDCARE for assistance.

IDCARE also provides intelligence to all police agencies, that is relevant to them, including dark web reports; monthly insights reports; and profiles and alerts.

After 10 February 2025, when the current funding and contract ends, police will not be able to refer cybercrime victims to IDCARE for prioritised support. The referral functionality in ReportCyber and from the Australian Police agencies will be turned off. This is likely to impact around 3,000 community members who are victims of cybercrimes each month, reducing their response experience mostly to auto-generated acknowledgements from the Commonwealth of their reporting activities from ReportCyber.

Question 2: How was the trial evaluated, what feedback did you receive from cybercrime victims, and what outcomes did the trial achieve?

Response:

IDCARE's performance delivery under the contract has been managed and evaluated by Victoria Police and representatives from each jurisdiction under a contact management framework. That includes IDCARE's monthly performance reporting, performance meetings, reporting by Victoria Police to AGD's on project progress and expenditure for assurance and auditing purposes, and annual reporting to ATSOCC and AGD. Feedback is collected from the Australian Police Agencies and reported to the ATSOCC in annual reports, including on the usefulness, and impact on cybercrime outcomes as a result of access to the IDCARE victim support and intelligence reports. The second annual report is currently being prepared by Victoria Police.

IDCARE has provided on-time delivery of services contracted with Victoria Police. The contract provides victim support on behalf of the Australian Police Agencies, which otherwise lack the capacity to provide individualised victim support to the large volume of cybercrime victims. Access to IDCARE's intelligence has, among other things, helped police better understand the impacts of cybercrime on Australian victims. Victoria Police's submission to the Inquiry includes feedback from cybercrime victims to IDCARE about the harms they experience (Table 2, page 20).

Victoria Police is undertaking a comparative analysis of victims who did and did not engage IDCARE to examine the impact of IDCARE's services on levels of repeat victimisation over time. IDCARE will be assisting Victoria Police by providing data and contacting relevant victims to seek their consent for participation. IDCARE was advised by Victoria Police on 29 October 2024 that the ethics application and associated research materials had been submitted to the Victoria Police Human Research Ethics Committee for review and had also been sent to external reviewers.

In addition, IDCARE will be undertaking our own "post pilot report and recommendations" at the conclusion of the Agreement.

Question 3: Could you provide more information about the cost of the trial, the reasons provided for not extending it, and who made this decision?

Response:

The value of the Agreement is \$5,093,297 (gst inclusive) over the two years and three months broken down by \$4,722,047 for support services and \$371,250 for intelligence reports.

Whilst there is an option in the Agreement to extend it for a "further term" (clause 26.2 – any further term will be on the same terms as this Agreement...), the Agreement is not being extended due to the closure of the NCCF. IDCARE was made aware of this by Victoria Police in a Quarterly Contract Performance Meeting on 17 July 2024. It is IDCARE's understanding that the decision to close down the NCCF was an Australian Government decision as part of the 2024-2025 Australian Federal Budget.

In addition, due to increasing demand, it is almost certain the funded referrals will exhaust prior to 10 February 2025.

At the time of responding to this QoN no replacement funding source has been identified to renew support for victims referred by police agencies or for individuals via ReportCyber. IDCARE remains engaged with Commonwealth stakeholders in relation to alternative options, particularly given the priorities established in relation to community care and response support in the Australian Cyber Security Strategy 2023-2030 and the National Plan to Combat Cybercrime.

Please let us know if you require any further information.

Yours sincerely

David Lacey
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IDCARE