

5 June 2013

Dr Jane Thomson
A/g Committee Secretary
Parliamentary Joint Committee on Law Enforcement
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Ms Thomson

I write in relation to the current *Inquiry in the spectrum for public safety mobile broadband*.

I note the Australian Federal Police (AFP), as a Commonwealth agency, will not be receiving an allocation of spectrum under the planned Public Safety Mobile Broadband (PSMB) for its national operations.

This reflects that State and Territory agencies will generally take primary responsibility for handling mission-critical, public safety operations (police, fire, ambulance, emergency services), with Commonwealth agencies providing support in appropriate instances.

The National Implementation Plan, endorsed by the Standing Council on Police and Emergency Management, notes that the States and Territories will provide reasonable access and relevant equipment when Commonwealth agencies are requested to provide support.

As the PSMB development process is ongoing, the specific circumstances in which the AFP may access and use the capabilities developed by States and Territories have not yet been determined.

In relation to the Inquiry's Terms of Reference, I note that the identification and allocation of spectrum, and management of those processes, are matters for the Broadband, Communications, and Digital Economy portfolio.

I understand that the Australian Communications and Media Authority (the ACMA) is currently considering evidence provided by some jurisdictions in relation to the quantum of spectrum needed for the PSMB.

The AFP has some interest in potential overflow arrangements, noting that the AFP will, at the least in part, be relying on commercial providers for its own mobile broadband capabilities and/or these may come into play during major events (which may have increased likelihood of AFP involvement).

However, as the AFP is not receiving a specific allocation of spectrum under the PSMB, I do not currently expect there to be any costs implications for the AFP associated with the capabilities' implementation.

There will be some cost implications for the AFP in terms of transitioning some voice communications currently operating in the 800MHz band, if that spectrum is ultimately used. These implications may be addressed through other processes, such as the AFP response to the 400MHz band harmonisation.

The AFP could also face some costs if required to acquire infrastructure to access or use the PSMB in support of the States and Territories, or under other circumstances that are yet to be determined but that may be agreed with them.

Noting this, the AFP will continue to be engaged in the development processes for the PSMB. This involvement will remain focussed on ensuring the PSMB provides for appropriate AFP access if and when needed, and is responsive to potential implications for AFP operations.

Yours sincerely

Michael Phelan APM