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Roundtable

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JOINT COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS, DEFENCE AND TRADE

Friday, 15 August 2003

Members: Senator Ferguson (*Chair*), Mr Brereton (*Deputy Chair*), Senators Bolkus, Cook, Eggleston, Chris Evans, Harradine, Hutchins, Johnston, Sandy Macdonald, O'Brien, Payne and Stott Despoja and Mr Baird, Mr Baldwin, Mr Beazley, Mr Bevis, Mr Byrne, Mr Edwards, Mr Laurie Ferguson, Mrs Gash, Mr Hawker, Mr Jull, Mr Lindsay, Mrs Moylan, Mr Nairn, Mr Price, Mr Prosser, Mr Scott, Mr Snowden, Mr Somlyay and Mr Cameron Thompson

Senators and members in attendance: Senators Ferguson, Payne and Stott Despoja and Mr Byrne

Terms of reference for the inquiry:

Watching brief on the war on terrorism.

Committee met at 9.36 a.m.

ESPLIN, Mr Bruce, Emergency Services Commissioner, Office of the Emergency Services Commissioner

HALL, Dr Robert, Director, Public Health and Chief Health Officer, Department of Human Services

JOYCE Mr Brian, Executive Director, Operations Division, Department of Human Services

KELLY, Mr Bill, Deputy Commissioner, Operations, Victoria Police

MORAN, Mr Terry, Secretary, Victorian Department of Premier and Cabinet

CHAIR—I declare open this morning's public hearing. This is the fourth hearing in a series of public hearings on Australia's preparedness to manage the consequences of a terrorist attack in Australia. The hearings are part of the committee's ongoing watching brief on Australia's involvement in the war on terrorism and in related actions in response to terrorism. When we began our watching brief in May 2002, we viewed issues associated with Australia's commitment to the war on terrorism from the perspective of a world changed by the terrorist attacks in America on 11 September 2001. The bombings in Bali on 12 October 2002 and the recent attack in Jakarta have tragically demonstrated that the threat of terrorism is always present. While we as a nation must continue to do all we can to prevent terrorist attacks, we must also do all we can to prepare for the consequences of such an attack. Our hearings are part of this prudent preparation.

This morning's hearings will focus on the role of the Victorian government and its agencies in coordinating the immediate response to, and managing the consequences of, a terrorist attack. I welcome representatives from the Department of Premier and Cabinet, the Department of Human Services, the Victoria Police and emergency services to today's public hearing. The committee intends to conduct today's proceedings in public, although, should you wish at any stage to give any evidence in camera, you may ask to do so and we will give consideration to that request. Although the committee does not require you to give evidence under oath, I remind you that these hearings are legal proceedings of the parliament and therefore warrant the same respect as proceedings in our chambers. The giving of false or misleading evidence is a serious matter and may be regarded as a contempt of parliament. I now invite you to make your opening statements and remarks before we proceed to questions. I gather, Mr Moran, that you will be doing it in sequence.

Mr Moran—We are pleased to be here today with colleagues from Victoria Police, the Department of Human Services and the Emergency Services Commissioner who, along with the Department of Premier and Cabinet and the Victorian community, are the prime stakeholders in the state's counter-terrorism arrangements. We look forward to discussing with the committee Victoria's counter-terrorism capabilities and the steps that Victoria has taken to enhance these capabilities since 11 September 2001.

Victoria has in some ways been fortunate that events prior to 11 September focused us on the continuous reform of our emergency management arrangements well before the increased terrorist threat to Australia. Events like the 1983 Ash Wednesday bushfires and the 1998 explosion at the Longford gas processing plant served as catalysts to review and reform Victoria's emergency management arrangements.

Ash Wednesday prompted reviews that led to the development of Victoria's current emergency management arrangements, which are based on an all hazards approach. The Longford explosion led to further review of emergency response arrangements and to a review of Victoria's security of supply of essential services, which in turn prompted us to have a greater focus on consequence management.

September 11 and the Bali bombings have, however, shifted Australia's focus more firmly onto the possibility of terrorist attacks on Australian interests, people and territory. Victoria has put an intensive effort into adjusting our arrangements and capabilities to changed strategic circumstances, including capturing the lessons learned by the US in the aftermath of September 11; participating in the reform of the national arrangements, including through legislative action; and investing significant funding to enhance our capacity to prevent, respond to, recover from and investigate terrorism.

Since September 11, the Victorian government has allocated \$100 million to fund counter-terrorism initiatives, including, in the package announced, Enhancing Victoria's Domestic Security in November last year and in the 2003-04 budget. This funding has provided significant enhancements to the counter-terrorism capabilities of the Victoria Police, who are the principal counter-terrorist crisis first response, and in this is included the creation of a Counter-Terrorism Coordination Unit. As a pivotal player in the consequence management of terrorist incidents, the Department of Human Services has received significant funding to improve counter-terrorism preparedness, including the purchase of medical, radiation and disaster medicine equipment; personal protective equipment; technological systems for syndromic surveillance at key hospitals; pharmaceutical stockpiles; funding for personal protective equipment for emergency service staff and volunteers; and additional specialist urban search and rescue equipment and training. In the case of my own department, which has the lead role in the coordination and management of counter-terrorism policy, we have also received additional funding to establish a new dedicated State Crisis Centre and the creation of a Security and Emergency Unit.

It is not possible to catalogue here, although there is more detail in our submission, the full extent of Victoria's capabilities and the improvements we have undertaken to respond to the increased threat to Australia. Hopefully, that will be covered in our submission to the committee and through your questions. It should, however, give a flavour of Victoria's approach, which we believe is comprehensive and is focused on meeting our responsibility to provide primary operational response to an incident in Victoria. As we focus on the future, including planned events such as the Melbourne 2006 Commonwealth Games, these plans and capabilities will continue to evolve. Our planning recognises that, due to the evolving nature of the threat of terrorism, this is essentially a task that will never be finished.

I now ask my colleagues each in turn to make some short comments on how their agency contributes to Victoria's arrangements before I make some final brief comments on the role of the Department of Premier and Cabinet.

Deputy Commissioner Kelly—Victoria Police is very serious about its responsibility to provide primary operational response to any terrorist or major emergency within the state of Victoria. Victoria Police also remains committed to playing an important role in the national counter-terrorism arrangements and has played a significant role since September 11 in the reforms of the national arrangements to strengthen Australia's readiness to respond to a terrorist threat and improve coordination between state and national agencies. I am a member of the National Counter-Terrorism Committee and of the executive of that committee.

Victoria Police has conducted a thorough examination of existing operating procedures and protocols, with a priority focus on intelligence and prevention strategies, threat assessment and incident control to ensure an effective response capability and capacity. All counter-terrorism incidents will be run within the emergency management framework under the Emergency Management Act for Victoria based on prevention, response and consequence management.

The Special Operations Group provides Victoria's tactical counter-terrorism first response capacity and deals with the safe disposal of explosive devices. In the event of a CBR—chemical, biological or radiological—device, the Special Operations Group works in cooperation with the relevant agencies. The group also responds to unplanned operational critical incidents such as sieges, hostage situations, armed offender tasks and bomb response incidents. Recent State Government funding has resulted in the enhancement of the Special Operations Group's capacity to respond to bomb threats and hostage and kidnap situations at a cost of \$5 million over four years; increases in operational staff; and the development of an analytical capacity, with an additional six bomb response unit members and two primary analysts.

In the intelligence field, Victoria Police has refocused its intelligence and its preventative strategy. The Security Intelligence Group, known as SIG, focuses on the prevention of terrorist threats or acts through the analysis and provision of timely and accurate intelligence. It is the primary conduit of threat advice from the Commonwealth and of security liaison with other states and agencies. State Government funding of \$3.8 million has been allocated for surveillance and communication equipment for Victoria Police's intelligence and risk analysis capacity, to enhance its ability to detect the planning of terrorist activity and prevent an attack. The funding has allowed for 12 additional intelligence officers and technical support staff, and supports an international exchange of analysts from other countries involved in counter-terrorism, which is currently active.

Forensic science and disaster victim identification are pivotal pieces, and Victoria Police has greatly enhanced its DVI capability following a significant injection of state funding. While our capability has increased, I have always been confident that we have had the expertise to undertake this critical role. It has been with Victoria Police for about 15 years. That was evident during the Bali investigation, when Victoria Police provided the DVI managers for what was regarded as an excellent international DVI response. Government funding has allowed us to purchase and maintain new forensic equipment at a cost of \$1 million over four years. Funding of \$9 million has gone to the state coroner, Victoria Police and the Victorian Institute of Forensic Medicine for additional scientific equipment and specialist resources for the DVI processes, 11 additional DVI staff and six scientists. It is also interesting to note that Victoria Police provided the expert facial computer recognition people who were integral to the investigation of the Bali bombing and led to the arrest of the offenders. Those same specialists are now working in Jakarta.

Further funding has increased Victoria Police's capability with regard to the threat of a CBR incident, with investment of \$1.2 million in state-of-the-art detection and protection equipment for police to increase their capacity to respond to and resolve incidents involving chemical, biological or radiological materials. That includes, for first response and forensic capacity, 80 tactical suits and 10 fully encapsulated gas suits. Further suits will be supplied through the national counter-terrorism arrangements under the Emergency Management Australia framework.

The Counter-Terrorism Coordination Unit is new to the Victoria Police and has been established to enhance our capability and capacity to prevent, respond to and manage the consequences of any terrorist threat or act. The Counter-Terrorism Unit has a high profile within Victoria Police, with a senior member at the rank of commander responsible for the management of the unit. It undertakes a number of important functions within Victoria Police, in partnership with government departments and other agencies. That includes training, dissemination of information, research, risk management and critical infrastructure protection.

On the subject of critical infrastructure protection, Victoria Police has contributed to the national approach to critical infrastructure protection by providing advice at the Trusted Information Sharing Network's Critical Infrastructure Advisory Council. Working with government and the private sector, it has identified the state's critical infrastructure, iconic buildings, and places and events of significance. A database has been developed containing more than 600 entries. The Counter-Terrorism Unit has been working with owners and operators of critical infrastructure, including all energy installations and transport systems, to ensure that they are aware of their responsibility to provide adequate security and undertake risk management planning. The new Terrorism (Community Protection) Act provides that the operators of essential services must prepare risk management plans to identify and mitigate the risk of terrorist acts, which is an augmentation of the long-term emergency management plans that have been in place for many years. Under the legislation, Victoria Police will supervise exercises by those installations intended to test their risk management plans.

In short, the response by Victoria Police to major emergencies, whether natural or criminal related, has been refined, tested and retested for the past 20 years in incidents such as the Ash Wednesday bushfires, the Turkish embassy bombing, the Russell Street police headquarters bombing, the Longford explosion and numerous other natural disasters. The command, control and coordination functions and roles are regularly tested in an all-agency, all-hazards approach under the Emergency Management Act framework and requirements. One of those requirements is an accountable and reportable performance measure in all local and senior level police managers' plans. This year alone our emergency management systems, including the CT component, have been exercised across the state, with 282 municipal and 108 divisional level exercises completed. So there have been over 300 exercises this year alone in emergency management framework testing.

Mr Esplin—Victoria's emergency management arrangements have been continually improving since they were established in 1983, following the devastating Ash Wednesday bushfires. There were probably three seminal events in establishing Victoria's current arrangements. They were the Ash Wednesday fires; the Longford gas crisis, which highlighted the impact of infrastructure failure on the community; and the 9/11 terrorist attacks in the United States. Victoria's arrangements are under a constant state of review. Our processes are to

continually improve. It is never 100 per cent right. There is always a changing risk environment. The role of the Emergency Services Commissioner's Office is to ensure that Victoria's arrangements are appropriate for the risk environment confronting the state.

We continue to evolve, through events such as Longford; through an understanding of the Sydney water crisis and the Auckland power blackouts; through business continuity and disaster recovery planning for the year 2000 transition; through contingency planning for the World Economic Forum and Olympic events; through the white powder incidents that followed the 9/11 terrorist attacks; through exercises such as New Dawn in the counter-terrorism sphere or Exercise Minotaur in the exotic animal disease sphere; and actual events such as the Arthurs Seat chairlift collapse. In that situation the state was able to put on the ground some 200 emergency and health workers from 10 different organisations and the arrangements worked in a seamless way. At the peak of the recent bushfires, there were 5,000-plus people involved in the fires in the north-west of the state, from 30 different organisations. At the same time, the state maintained a capacity to deal with 192 other fires on the same day as that large body of emergency workers was in place in the north-east of the state.

The greatest asset that Victoria has is its commitment to continuous improvement in its emergency management arrangements. That is demonstrated by the ongoing change and the commitment to enhanced resourcing that current and previous governments have put in place. Our arrangements build on the legislation established in 1986—the Emergency Management Act—which prescribes the Minister for Police and Emergency Services as coordinator-in-chief of emergency management. It brings senior level political involvement to the way the state's emergency management arrangements are developed and the way policy is continuously improved. We build on existing whole-of-government arrangements, such as the Security and Emergencies Committee of Cabinet and the Central Government Response Committee. That is a whole-of-government coordinating body that brings about the ability for whole-of-government needs to be appropriately coordinated in a real-time way by a very senior committee of government reporting to a cabinet committee.

As has been said by my colleagues, we work to an all-hazards, all-agencies approach. In essence, that means we are able to focus on the consequences to the community of a particular event. In the Longford gas crisis, for example, there was a significant explosion and fire, requiring the relevant fire service to deal with it. The larger emergency was the consequence to the community of a significantly reduced gas supply over a protracted period of time. Since the 9/11 terrorist attacks, and since Bali in particular, the resources and the number of firefighters have been significantly improved. The personal protective equipment that is available to those emergency service workers and the diagnostic equipment they use to go about their tasks have been significantly enhanced. Our methods of dealing with these situations build on our everyday experience. For example, in the case of a chemical attack, the processes and planning used build on the way the emergency services would respond to a hazardous materials incident. So there is a continuity of training and development and a familiarity with the processes used. The difference in a terrorist attack is potentially the scale and the involvement of Victoria Police in capturing the perpetrators et cetera.

Victoria is committed to using intelligence and information in a much stronger way and is moving towards connectivity in the use of spatial information to ensure that the absolute highest quality data and information is available to all emergency services for planning and response

needs. One of the critical issues is being able to have the information necessary to plan for and respond to emergency scenarios. That is the snapshot I would like to finish on.

Mr Moran—I now turn to the Department of Human Services.

Mr Joyce—Under Victoria's emergency management arrangements the Department of Human Services has responsibility for four key plans. The State Medical Emergency Response Plan outlines the role of the Chief Medical Coordinator, the Area Medical Coordinators, the ambulance services, medical and health services and hospitals for mass casualty incident response. We have responsibility for the Public Health Emergency Response Plan, and Victoria's Health Act supports the role of the Chief Health Officer, Dr Hall, for chemical, biological and radiological incident responses. This, of course, extends on the core business role of the Department of Human Services in general public health functions.

The State Emergency Recovery Plan outlines the role of the State Recovery Coordinator, which is my role, in establishing specialist community recovery services, support for victims of trauma, community information, and financial assistance to families. That is largely done on a regional basis. Local government services and non-government organisations play a key role in that recovery. The experience of Bali and the northern Victorian bushfires recovery program demonstrates a well-developed recovery services capability in Victoria.

To cover all these responsibilities DHS has a high-level coordination plan—the DHS state level Emergency Management Plan—and that ensures coordination of communication and command of DHS resources and provides coordination and linkages with the State Emergency Response Coordination Centre and the Central Government Response Committee. We have also got capacity to establish a major community call facility for direct information and communication with the public.

The medical aspects of mass casualty incidents are managed through a partnership arrangement with the Chief Medical Coordinator and ambulance services. Integrated central and site communication and response systems provide a response model for the triage of casualties, first aid, oversighting the contamination of casualties and coordination of transfers to hospitals. Victorian hospitals also provide additional on-site capacity through the deployment of trained disaster teams resourced with specially designed mobile kits.

Victoria's hospitals have no built-in redundancy for casualties. A contingency planning system is used to establish capacity. Hospital capacity for casualties is managed through a combination of burns beds, critical care beds and multi-day and same-day beds; through the cancellation of non-urgent elective surgery; transfer of less acute inpatients to other private and public hospitals; and use of alternative care facilities, such as hospital gymnasiums, outpatient clinics and teaching facilities, as well as off-site halls for the walking wounded, as needed. Additional hospital, nursing and medical specialist personnel are accessed via health services and the medical community outside the hospitals directly associated with the casualties. We are very confident that we have a surge capacity in terms of providing the capacity for the treatment of casualties. The DHS state level coordination plan is used to establish a network of hospitals and health services capacity building activities to be responded to at short notice via established systems. This links the Chief Medical Coordinator role and incident site medical coordination.

Finally, the Australian Health Disaster Management Policy Committee—which was established only this year by the Australian Health Ministers Advisory Committee—provides a national approach to capacity management issues relating nationally to health and medical services.

Dr Hall—The Department of Human Services Public Health Group is the lead agency for biological and radiation incidents and is a support agency for chemical incidents. To respond to these possible threats, we have developed specialist threat assessment teams both within the department and on a cross-agency basis. We have multiagency chemical technical advisory groups, where we collaborate with our partners in the fire service and other emergency service organisations, and a radiation emergency technical advisory group with a similar remit. With biological incidents, we are a participant in the Communicable Diseases Network of Australia, which provides the same sorts of functions across Australia. Its utility was illustrated during the recent SARS outbreak, where many of these concepts were tested.

The medical and technical aspects of the approach to chemical, biological and radiation incidents focus around surveillance capability in order to be able to detect whether such incidents have occurred. We are developing a pilot syndromic surveillance project to obtain real-time information from hospitals to detect these kinds of events, and we are also working with our colleagues in pathology laboratory services to obtain real-time information from those sources. In response to information that comes from these sources, through the protocols that have been developed through CHEMTAG and REMTAG, we have an investigation process to determine the significance of the potential events and where the sources of, say, biological agents may have come from. The response is in three parts, and we have well-developed systems through the regional offices of the Department of Human Services and through partners in other emergency services and local government to supply preventive capability to incidents such as biological incidents, treatment for people and, most importantly, communication processes.

Initiatives that we have taken in the recent past include reviewing our stockpile of pharmaceuticals in collaboration with the Commonwealth; the pilot surveillance project that I mentioned before; extensive training for emergency services and hospital staff in the public health aspects of these events; particular specialised training focusing on subjects such as smallpox control; and the purchase of radiation equipment both for the teams from the Department of Human Services and for hospitals which would be asked to manage patients in these incidents.

Mr Joyce—Finally, to complement that, the Department of Human Services has developed an Emergency Management Coordination Unit and is implementing a comprehensive education, training and development strategy for staff in the health and human services sector which focuses on specialist response development programs, as well as generic emergency management programs.

Mr Moran—Finally, in brief conclusion, my department—that is, the Department of Premier and Cabinet—has represented Victoria in the national counter-terrorism arrangements since the creation some time ago of SAC-PAV. Following September 11, the April 2002 Leaders Summit and the consequent reform of the national counter-terrorism arrangements, DPC has assumed the role of the lead agency for Victoria's policy coordination with the Commonwealth, including participation in the National Counter-Terrorism Committee and its executive, and participation

in the Leaders' Summit and in the negotiation of the Intergovernmental Agreement signed in October 2002.

To bring this work into focus, there is now a Security and Emergencies Unit in the Government Branch of the department, which was created in November 2002. This unit is led by an assistant director and has four staff members. It will coordinate Victoria's whole-of-government incident management at the strategic level, including counter-terrorism policy and planning, coordinating the implementation of Victoria's responsibilities for the Intergovernmental Agreement and the National Counter-Terrorism Plan, and Victoria's participation in the National Counter-Terrorism Committee and its various subcommittees. It will also coordinate and provide secretariat support for whole-of-government committees—I know this sounds rather dense—and liaise with the Commonwealth and other state agencies. In the event of a terrorist attack, Victoria's emergency management arrangements provide that the Department of Premier and Cabinet would provide strategic coordination and manage the State Crisis Centre. The new State Crisis Centre will operate during any large emergency, including terrorism or a major event. That concludes our comments.

CHAIR—Thank you very much for that overview. I am interested—and I am sure the committee is interested—particularly in the coordination and the interoperability of state and national agencies. We commenced our watching brief by hearing from all of our national agencies. To paint a picture of a likely scenario: if there were an explosion or attack of some sort, not necessarily major, it would be natural that the first people to respond would be from the state or territory in which it occurred. It could be a criminal act, a natural disaster or a terrorist attack. Can you take us through the processes that would happen which would determine whether or not it is a terrorist attack? Who makes that decision? At what stage are the national bodies notified and at what stage do they become involved? Unless it is a terrorist attack, there is a fair chance that it would be something that you would handle as a state—particularly if it is a criminal act or a natural disaster. You have used the example of bushfires quite a bit because that probably is the most common occurrence but, in the event of serious disasters with bushfires, you usually get some sort of warning—whether it is weather or a build-up—so you do have some chance to make some sorts of plans. With a terrorist attack, the major impact is the first impact and it all flows on from there. Can you take us through the stages that would happen? When would you reach the stage of determining that it is a terrorist attack, and how would you then involve the national agencies?

Mr Moran—I will make a few opening remarks and Deputy Commissioner Kelly will probably add some more specifics to your questions about determining whether it is a terrorist attack or not. Clearly there are improved arrangements in operation now for working between the Commonwealth and the states. They depend on developing relationships with bodies such as the National Counter-Terrorism Committee, and the conversations which occur at head-of-government level, and the sorts of things which they provide. In the instances that you give, Victoria Police would obviously be the first to respond—and the deputy commissioner will speak in a moment—but it would be our practice to ensure that, in any significant event, national authorities would at least be informed immediately of what is happening, and then there would be ongoing discussions as to how they might be involved.

In some of the exercises which have occurred—for instance, New Dawn—those arrangements have been tested and I think worked quite satisfactorily. For example, there was mention during

our presentation of the various bodies at a state level that are designed to coordinate activities, such as the Central Government Response Committee and the Security and Emergencies Committee of Cabinet. My recollection of the New Dawn exercise was that senior Commonwealth agency representatives ended up being involved in the meetings of that state body. There was at that level a sharing of information, and of course they also had people present in the State Crisis Centre and participated in the work which occurred through the State Crisis Centre at the time. Ultimately, though, these arrangements in a crisis depend upon established relationships and an openness in communication. This can always vary over time, depending upon the circumstances, and one can always see some scope for some improvement, but I think that our reading of it would be that relationships across government boundaries are more numerous, more professional, better based and more informative than perhaps they were previously.

Deputy Commissioner Kelly—Let us start at the beginning. We quite frequently use Longford as an example of an issue that arose in Victoria from a set of circumstances that were not terrorism related. But if such a situation were terrorism related it would not make any difference at all to the way that we would respond, because we would all respond within the emergency management framework that has been tested. If a criminal act led to a Longford situation—for example, if it was someone detonating an explosive device, rather than something natural occurring—the emergency management framework would kick in. The control agencies under the emergency management would be more than the fire services and the ambulance on scene for the injured. You would then have an injection of police because, under the emergency management arrangements, we are the controlling agency for counter-terrorism and any criminal acts. We also hold the coordination responsibility, under the act, for supply of resources to the emergency services that actually respond.

I suppose that if an explosive device had caused the explosion at Longford, given the ramifications of the gas supply both here in Victoria and elsewhere in Australia—the gas reserves and the connectivity—we would immediately have notified our intelligence cells here and they would have begun immediate work with both of our national colleagues. Through the Counter Terrorism Coordination Unit and the intelligence cell we would have immediately been in touch with the Attorney-General's Department—in the national counter-terrorism arena—through the PSCC to say, 'We have had an explosion and we are trying to establish whether it is just a local criminal act or something bigger than that.'

In such a situation, we would hope that intelligence available prior might give us some indication of whether we were looking at a single criminal act within Victoria or something with a more sinister basis, such as a terrorism related incident. The operational Forward Command post for the police that would be set up at such a site, along with the command posts of the other emergency services, would be informing us of the circumstances there, and we would be making value judgments on whether it was a local criminal act or had more sinister connections.

If it turned from a criminal act into a terrorist act, the procedure, in terms of the investigation and management of coordination, probably would not change. However, the spectrum of people involved at the national level would change. We would immediately deploy what we call a forward joint intelligence cell to complement the Forward Command Post. The Police Operations Centre would immediately be set up. The State Crisis Centre, on the advice of the deputy commissioner or the Chief Commissioner—usually the deputy commissioner—would

advise the Premier's department that it would be necessary to set up the State Crisis Centre. It is a programmed response. It is something that is well tested. We used the bushfires, which I suppose could be looked at as analogous to a terrorist act—

CHAIR—A bushfire could possibly be the easiest form of terrorism.

Deputy Commissioner Kelly—It could be. Our response would also be through the counter-terrorism arrangements. Through our critical infrastructure program—through the network we have established—we would notify all the other critical infrastructure in Victoria of what had occurred. Our joint intelligence groups would be working with the Commonwealth agencies, both in the Forward Command Post and at the Police Operations Centre. We have what is known as a SERCC—a State Emergency Response Coordination Centre—which sits off to the side of the Police Operations Centre, to which all the agencies involved would send a liaison officer. It is a room specifically fitted out for all the coordinating agencies under the other emergency services. They support the Police Operations Centre. Any requests that come for extra resources, either from our agency or other agencies, would be fed through there and coordinated through there.

The national counter-terrorism arrangements would then follow under the new National Counter-Terrorism Plan, which has now officially been launched. The handbook arrangements, which are really the operational end of the plan—a complementary document from the old handbook of the National Counter-Terrorism Plan—would be enacted. The arrangements for the national response would then be put in place. That is how it would flow. The most important thing is that the response and activities would vary from the emergency management arrangements that we have had for some time only in the sense of how many control agencies there were for that specific event. If it were then to be declared a national counter-terrorism situation—

CHAIR—Who decides that?

Deputy Commissioner Kelly—I was just going to say. Under the new arrangements, that will be done through a discussion between the Prime Minister and Cabinet's Department and the state and Territory premiers, who will be directly involved, and the decision will be taken jointly on agreement of the premiers. That protocol forms part of the new National Counter-Terrorism Plan; it is common to every state. We would also obviously be talking to our state counterparts and to any federal agencies as well.

CHAIR—The Longford case was probably a pretty good example. I guess, considering the current climate, there was always the possibility that it was either a terrorist or a criminal act. How long did it take you to rule out the possibility of it being a criminal act or a terrorist act and to realise that it was an accident?

Deputy Commissioner Kelly—Without going back and looking, I probably could not answer that accurately. The first response was police, fire and ambulance. I would imagine that within the first hour they would be able to establish through witnesses whether there was something sinister involved. Even though we lost some lives, we were fortunate to have a number of other witnesses who were able to shed some light on the circumstances as to how and why it occurred because there was some history to it. If there were no history to it, I would suggest that an

explosion in a place like that—or in any part of the critical infrastructure grid—would make you immediately suspicious.

CHAIR—You also mention intelligence. Is your relationship with the intelligence organisations better now than it was a couple of years ago? Are you satisfied with the arrangements that are in place?

Deputy Commissioner Kelly—I suppose I am fortunate enough, having been involved in the old SAC-PAV and being involved in the new counter-terrorism arrangements—and I heard you say before that, if there were issues that were not to go on the public record—

CHAIR—Yes. If you want to do something in camera, I would be very happy for you to do that.

Deputy Commissioner Kelly—I would rather discuss that in camera.

CHAIR—Okay. We will do that at the end.

Deputy Commissioner Kelly—I would like to put on the record that the arrangements within the state are excellent.

Mr Moran—Could I add to Deputy Commissioner Kelly's comments. It would be apparent from other statements made here today that the Department of Human Services is the control agency for biological and radiological emergencies, and I do not think we mentioned that the Metropolitan Fire and Emergency Services Board is the control agency for a chemical emergency. What this all amounts to in hopefully straightforward terms is that, for designated situations, there are agreed control agencies and mechanisms which allow all others who might contribute to do so in an orderly way. There is a combination within this of 'command and control' type arrangements and of what might best be called network management arrangements. Sometimes I sense a tendency to imagine that the best possible system for dealing with these situations is an absolutely monolithic 'command and control' arrangement—whether that be at the state level or at the national level feeding down to the state level—and it has been consistently our argument, as these matters have been discussed, that those sorts of arrangements ultimately probably will not work.

Therefore, you have to rely upon what came into play in, for instance, New York on September 11—that is, a more networked management arrangement which takes advantage of existing agencies and so forth at both levels of government, where relationships between them are well established and trialled through various exercises and so forth. Our experience is that that works reasonably well. It has worked well on all the incidents that have been mentioned in comments already made, particularly by the Emergency Services Commissioner, and I think part of our job is to improve them continuously and to keep testing them through the sorts of exercises that are run. Arguably, we will have more exercises in the future because of the circumstances we face as a nation. We would welcome that. Out of those exercises, when they are evaluated, would undoubtedly come suggestions for further improvement. We would welcome consideration of those suggestions as well. However, we are reluctant to see set aside the successful arrangements which have emerged in Victoria over time around the principle of network management.

CHAIR—I guess what it all boils back to is the fact that ultimately, the first response would have to come from a state or territory response unit. If you are talking about monolithic structure, ultimately it is the state or territory—wherever it occurs—that is the first response.

Mr Moran—But it is more than that. Yes, the first response is in the way that you suggest—and as the deputy commissioner explained in more detail—but it is likely to be that most of the subsequent work involves state agencies as well. It is the state agencies that overwhelmingly have the people who can do the work, whether it be police, people in emergency services, people in the health system, the education system can be involved, the welfare system can become involved—many thousands of people might be involved in the response at a state level to a significant incident were it unfortunately to occur. But there have to be established and successful relationships established with agencies at the Commonwealth level as well as with local government. In operational terms we are approaching better relationships there, and a better understanding of who does what, in what circumstances—but that will go on improving over time.

Deputy Commissioner Kelly—Within the emergency management arrangements there is one overriding factor. It has not happened to any great degree, but if there is a dispute in any given situation about who the controlling agency is, to avoid confusion in the operational first response, Victoria Police has the role and the responsibility under the act to designate who it will be. If there was an argument to do with the controlling agency, we would say, ‘You are the controlling agency for this. If there are issues in terms of that, we will talk about those later on.’ The trigger for us is a seamless approach—all agencies working together under the framework. We have not really had any issues where we have had to step in.

Mr Esplin—Reinforcing what Deputy Commissioner Kelly said, the constant theme in all our emergency management processes is the role of Victoria Police in its coordination function. Similarly, with regard to federal government agencies, if it is a natural event, it is Victoria Police who provides that contact to Emergency Management Australia. Our arrangements are designed that way so that there is consistency and there is always that coordinating role played by Victoria Police. Hand in hand with that is a quality reporting process that exists in Victoria so that any event is reported up the chain. For example, if we had a bushfire event, we would be aware that there was an increasing risk of fire occurring and would be pre-planning for what we might ask for, by way of additional resources or support from the Commonwealth. There are two connection points in our relationship with the Commonwealth—one through the counter-terrorism arrangements, the other through the emergency management arrangements—but in both cases Victoria Police is the coordinating point. That ensures that if there were to be a fire event that subsequently turns out to be of a more sinister causation, then Victoria Police would already be deeply involved in the process; it has made the connection right at the onset of the incident.

I would like to put on the record that I think that most states and territories have got a quality relationship with the Commonwealth through Emergency Management Australia in the emergency services and management sense. That has been strengthened over a number of years now. It works well. It emphasises a point that Mr Moran made in relation to resources—Emergency Management Australia is not an operational agency and yet it plays a key support role. The state provides the arms and legs and resources; Emergency Management Australia coordinates either federal assistance or mutual aid from other states and territories.

Senator STOTT DESPOJA—Deputy Commissioner Kelly, I seek a quick clarification before you move away from the processes. I understand that the SCC is activated by the Premier upon the receipt of advice. That is clear and you have referred to that in your statement. But you have said the advice comes from you—the deputy commissioner—or the commissioner. What I want to clarify is, is that formalised or are there other areas from which he could receive advice? Is it quite specific that you are responsible for providing that advice to the Premier so that he activates that process?

Deputy Commissioner Kelly—It has always been that under the SACPAV arrangements that the first responders through the chain of command, if it is a criminal act, would provide advice to Premier and Cabinet in terms of the risk to the state. It would be an informed decision that was taken jointly. We would not say, ‘We want you to open it up’ and expect it to be opened up. We would inform Premier and Cabinet that there is an issue, it is of significance and it could grow to be a state level issue rather than a municipal or a regional level issue, and it may require resources that are not within the capacity of Victoria and may require Commonwealth involvement. So there are a series of planks that have to be established. Clearly, if it were a municipal or regional level incident that was not going to have national or state connotations we would not make a request. In the existing structure, it would be done on a consultative basis with the new security policy unit, it would be done in consultation with Mr Moran and it would be a mutual decision at the end based on the risk to the state.

Mr Moran—If I could just add that, at that point, a number of things would probably be handled simultaneously. There would be advice as to whether the State Crisis Centre needed to be established and probably at the same time the Central Government Response Committee would be convened. We are all members of that, along with some other people. The ministers who are members of the Security and Emergencies Committee of Cabinet would be notified and advised that they may be called together at short notice for a meeting. But the Premier and the Minister for Police and Emergency Services, and possibly other ministers who might because of the nature of the event be involved, would also be individually briefed. As the Emergency Services Commissioner explained, there are a number of tracks into the Commonwealth to make sure that it knows what is going on—three, in fact, at a minimum; possibly more. The one into the Prime Minister’s department would be handled through my department but there would also be contact with the Attorney-General’s Department and various agencies of the Commonwealth through either the Victoria Police or through the emergency services people.

CHAIR—I have just one other question before I hand over to my colleagues: history shows us that, of the terrorist attacks that have taken place, probably the most significant difficulty has been handling burns victims. What is the capacity in Victoria to handle serious burns victims in terms of the number of beds? If there was a significant number would it be possible to handle them?

Mr Joyce—We have identified about 300 beds that could be made available in the short term and about 1,500 in total within 24 hours state-wide. There are also currently 60 specialist burns beds in the state. If there were a large number of burns victims, we could actually increase the capacity to handle them within the following 24 hours, but if it greatly exceeded what we could do in terms of the number of specialist beds and specialist teams to handle them then obviously we would have a transfer relationship with other states’ burns facilities. I know that the

Commonwealth-state health planning committee for antiterrorism is developing a burns plan to establish and ensure that we have that relationship on an ongoing basis.

CHAIR—Do those 60 beds include regional hospitals or is it just Melbourne?

Mr Joyce—That is Victorian burns beds. There are 30 at the Alfred Hospital and there are 30 at the Royal Children's Hospital.

CHAIR—What about in regional hospitals? Are there any burns beds?

Mr Joyce—No, not specialist burns beds. Again there is a capacity to treat people quickly in an immediate situation, but for a capacity well in excess of what we could handle in terms of specialist burns expertise we would have to work with other states and transfer patients, as happened with Bali. I think we had nine burns victims transferred here.

Senator PAYNE—Mr Moran, when you were making some comments before about exercises, you talked about the evaluation and implementation of lessons learnt, which are also referred to in the submission. It refers to a more recent exercise in April of this year designated Exercise Octopus, which you describe as a discussion exercise. Can you tell the committee a little more about that?

Mr Moran—I might suggest that the Deputy Commissioner talk about that.

Deputy Commissioner Kelly—That was a discussion exercise where the key players from all agencies—both state and Commonwealth—were involved at Emergency Management Australia's college at Mount Macedon. It was a discussion exercise based on a situation that would occur in the metropolitan area of Melbourne.

Senator PAYNE—So it is like war games, but in a different capacity?

Deputy Commissioner Kelly—Yes. Exercises take a number of formats. They can be discussion exercises, tabletop exercises or full operational exercises. Some discussion exercises are very good because the key players are there. If, as a first responder, you have something that is your responsibility in the exercise, you can go directly to the person who would be responsible for something else and say, 'What are you going to do about that?' So it gives you a capacity to judge who can make decisions and when they can make them. That exercise went over a couple of days. It was a normal type of exercise that we would run operationally and it has very good value. I think there were probably in excess of 80 or 90 people at that exercise.

Senator PAYNE—Has it been evaluated in the same way as New Dawn?

Deputy Commissioner Kelly—It has. It has shown us things about capacity, surge and the capacity of hospitals to handle multiple walking wounded and multiple presentations. It has allowed us to look at the first response of our Special Operations Group to a particular incident scenario. They are all key pieces of the equation. It gave us an opportunity to either validate our processes by seeing whether they are robust or to look at something new, and to look at the needs of people. I think it is very important in the environment we are in now that everybody has an understanding of everybody else's business. It is a great thing when you can put faces to

people on a network basis. If you run the scenario through, you can pick up on those opportunities.

Senator PAYNE—On your point about everybody understanding everybody else's business, do you then take your exercise evaluation and discuss with the other states and the Commonwealth, or report on it, at least, to the other states and the Commonwealth? Was the Commonwealth involved in Octopus?

Deputy Commissioner Kelly—They are involved through Emergency Management Australia. It is part of the national counter-terrorism framework. We are required to run further high level exercises and we have been funded through the national counter-terrorism training program, so the coordination centre in Canberra is aware of them. We notify the Canberra centre of any exercises we run in relation to CT, so they have an involvement in the evaluation, opportunities and learning, and then we actually built them into other exercises that we plan. There is a programmed exercise regime for the National Counter-Terrorism Planning group.

Senator PAYNE—Does that make it Canberra's job to pass it on to the other states?

Deputy Commissioner Kelly—No, we share everything with the other state forces. Everything we do, we share. That is the basis for interoperability and joint assistance.

Senator PAYNE—In the submission there is also a reference to what the operation of the State Emergency Response Coordination Centre would be. It talks about providing media reports and the dissemination of information to the media and the general public. What is not clear to me from the submission is what consultation and liaison you do on a regular basis on CT issues in particular with the media themselves—with the people who are actually asked to disseminate information. For example, if a situation occurred in a down time, when radio was on relay from Melbourne into the regions and you needed to alert the regions urgently but stations were not manned or staffed in an adequate fashion—say, in midsummer or something like that—what arrangements are in place to deal with those eventualities?

Mr Moran—In terms of more general statements, in a terrorist situation the accepted arrangements are that public statements, depending on their nature, are made either by the Premier or the Chief Commissioner of Police. That has been the case in a number of the exercises and it has worked quite well. The Premier is intimately involved, at his level, in an emerging situation and so is in a reliable position to deal with that side of things. Obviously, the Chief Commissioner has various statutory responsibilities in such a situation which mean that she is the focus of a significant information flow as well. The media obviously might be in a situation such as you described—that is, not readily available in regional Victoria—and we are looking at improved communications arrangements to get into specific locations by other means in the event of a major emergency. That planning is under way now and we will take proposals to our government on that in due course.

Senator PAYNE—Do you have an arrangement for regular meetings or sessions with the media to brief them about the processes that would be implemented and how things would work? Are they involved in your exercises, for example?

Mr Moran—They may be involved in our exercises, and of course there is abundant contact between media and people in, say, the Victoria Police who handle those relationships, as well as people at the government level who handle relationships with the media. Whether the media feels it has enough background and all the details of how a government works in these situations is very hard for me to judge. As part of some of the exercises there are simulations of management of media relations, and the State Crisis Centre provides for that as one of the functions performed at that level. I do not know whether the deputy commissioner or the Emergency Services Commissioner want to add to that.

Deputy Commissioner Kelly—We obviously have a media unit within Victoria Police. We have a key person designated to the interface with other media, who is also the key person within the National Counter-Terrorism Media Subcommittee—he is the director of that subcommittee as well. For example, as part of the process for New Dawn we engaged real media on a contractual basis to play pseudomedia in both the State Crisis Centre, Police Forward Command Post and the Police Operations Centre, because they are a critical element in terms of command and control and coordination functionality and critical for us in terms of public information and confidence. We believe we have a very good system in terms of the interface with the Commonwealth, through the national counter-terrorism arrangements, to ensure coordination of media at that stage and a good relationship here through that particular person. I will leave it there and hand it to Mr Esplin.

Mr Esplin—I would raise two issues. Firstly, following the 2002-03 fires there was a debrief specifically for the media to gauge their views on the relationship during the fires. As part of that process, the Country Fire Authority has put in place an accreditation scheme to enable media to safely report on the fires from perhaps more close conditions than with previous fires. That is indicative of our wanting to see the media as a natural partner for us and as part of the communication process with communities, for them to get the information they need to put in place safe behaviours. Secondly, one of the positives that came out of the recent fires was the role of the ABC in regional Victoria. The ABC actually interrupted its normal programming methods to ensure that it could put out very regular bulletins to communities in regional Victoria, in Gippsland and the north-east, and it has been widely praised for the quality of its reporting and its access to the emergency services to ensure quality information was available to those communities.

Senator PAYNE—I think both the chair and I were going to comment on the value of that, particularly in Canberra in January this year.

Mr Esplin—It has been a very strong positive in the reviews we have been doing.

Senator PAYNE—There is a reference towards the end of your submission to the Victorian SES. It is supportive of the CTF—it is including planning and transport for CBR and so on. What training, or enhanced training, is being given to the SES to enable them to do that?

Mr Esplin—The State Emergency Services received an injection of nearly \$1 million in its current budget to increase its training and personal protective equipment to enable it to carry out a wider support role, not just in counter-terrorism but specifically for counter-terrorism at this point in time. That training will be done by the Metropolitan Fire and Emergency Services Board

and the Department of Human Services. It is really to provide an additional level of support to the control agencies during a crisis of that type.

Senator PAYNE—It really gives emphasis to the importance of volunteers in this process as well.

Mr Esplin—Absolutely.

Senator PAYNE—The last question I have I ask on the basis of the experience of a recent committee inquiry on the question of airport security. What role do the Victoria Police play in supporting the APS and the AFP at Tullamarine and Victoria's major regional airports? Not the air side, I guess, but the other side.

Deputy Commissioner Kelly—From our side, the Counter-Terrorism Coordination Unit's brief is to coordinate activities to ensure the best possible maritime and aviation security within Victoria. We have a very close relationship with the APS and the Federal Police at Tullamarine airport. We also have a police station there.

Senator PAYNE—Is that manned 24 hours a day?

Deputy Commissioner Kelly—Our police station is not; no. There are police there on regular shifts, though.

Senator PAYNE—They are Victorian police?

Deputy Commissioner Kelly—Yes. Our opportunities there—since September 11 and, particularly, Bali—have been to re-establish and reinforce the current protocols in terms of air services, aircraft in flight and notification. We have been working in support of the APS and the Federal Police to supply intelligence and investigative support in terms of the controlling agencies because of the difference between state and federal responsibility at the airport. We are also working, through the Counter-Terrorism Coordination Unit, on the two reviews that are currently taking place in terms of aviation security, and we are working very closely with DOTARS because they are one of our key partners on the National Counter-Terrorism Committee. That is looking at the security of regional airports and also our major airports here. So we believe that we are making very good progress with that.

Senator PAYNE—In practical terms, if the federal parliament passes the piece of legislation that is currently before it in relation to giving APS officers powers to stop, seek identification, search and seize from individuals in an airport, and then hold an individual until it is practicable to turn them over to a designated police officer—in your average Australian airport that would be a state police officer—what amount of time do you think would elapse in Tullamarine on a normal day before that person could be handed over to one of your police officers?

Deputy Commissioner Kelly—Our initial response would be from region 3. It has its headquarters at Broadmeadows, which is, probably in a hurry, about five minutes away from the airport. It would be sooner if we had a unit even closer. It would depend on the nature of the offence in terms of how long we took. That would be dependent on the information that was given to us by APS. But if it was an incident within the airport that would affect or disrupt the

airport in terms of aviation security or air side security—such as the last two incidents we have been notified of, the Qantas and Virgin incidents—we would have police on the ground in multiple numbers well within ten minutes. The first responders would be there in under five minutes.

Senator PAYNE—If the federal parliament passed a bill like that to give the APS enhanced powers in that regard, would the Victorian police follow that up with training and advising of your officers who would normally be present at airports to ensure that they were aware of those changes?

Deputy Commissioner Kelly—Absolutely. The issues that we have been working through with APS in the airport since APS took over the role of airport security are through the counter-terrorism coordination unit in terms of training awareness from both sides—from the APS side and from our side—to make sure that our members understand their complete role and APS officers understand their role. It is support in a common cause. It is about personal security for people at airports and the extrication of offenders who might disrupt that. So we have arrangements with APS to support them in their role and we are currently going further on the enhancement of that. That is probably all I would be prepared to say in the public hearing.

Senator PAYNE—We might come back to it later on.

Senator STOTT DESPOJA—Now that Senator Payne has raised the issue of police powers, I might begin with that. Since September 11 there has been a raft of Commonwealth and state legislative changes to allow for greater powers. I see that you have listed in the submission the community protection act, the Commonwealth powers legislation—comparable legislation to that of the Commonwealth—the Crimes (Property Damage and Computer Offences) Act and the Crime Commission legislation. The FOI act has also been amended. Could you give the committee an idea of whether any of the new powers under these pieces of legislation have been invoked? Have you had any reason to use the new powers? I know that a lot of them have come in fairly recently. Has anyone been charged under the new legislation?

Deputy Commissioner Kelly—That information actually goes down the path of intelligence. We could talk about the intelligence arena at a later time.

Senator STOTT DESPOJA—I am happy to put these questions on notice. I will not be here for the in camera session, but I am sure my colleagues will chase the questions up. If there is anything you do not want to discuss now, you could—

Deputy Commissioner Kelly—What I can say about the state legislation is that it has considerably enhanced our capacity in counter-terrorism capability and prevention. The key piece is to make sure that the various state legislations that have been passed since September 11 and Bali, along with the Commonwealth legislations, are both seamless and complementary, so that there are not any issues of investigating criminal elements of a terrorist act or just criminal elements here that might be overridden by other pieces of legislation. To overcome that, in Victoria we have set up a specific unit, the Legislative Review Unit, within the Counter-Terrorism Coordination Unit. The Legislative Review Unit feeds directly into the Legislative Review Unit of the National Counter-Terrorism Legislative Review Subcommittee, and that committee is looking on a national basis to ensure complementary application of the legislation

to ensure that nothing will impede, if you like, a prosecution or a successful investigation into, or the prevention of, a terrorist act. We believe the process is a very good process because for us it has a review level within the state and on a national basis in terms of the Commonwealth legislation if we need to change from one to another—if we were doing something under the Crimes Act here and needed to go to the Commonwealth terrorist legislation, for example.

Senator STOTT DESPOJA—Is that state process an ongoing review process where there is no particular time line? I noticed that in other places we have been to—for example, the Northern Territory—they are in a specific process of review at the moment.

Mr Moran—Could I add to what has been said. I think that the process of legislative reform that gives rise to your question is one of the best current examples of cooperative federalism, at least from the state's point of view. The premiers were actively involved in negotiating with the Prime Minister some key features of the legislative change, and Premier Bracks was at the forefront of those negotiations. Obviously there was a commitment from the state to follow through at our end of that, and this is without comment on some other aspects of Commonwealth legislation which have been introduced. Secondly, the government in Victoria has been quite responsive to the suggestions coming from VicPol itself as to what might be done to improve the legislative base we are dealing with on these issues. That has been given quite a high priority, as have proposals from the police and others for additional expenditures to better equip the state to deal with terrorism and its consequences.

From our view we would hope to see into the future a continuous process of consideration of the legislative base, both at a state and Commonwealth level, but in the context of a commitment from the Commonwealth government to work in that spirit of cooperative federalism, which from our point of view was very useful indeed in working through some of the changes that have been made through the Victorian parliament in recent times.

Senator STOTT DESPOJA—While we are on the record, are there any further comments you would like to make about your satisfaction or not with the degree of police powers that are afforded under the legislation that has been passed at a state level?

Deputy Commissioner Kelly—The legislation gives us a greater capacity than we had before. We have very good capacity in terms of criminal legislation in Victoria anyway, particularly in terms of warrants and other technical aspects of policing, but this enhances our capacity on the prevention and intelligence side. As I said earlier on, our focus is heavily on prevention and intelligence, in terms of CT. These powers—aside from the power to detain contaminated people—certainly support very heavily the capacity of prevention and intelligence gathering to prevent a catastrophe in Victoria. So, yes, they are very helpful.

Senator STOTT DESPOJA—In the submission and in your opening statement, Deputy Commissioner, you talked about the database of critical infrastructure, iconic buildings and other significant places. For the benefit of the committee, can you give us an idea about them? I believe you said in your statement that you have 600 on that database.

Deputy Commissioner Kelly—When we started, it was a refinement exercise. We had 600 pieces of what we believed were potentially critical infrastructure, iconic buildings and places of significance. That has been able to be refined and reduced to a lower number now. But they are

the ones subject to the legislative mandate of having risk assessment plans, particularly critical infrastructure that we are involved in in terms of the audit process or the testing. That database is common in all states in terms of critical infrastructure being fed back to the national critical infrastructure group. Then there is the Critical Infrastructure Advisory Committee that provides certain information for those.

So we have been working setting up the networks and providing information on risk assessment for those key planks—critical infrastructure, iconic buildings and places and events of significance such as the Grand Prix, the air shows and things like that—since the Counter-Terrorism Coordination Unit has been set up and, I might say, for a long time before that through our intelligence group, which had been working very closely with those events' agencies and organisers and those of other pieces of infrastructure prior to that.

Mr Moran—From my position, I think Victoria Police has been quite responsive in its dealings with a variety of groups in Victoria regarding the security issues which they might face. You cannot do everything on day one, and so, in a sense, Victoria Police has in my view taken the very sensible view that you start with the things that you are most worried about and work from there. We have some particular challenges because of the nature of many of the utilities in Victoria, their ownership arrangements being different from what you find in at least some other states. But again I think the people who have effective management control over that infrastructure have come to work ever more effectively with Victoria Police on these matters.

Senator STOTT DESPOJA—I was going to ask about that risk assessment process that you referred to and the fact that obviously it involves utilities and the private sector and a range of other groups and organisations. Is there a time line on that? You are obviously working through that process of liaising and assessing with them.

Deputy Commissioner Kelly—If you go back to the emergency management arrangements, most of the places that we talk about have been encapsulated within the emergency management framework for years. The CT extension to their risk management plans is something that is new for them to finish off. That will finalise itself fairly rapidly. But it is not a matter of going back to the start and writing a plan, because the emergency management plans in terms of their consequence or natural disaster have been there for many years. It is really that piece on the end where we say: 'Rather than a natural disaster, if this was caused by a criminal act, what would you do? These are the things that we would supply to you in terms of what we believe that you should be doing for the various risk levels that have just been validated under the National Counter-Terrorism Plan, but we would operate within the emergency management framework and the police component, the investigation component, of a criminal activity would be tacked on the end—be it just a criminal act or a terrorism act.

Mr Esplin—I think it is important to stress that we are not starting from a zero base in terms of our looking at critical infrastructure. A lot of work had been done before Longford, but certainly significantly more work was done post Longford and post 9/11. There have been two reviews, as was indicated earlier. I think the thrust of our activities is about recognising that this is risk management, disaster recovery planning and business continuity planning. As the deputy commissioner has indicated, it is putting that other tail on it about the potential for intentional disruption or damage to the supply system. By taking that approach we are able to engage with the private sector in a very complete way. It is an appropriate way for them to do their risk

management. It is about sharing intelligence and sharing systems of understanding. But we were a long way down the track when some of this work was started on a national basis.

Mr Moran—Could I add the observation that one of the things that is different is that there is now a heightened concern about possibilities and what might happen, clearly. That has effects in a number of areas. It certainly has the effect within government, as you have no doubt discovered, that people like us seem to spend more time on these issues and more resources are committed to support us in planning and all the other sorts of measures that have been already discussed this morning. It is interesting that in the utilities, where perhaps some of these issues would have been handled at a somewhat junior level, there are signs that more senior managers are recognising the importance of committing from their end to more effective planning and preparedness for these issues. I am not saying that it is perfect but, in respect of those who manage the utilities, I believe there is incumbent upon them a great responsibility to pay an equivalent level of attention to these matters from their perspective to that which government has now decided to devote to these matters.

Senator STOTT DESPOJA—You mentioned resources. Obviously there is an impressive list of state funding that has been dedicated to various services. Perhaps I should ask Mr Esplin and Deputy Commissioner Kelly how they feel about the appropriateness of the resources that have been provided to them. Perhaps more generally, from a Commonwealth perspective, is the state feeling that the Commonwealth has provided sufficient funds and resources?

Mr Moran—I will follow on after they have answered the question.

Senator STOTT DESPOJA—I thought it was quite a gift from a Commonwealth member to a state representative, but I have also given the services a chance to comment in relation to the state.

Deputy Commissioner Kelly—That is a pretty loaded question.

Mr Moran—There is no budget give, though, is there, Deputy Commissioner?

Senator STOTT DESPOJA—Acknowledging that you can always do with more resources, in terms of the allocation and how you have gone about dedicating what funds and resources to what particular areas, has that been a satisfactory process?

Deputy Commissioner Kelly—There is absolutely no doubt that the funding base the state government has made available to us in this round in terms of our response, intelligence and consequence management capacity has greatly enhanced our domestic capacity. The resource base has been not only a physical resource base in terms of people but also a technical resource base which, even though we have the sophistication of the equipment that most agencies have both at a state and federal level, has certainly given us the availability in the intelligence, forensic and first response areas to grow the capacity even further. So the resources are very good.

We believe that, as you say, we could always do with more resources, but the resources that we have in terms of counter-terrorism and our role in this whole issue are very good. The areas that they were designated to are critical areas for these issues and we have been able to build our

capacity a lot more. For example, if we did not have the funding, we would not have had the counter-terrorism coordination unit capability. The other parts of it are the consequence management side of things as well as the critical first response side of things, so it has given us the whole package. It has been terrific—really good.

Mr Esplin—I took your question to include the Commonwealth assistance provided to the states.

Senator STOTT DESPOJA—It did.

Mr Esplin—I would say that it has been a good process for the emergency services in terms of the consequence management and a cache of equipment that EMA has been responsible for devising with the states. Again, it has been an opportunity for the Commonwealth, states and territories to work together in identifying what is required and then disbursing it in a way that is appropriate to the risk environments in the different states and territories. So at that level it is a good process but it is important that those sorts of processes are maintained—that there is a joint development, a joint work-up, a joint identification of need and then matching resources to that need. That is a critical way forward that has to be maintained. It can also be in the area that Deputy Commissioner Kelly referred to with training and development. EMA, through its institute, can play a key role in providing the opportunity to bring resources together to share those experiences and ensure interoperability across state and territory jurisdictional boundaries.

Mr Moran—This is an important point. There have obviously been discussions within Victoria about what additional resources might be required. An evaluation of proposals from various agencies such as the police force, emergency services and human services has been taken out of the normal budget process for government and, at the level of officials, conducted principally in my department as opposed to the Treasury arrangements which normally apply. Everything that has come out of that process led by my department has been approved by the government and by the Treasury. So we have not, at the top of the process, asked for anything that has not been provided. That is not to say that different agencies might not have wanted more than they got, but the government was prepared to accept that a professional evaluation of the bids would be undertaken from a whole-of-government perspective at a departmental level. Then, having received the proposals, the government said, ‘You can have the money.’ So, in the case of my department, I got everything I asked for.

The final point is that the view in Victoria is that these issues are not simply a Commonwealth responsibility. They are the responsibility of all governments—and I include local government. It would be inappropriate, therefore, for a Victorian government to say, ‘Yes, this is important, but we’ll only do the things that should be done if the Commonwealth somehow puts a whole lot of money in the direction of the Victorian government.’ The Commonwealth government is obviously spending lots of money on its own initiatives and for its own purposes. I make no comment on that, but the view of government in this state is that whatever needs to be done, and whatever should be funded after a proper evaluative process, is fundamentally the responsibility of the state government. And that is how it is being treated through the process which I described a moment ago.

Senator STOTT DESPOJA—Excuse me, I have to leave. Are you happy to take questions on notice?

Mr Moran—Sure.

Senator STOTT DESPOJA—I think Senator Payne exhausted everything on New Dawn except for one question: who comes up with names like Octopus, Minotaur, and New Dawn?

Mr Moran—There is a parrot working in Victoria Police!

Deputy Commissioner Kelly—We have a process by which a certain group nominates names for operations so that we do not offend anybody by inadvertently naming something after somebody.

Proceedings suspended from 11.02 a.m. to 11.11 a.m.

Mr BYRNE—I want to ask a few questions about page 5 of your submission, which talks about some of the expenditures by the Victorian government. The first question I want to ask is in relation to the \$2.5 million that is being spent on an upgrade of disaster management kits at hospitals, the purchase of rapid response and communication ambulance vehicles, the establishment of a pharmaceutical stockpile, the upgrading of decontamination facilities and the enhancement of disease surveillance and radiation monitoring equipment. I just want you to flesh that out a bit.

Dr Hall—We have embarked on a process of increasing the capability in the ambulance service with regard to personal protective equipment. Also, we are increasing the capability of hospital emergency departments to deal with chemical, biological and radiation incidents. We have detection equipment, which can be deployed at the scene of an incident to examine the nature of radiation and the kind of response that would be required to deal with it. We also have equipment to deal with that issue in hospital emergency departments, again to guide the response to radiation issues. With regard to the pharmaceutical stockpile, we are developing our pharmaceutical stocks to respond to issues such as the anthrax issue that came up in the United States and the white powder incidents that we had in Australia. We are working with the national arrangements to refine exactly the kinds of drugs needed. That process is ongoing. That is for both antibiotics for biological agents and drugs for chemical agents.

Mr BYRNE—Who funds the stockpiles of pharmaceuticals?

Dr Hall—We will have access to some Commonwealth drugs, but there is also state funding for those pharmaceuticals.

Mr BYRNE—Who determines in each state the level of pharmaceuticals required?

Dr Hall—We have a process where, with our REMTAG and CHEMTAG committees, we determine what we think is a reasonable level of pharmaceuticals for those issues and we participate in the national process. A number of Commonwealth committees are looking at the biological side in particular. That decision is made in consultation with those bodies.

Mr BYRNE—Do we have a full range of stocks currently available for the scenarios that have been gamed out in each of those areas?

Dr Hall—This is under continuous development, but for the scenarios that have been discussed—largely based on historical incidents such as the anthrax—we have pharmaceutical stockpiles intended to address comprehensively those issues.

Mr BYRNE—So you are saying that in a potential scenario where we had some sort of anthrax attack here we would have sufficient pharmaceuticals to deal with that contingency in this state?

Dr Hall—In terms of the planning we have done and the experience we have had with the white powder incidents, we have gauged our stockpile on the basis of both the experience and the contingency planning, and it is adequate for those purposes.

Mr BYRNE—I need to be fairly careful in this question, I suspect, but would you be able to roughly indicate what the level of that pharmaceutical stockpile would be?

Dr Hall—I cannot give you numbers at this point.

Mr BYRNE—Could you take that on notice?

Dr Hall—Yes.

Mr BYRNE—Is that also in terms of chemical weapons and so on?

Dr Hall—Exactly the same sort of process is applied to pharmaceuticals that might be required for those agents.

Mr BYRNE—You would be providing an assurance that, in a scenario like a chemical weapons attack—as gamed out—or an anthrax attack, we would have sufficient supplies?

Dr Hall—In terms of the experiences that we have had and the analyses we have done, we have—and are developing—stockpiles to deal with those scenarios.

Mr BYRNE—Are you able to give us an outline of what the decontamination facilities are and where they might be?

Dr Hall—Essentially, we see a two-phase process where, if there were an incident that required decontamination on the scene, the fire service would have the primary responsibility for conducting that decontamination on the scene. We also have systems within our hospitals to ensure appropriate decontamination of people as they arrive. It may well be that some people will self-present to hospitals, where we can arrange to have decontamination of those people as they present.

Mr Moran—From our point of view, we would prefer any questions that go to numbers either of people or, in this case, of pharmaceuticals to respond to situations to be dealt with in camera.

CHAIR—If those questions can be answered on notice, they can be treated as in camera responses by the committee if they are in written form.

Mr BYRNE—I am prepared, for the purposes of the exercise, to ask these questions in camera, but, obviously, I still want to ask the questions. I turn to emergency services. A scenario in which it is not clear as to whether or not a terrorist incident is occurring—an explosion somewhere or a child-care centre, something like that—was discussed. If emergency service workers attend in such a scenario, what protection do they have in case a biological weapon is being used? Say, for example, that they attend but do not know what it is. Does every fire unit et cetera carry a protection unit?

Mr Moran—I wonder whether that question would perhaps be best addressed to the emergency services.

Mr BYRNE—Either/or; I am just happy to ask it generally.

Mr Esplin—The first line of protection is an awareness and training program that is being put in place to ensure that all first responders do not just charge into a situation—that they consider the potential for it to be something more sinister than a naturally caused event. I think that that is the critical feature that we must get right: we must alert our first responders to the potential for it to be something more sinister than a simple explosion, if I can use that term. At a second level, a significant cache of equipment is now being provided to the fire and emergency services and ambulance services to provide them with the personal protective equipment necessary for those sorts of events. I think that the combination of awareness, a bit of additional care in the way that they respond to an event and the personal protective equipment on their vehicles or appliances is the answer to your question.

Mr BYRNE—If I had that sort of protective capacity in the event of there being a fairly innocuous incident that is then discovered to be—

Mr Esplin—The equipment is carried with them on their vehicles so that it is available to them. If they are sufficiently aware of the circumstances, they have the opportunity to use that personal protective equipment.

Mr BYRNE—Does that apply to the police as well?

Deputy Commissioner Kelly—It does. Our first responders, now, to incidents of explosions—gas or anything like that—have an awareness of what Mr Esplin is talking about through training. Our first responder to explosions and things like that is the Special Operations Group, followed by the forensic capacity. There is sufficient equipment and augmented equipment, suits et cetera, for their personal safety. We have that now, and we will receive even more through the EMA arrangements under the national counter-terrorism framework and under the funding arrangements through Emergency Management Australia. Our first responder, the Special Operations Group—the critical responder—is very well protected.

Mr Esplin—At another level, there is a state level committee that is made up of the health side of the business, the police and emergency services side, which considers the state's capabilities around chemical, biological and radiological issues. It develops the joint strategies, the multiagency strategies, that are necessary. I think, to pick up on the notion that was put on the record before of network management, there is an increasing use of secondments across different agencies to ensure that the awareness levels are raised, not just of an organisation's own

needs but also of the capabilities, exposures and needs of other organisations. The instance there is the placement of a fairly senior firefighter into the Counter-Terrorism Unit in Victoria Police to ensure that the way of operating is interoperable between police and emergency services who might be responding in the first instance to an event.

Deputy Commissioner Kelly—Particularly in an explosion event where there might be a fire or a criminal act, where you have the fire brigade as a controlling agency for the fire as well as the police being the controlling agency for the criminal act, where the Special Operations Group need to do their thing and the fire brigade need to do their thing. The secondment capacity that we have entered into has been very valuable for us. It builds on the other secondment opportunities that we have had with our contemporary international analyst in our intelligence unit, who has been exposed to the terrorism regime for many years.

Mr BYRNE—So the scenarios for protection of emergency services workers, police and any other operational people who are attending the scene of the incident are such that, if there was sarin gas, for example, or something like that, you could say that these scenarios have been gamed out and the appropriate protections will be afforded to the workers in the field.

Deputy Commissioner Kelly—I think the issue with training and awareness of the members is that you fully equip them with the training and awareness, as far as you possibly can, make them aware of the dangers, approach everything on a risk basis—that is the way that we approach everything—and be guided in the first instance by those emergency services that have a lead role. Where it is not a police responsibility, we would be guided by what the fire brigade personnel would be telling us and we would be excluded from the hot zone to do other functions.

Mr BYRNE—The trigger then, in terms of a general concern or deployment, would be the nature of the incident. So, if there is an incident and it is reported somewhere in Melbourne, is there some fairly quick assessment that is conducted as to whether that presents within a profile? If it does present within a profile, that then very much shapes the deployment of not just the personnel but the protective equipment as well.

Mr Esplin—Starting at the top, Victoria has a multiagency call taking dispatch process so that in a situation where an event occurs the details are taken and the parameters of the dispatch that are put in place by the system are determined by the nature of the event. So if it was an event that was ambiguous, as to cause or whatever, police and the fire services might both be dispatched to it. I think at the highest order, at that first point of contact, that first notification of an event, the process starts to shape what resources might be required and, in the resources that are required, the sort of care and attention and awareness that are required flow from that first point.

Mr BYRNE—Each of the scenarios that have occurred, in terms of the terrorist incidents, are things that appear not to have been gamed out, One presumes that, in terms of the targets that might be looked at by terrorists, there would be stuff that they would anticipate that authorities have not gamed out. As a consequence of that, I ask again: is there some sort of ongoing assessment conducted to cover the widest range of potential contingencies and thus shape the response?

Mr Esplin—We would call it looking over the horizon. In Victoria we are trying to use a process of scenario based planning: looking over the horizon and letting people think outside the square, if you like, to explore the most ‘out there’ sorts of scenarios that the state might be required to respond to. I think that is the sort of process that enables us to shape, based ultimately on risk assessment, just what the scenarios are that we will need to respond to. We need to think outside the square and think over the horizon of the sorts of risk environments that might confront us.

Mr BYRNE—That has been done. I would talk about the changing nature, but I might save those questions for in camera evidence.

Mr Moran—I will add to what the Deputy Commissioner and the Emergency Services Commissioner have said. I think part of the key to this is a greater emphasis on scenario planning for different sorts of eventualities, which is occurring, and more substantial and more frequent exercises, which will occur also. As I said, it cannot all happen overnight; these things take time to put together. But they are being put together and they are part of the reflection of the added importance placed on preparedness in this area.

Mr BYRNE—Also, in terms of the expenditure and the priority, one would have thought that the nature of the threat presented at the moment ensures that this is amongst the highest priority projects; that it is not just a question of when things eventuate but a matter of saying that there is an increased threat and therefore we should be responding appropriately within inappropriate timelines.

Mr Moran—That is correct. A vast amount of work has already been done.

Dr Hall—I will illustrate that. The Chemical Emergency Management Technical Advisory Group and the Radiation Emergency Management Technical Advisory Group have been set up specifically in part to address those types of questions—to think through what would be potential exposures. They are multiagency groupings that, again with this concept of network management, fit in with the state CBR overall response, but the approach has been to adopt an all-hazards approach so that we can logically cover as many of the bases as possible. This is technically fairly difficult, but we are undertaking that process.

Mr BYRNE—I will finish because I am aware of the time. Is your guiding line from the intelligence agencies? Do they provide you with a framework? Is it only from our intelligence agencies?

Mr Moran—That is getting into a question that would fit into the in camera box, I think.

Mr Esplin—I will just add one point that I think is critical. Dr Hall has made the point about the multiagency and network nature of the approach. The way the state responds builds on the way we respond to the more benign events. But the same need for caution applies to a potential chemical spill as to a potential terrorist event. Our emergency services are very mindful of the dangers that they are exposed to when they respond to a hazardous incident. It is that line of defence. It is familiarity with the sort of care and attention that they need to apply in responding to a benign event and, if necessary, ultimately to a terrorist event.

Deputy Commissioner Kelly—Building on that, in terms of chemical spills and domestic disputes that might arise concerning barricaded persons, it would suffice to say that practice is not uncommon. Our emergency management arrangements are practised every day of the week, from the simplest car accident to the most complicated industrial accident.

Mr Moran—I will just make one final observation. Clearly, as has already been mentioned, relationships between different states and territories and with the Commonwealth government, in terms of sharing experiences and observations about what is required, are very important here. But we also need to tap a sense of what is best practice internationally. As one example, the director of the government branch in my department has been mentioned already in some of the papers and the discussion. He is not here today because he has just gone to Harvard to do a major program on these issues, solely for the purpose of tapping into a range of people not only from North America but from other locations who are at the forefront of thinking about these issues and what you do about them. We are seeking to invest effort and resources in the best way of being absolutely up to date on what the people at a best practice level internationally are doing so that we can continually improve our approach. Training is an important part of that but many other things as well fire from that.

CHAIR—You talked about a register of buildings et cetera that you have documented. Do you have a register of heavy lifting equipment and structural engineers to use in the event of a significant building collapse as a result of a terrorist attack?

Deputy Commissioner Kelly—Emergency management and the framework that operates within the SERCC—the State Emergency Response Coordination Centre—has that for a number of issues in terms of augmenting resources for any type of natural disaster that requires heavy lifting. For example, in bushfires we use bulldozers, graders, helicopters—

CHAIR—Are those ready for quick response?

Deputy Commissioner Kelly—There is an immediacy of access. The people who sit on the emergency management committees that are developed within the police structure are the people who have the ability at a regional level to make a decision and commit resources without recourse to a higher authority. They must be able to make one phone call when they are asked and have the supply occur. Then, once they are committed, they operate within their own command structure on what they are doing. You say, ‘I want that piece of equipment removed,’ or something and they go and tell their people to remove it using their normal processes. That is a critical part of it. It has been critical for a long time that we have access to a virtually infinite bucket of resources. If we cannot get that from within the state, we move to the next level. That is the way it has worked for a long time. So, yes, we do do that.

Mr Esplin—That is legislated for in the Emergency Management Act, which provides for a position at local government level of municipal emergency resources officer. One of the functions of that officer is to maintain a register of resources and be available to provide them in the event of an emergency scenario. It is a critical part of our pre-planning not only to know where resources are available but to have multiple sources of resourcing. The state’s arrangements build first at the local level. If the local level is overwhelmed it goes to the regional level and finally the state level, and if the state is overwhelmed we seek assistance from the Commonwealth through EMA.

Deputy Commissioner Kelly—The chairlift collapse is a good example—the pylon that came down. They make one phone call and the crane is there, so it works very well.

CHAIR—Throughout the morning and everywhere else we have been talking about a terrorist incident or a terrorist attack when in fact, since September 11, we also have to consider coordinated and simultaneous terrorist acts. That was not one; it was four—three successful and one not quite so successful, although it resulted in a lot of loss of life. How developed is your thinking on handling a coordinated and simultaneous terrorist attack—for instance, if you had one at Wodonga, one at Geelong and one in Melbourne?

Deputy Commissioner Kelly—One of the assumptions that is now clear in the minds of all of our first responders is that when you respond to an incident you should expand your thinking as to whether other incidents are occurring simultaneously and connect them. There is an issue of first response and there is an issue of intelligence with regard to that, but there is also the issue of interoperability and national response in other places. The National Counter-Terrorism Plan and the handbook cater for interoperability of all first responders around the country. If we had an incident here and our first response was not capable, we would immediately seek assistance from some other state and they could immediately deploy. They are interoperable. We build our capacity in terms of that. That was really the focus of the SACPAV committee about 1985: to ensure that we had interoperability and augmentation in terms of capacity on the ground. That has continued. State-Commonwealth relations have been very good in that regard, particularly at a higher level if it brings in the Defence Force as well. Nationally we can plug into one another. Port Arthur is an example of that—our people went to Port Arthur. Another is the bushfires, when interstate and overseas people came to assist us.

Mr Esplin—The state has explicitly looked at its capability to deal with an extreme or catastrophic scale event or multiple concurrent events. The example I put before you is the white powder incidents following 9-11. The state's capability to deal with a potential CBR event was pretty well tested by dealing with up to 50 white powder events per day spread across the length and breadth of Victoria. We learned a lot from that process about the need to deal with multiple concurrent events. Some of the additional support that is now provided by SES as a support agency flows from the lessons of the white powder incidents.

The second example I would put before you is the bushfires. As Deputy Commissioner Kelly said, most of Victoria was dry and exposed to extreme bushfire risk. The strategy put in place by Victoria was not only to provide a significant weight of attack on fires that were burning, such as in the north-east or in Gippsland, but also to maintain a fire cover for the balance of the state, which included a surge capacity. On the basis of our risk assessment, the rest of the state could easily have had another significant fire in the south-west or the north-west. One did occur in the south-west of the state, and the state was able to deal with it with quite a significant weight of attack. That is the level of pre-planning that is in place now. It factors in that we might need to do more. It is not just one event—it could be multiple events—and we plan on that basis now.

Senator PAYNE—I want to follow up on something that Deputy Commissioner Kelly made reference to: the involvement of the ADF. You talked at length today about Emergency Management Australia but not a great deal about the ADF. Could you outline for the committee the processes and lines of communication that operate under counter-terrorism arrangements for

contact with the ADF? Can you give an example of where you might avail yourselves of TAG East or the Incident Response Regiment?

Deputy Commissioner Kelly—It all starts from a base of state capacity and dealing with your own incidents within your own capacity of first responders. If, for example, it were a siege or hostage situation and it was a singular issue, our Special Operations Group would be more than capable of handling that. If there were criminal activity—and we have divided into emergency management here—and we required the ADF for TAG or the new regiment for CBR, the protocols are very clearly set out in the National Counter-Terrorism Plan and the handbook for when a request is made to deploy because it is beyond the state's capability and resources to finalise the incident. There is a protocol of the Police Forward Command Post then engaging with the ADF if they are to be deployed. That is handled at a national level, and the request would go up through the State Crisis Centre to the national level. If and when the approval was given, the TAG commander would consult with the forward commander. There is then some documentation that is processed and an official handover is done to the ADF. When the incident has been completed, there is a hand-back. So there is a process there that is well tried and tested.

The other one is DACC—Defence Assistance to the Civil Community. That occurs under the emergency management arrangements for things like fire and flood, where we might need the Army to come in and build bridges, cut firebreaks or things like that. Again, that is another request that we would make up the channel through Emergency Management Australia, and it would come down through Mr Esplin's area for the provision of coordinated resources to do that on a civil support basis. In terms of CT, there is a very strict protocol and there is a very strict audit trail of accountability—how it happens, what happens operationally at the front end, what happens when the exercise or the incident is terminated, the hand-back, the coronial requirements and what the ADF do after that and the emergency management side.

Senator PAYNE—When you say 'tried and tested', does that mean your exercises regularly include the ADF?

Deputy Commissioner Kelly—The SAC-PAV exercises on a number of occasions have included the ADF and I would imagine that will continue. The more recent one that we did with New Dawn, which was a multiple incident exercise, clearly included ADF, as did quite a number of the exercises that the state forces played a role in preceding the Olympic Games.

Mr Esplin—Local Defence in Victoria is represented on the Victorian Emergency Management Council too, so there is a very formal and very ongoing relationship with our colleagues from Defence in Victoria.

Deputy Commissioner Kelly—We have a very good social relationship as well.

Senator PAYNE—Great parties!

Deputy Commissioner Kelly—I mean in terms of our compatibility. The synergy between the two organisations is terrific.

Senator PAYNE—On the other side of that coin, Deputy Commissioner, you mentioned the resource that local government has for some areas in Victoria. What bodies are they represented on?

Deputy Commissioner Kelly—They are on all the municipal emergency response committees, in the municipal local government area. They are also at the Divisional Emergency Response Coordinator level. Within Victoria we have five police regions. Within each one of those regions there are five divisions, so they are at the level of superintendent. Then they are at the local government area, the local district area. Complementing that, under the new framework which we police from, there are 78 local government areas in Victoria. Some are joined, but 72 of those have what we call a local safety committee of all the key agencies. We are clearly of the opinion that community wellbeing is a key plank for the local government, of which policing is a part. So the local safety committees have key agencies. Every one of the 72 across Victoria—local government, emergency services, health, education and any key player in that local community—is designed to look at its own problems from a community wellbeing perspective and put them into a plan. That plan becomes the police plan for achievement at the district level. Part of that is the emergency management framework. So we have 72 of those, and then we have the emergency management structure with this in there as well.

Mr Esplin—The emergency management actually requires each local government to have an emergency management plan and an emergency management committee at its local government area, so there is a very formal relationship with local government at each area level. At the state level, the Municipal Association of Victoria is a representative on the Emergency Management Council.

Senator PAYNE—Does your organisation audit or evaluate the emergency management plans that are in place at local government level?

Mr Esplin—The director of the State Emergency Service is delegated that power for the broad emergency management plan, and the Country Fire Authority audits fire prevention plans at the local level.

Senator PAYNE—And follow-up is done if there are omissions?

Mr Esplin—Absolutely.

CHAIR—I think at this stage we will move to an in camera session. I ask all of the witnesses at the table to stay. There would be some health issues to be raised and then some intelligence matters. Before I ask people to leave, I thank people very much for their interest in and attendance at this morning's hearing on what is an issue of vital importance to all of us. I do thank you all. I am sorry you cannot stay for the rest of it, but we will move into camera now.

Evidence was then taken in camera—

Committee adjourned at 12.25 p.m.