



Police Federation
of Australia

The National Voice of Policing

Media Release

Government fails to deliver on public safety mobile broadband

Today's announcement that "a committee of Commonwealth, State and Territory officials to consider fully scoped proposals and report to the Council of Australian Governments in 2017" is to be established as a response to the Productivity Commission's report on public safety mobile broadband, shows that this Government has no plan for the safety of Australians.

In what can only be described as the longest running episode of *Yes Minister*, the move is just another occasion where the decision on the allocation of public safety mobile broadband has been fobbed off to a talk fest.

"Police and emergency services are horrified by a spineless decision made by this Government." Says Mark Burgess, CEO of the Police Federation of Australia.

"Government has been playing with this since 2011."

"First there was the Public Safety Mobile Broadband Steering Committee jointly chaired by the Attorney General's and Department of Communications, then there was the Senate Committee, the Joint Parliamentary Committee and the Productivity Commission report. And now it's back to a committee.

We have to question the intent of the Government – given that they have already announced that they are going to auction the unallocated 700MHz – it's a committee looking into nothing. *Very Yes Minister.*" He said.

This decision makes a mockery of the Government's comments that they "recognise(s) that mobile broadband offers significant potential to improve the efficiency of the emergency services and the safety of its officers.

"As we head into bushfire season, the Government continues to play with the safety of all Australian's, by not having a plan in place that will ensure emergency services can communicate without fear of interruption in times of heightened need. The last thing we need is yet another committee." Said Mr Burgess.

The PFA and other emergency-service providers made submissions to the 2011 Senate Committee inquiry into emergency communications.

Upon conclusion, the committee unanimously recommended that the:

“Commonwealth Government allocate sufficient spectrum for dedicated broadband public protection and disaster relief (PPDR) radio-communications in Australia”.

Two years later, the Joint Parliamentary Committee on Law Enforcement’s Inquiry into Spectrum for Public Safety Mobile Broadband recommended that:

“... an appropriate portion of the proceeds derived from the auction of spectrum to fund the allocation of 20MHz of spectrum in the 700MHz band for the purposes of a national public safety mobile broadband network.”

“Handing this back to a committee is not the answer and is a monumental waste of tax payers money,” says Mark Burgess.

“We need the Government to be firm and decisive and ensure that the safety of all Australian’s is protected by progressing the public safety mobile broadband issue with an allocation of 20MHz of 700MHz band spectrum to public-safety agencies as a priority.

It is imperative that the proposed auction be stopped until the Government advises the Australian community how they propose to provide public safety with a mobile broadband capability into the future.”

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