

Communiqué

Law, Crime and Community Safety Council

4 July 2014

The inaugural meeting of the Law, Crime and Community Safety Council (**LCCSC**) was held on 4 July 2014 in Melbourne, Victoria. The Victorian Attorney-General, the Hon Robert Clark MP and Minister for Police and Emergency Services, the Hon Kim Wells MP, chaired the meeting. Ministers from the Commonwealth, each state and territory and New Zealand with portfolio responsibility for law and justice, police and emergency management were in attendance as was a representative of the Australian Local Government Association.

The Prime Minister, the Hon Tony Abbott MP, gave the opening address and highlighted the opportunity for the council, which brings law makers and law enforcers together, to progress reforms that will improve community safety and fight crime across Australia and New Zealand.

The LCCSC was established by the Council of Australian Governments (**COAG**) to sharpen the nation's focus on fighting crime. It replaces two previously separate councils – the Standing Council on Law and Justice (**SCLJ**) and the Standing Council on Police and Emergency Management (**SCPEM**). It will assist COAG by developing a national and Trans-Tasman focus on fighting crime and promoting best practice in law, criminal justice and community safety.

Summary of decisions

Session 1: Law Reform

Uniform legal profession reform

Ministers:

- a) noted the value of the continual development of a seamless legal profession across Australia, through a state and territory based model
- b) agreed that non-participating jurisdictions (Queensland, South Australia, Western Australia, Tasmania, Northern Territory & Australian Capital Territory) consider implementing the uniform law developed by Victoria and New South Wales.
- c) noted that Queensland, Western Australia, the Northern Territory, Tasmania and South Australia would support the continual development of a seamless legal profession across Australia through state and territory based legislation provided the regulatory arrangements are in the interests of their respective

public and legal professions as a whole. These jurisdictions will monitor developments in Victoria and New South Wales.

Legal assistance reforms

Ministers:

- a) noted that the review of the National Partnership Agreement on Legal Assistance Services has been finalised
- b) agreed to work together on future legal assistance arrangements to commence from 1 July 2015
- c) provided in-principle support for the development of a national strategic framework for legal assistance services in conjunction with the development of a new national partnership agreement, with a draft to be provided for agreement at the next meeting.

Fines collection

The LCCSC agreed to pursue implementation of improved information sharing to collect unpaid fines.

National response to match-fixing in sport

Ministers discussed the need for ongoing and increased vigilance to address inappropriate and fraudulent sports betting and match-fixing activities to protect the integrity of sporting events. Ministers noted the legislative arrangements in each State and Territory to respond to match-fixing activities.

Session 2: Law Enforcement and Crime

LCCSC arrangements

Ministers agreed to arrangements for the operation of the Law, Crime and Community Safety Council.

LCCSC operating procedures

Ministers agreed to operating procedures for the LCCSC and to their publication on the LCCSC website.

Addressing the foreign fighter threat

The LCCSC received a report from the Director-General of Security and noted that the participation by Australians in jihadi activities in Syria and northern and western Iraq, and the potential return to Australia of jihadist war fighters, poses a significant and immediate threat to Australian domestic security and community safety.

A strategic national approach to serious and organised crime

Ministers agreed that Commonwealth, state and territory agencies will work together to develop a new draft response plan which will be put to ministers for consideration at a later LCCSC meeting.

Electronic bank records

The LCCSC expressed its concern regarding Australian banks not providing electronic records to law enforcement agencies when lawfully requested and expects that Australian banks assist law enforcement in all Australian jurisdictions by providing electronic records where warrants or other lawful access is permitted.

Framework for a national response to New Psychoactive Substances

Ministers endorsed the Framework for a National Response for New Psychoactive Substances, which was developed by the Intergovernmental Committee on Drugs (IGCD) with input from health, law enforcement and non-government experts and which provides a guide for a balanced national response to new psychoactive substances.

Responding to alcohol-fuelled violence

Ministers noted with concern the complex issues surrounding alcohol-fuelled violence, and agreed that the states and territories through the Intergovernmental Committee on Drugs (IGCD) should progress work on a Statement of Priorities for Alcohol.

Identity security: expansion of the Document Verification Service (DVS) commercial service

Ministers endorsed the expansion of DVS access amongst government and private sector organisations in Australia and New Zealand that meet the necessary requirements of the *Privacy Act 1988*.

Ministers noted that, as a secure online system for verifying information on identity documents issued by government agencies, use of the DVS helps to:

- a) improve the detection of fake or stolen identity documents, reducing both identity fraud against government and businesses and identity theft against individuals
- b) reduce the regulatory burden on business of client-identification obligations contained in certain Commonwealth, state and territory legislation

- c) promote the growth of Australia's digital economy through greater trust and confidence in the identities that citizens use to access online services and transactions
- d) protect the privacy of citizens in comparison to many alternative identity verification processes.

Session 3: Emergency Management

Bureau of Meteorology briefing on upcoming fire season – climate outlook

The Bureau of Meteorology presented a briefing on the climate outlook, including the heightened risk of an El Niño developing in late winter or spring. Ministers noted that an El Niño may increase the potential of dry and warm conditions across eastern Australia leading into and during the coming summer.

National strategy for disaster resilience

Ministers:

- a) affirmed their commitment to a national, integrated approach to building disaster resilience and the delivery of sustained behavioural change and enduring partnerships between governments, communities, businesses and individuals;
- b) noted achievements and current priorities in implementing the National Strategy for Disaster Resilience, including in the areas of disaster risk assessment and communication, land use planning, disaster mitigation and recovery, and engagement with the private and not-for-profit sectors; and
- c) tasked the Australia-New Zealand Emergency Management Committee to review the implementation of the National Strategy for Disaster Resilience with the aim of renewing the practical focus and identifying national priority actions for consideration by Ministers.

Revision of the National Emergency Risk Assessment Guidelines

Ministers endorsed a revised version of the National Emergency Risk Assessment Guidelines, affirming the importance of risk informed approaches to building the nation's disaster resilience. The Guidelines will support effective and nationally consistent emergency risk assessment approaches, helping to build more resilient communities and businesses by enabling access to consistent disaster risk information across jurisdictional borders.

National fire danger ratings system

Ministers:

- a) agreed that the development of a new National Fire Danger Rating System is a

- national priority, and
- b) noted that work to determine jurisdictional functional requirements, governance arrangements and a national project plan is being considered for National Emergency Management Project grant funding.

Emergency alert upgrade and system replacement

Ministers noted the delivery of the national telephone-based warning system, Emergency Alert, as a valued national warnings capability and discussed future enhancements to the system's operation and technology.