



NATIONAL SEARCH AND RESCUE COUNCIL

National Search and Rescue Council Charter

CHARTER of Council administration processes and formal arrangements

Date: 21/12/2017
Version: 1.0

The purpose of this Charter is to document in detail how the National Search and Rescue Council operates, including its key business processes in order to fulfil its functions as described within the Inter-Governmental Agreement (IGA).

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1. Purpose of the Council

- 1.1. The purpose of the National Search and Rescue Council is to ensure an efficient and effective search and rescue service is provided within the Australian search and rescue region that meets both international obligations and domestic requirements.
- 1.2. The Inter-Governmental Agreement (IGA) on National Search and Rescue Response Arrangements puts in place arrangements between the Commonwealth and State/Territory SAR Authorities on the coordination of search and rescue in the Australian region.

2. Objectives of the Council

- 2.1. As outlined within the IGA Terms of Agreement, the Council member organisations agree that the National SAR Council will be the national coordinating body for search and rescue response arrangements in Australia, with the following functions:

- Oversee the implementation of search and rescue arrangements within Australia's search and rescue region for consistency with the National Search and Rescue Response Arrangements;
- Sponsor and promote the development and use of the National SAR Manual, which details agreed search and rescue response and coordination arrangements in Australia; and
- Promote the ongoing effectiveness of the cooperative arrangements between the SAR Authorities.

(IGA, 2017)

3. Operation of the Council

Council Membership

- 3.1. The National Search and Rescue Council meets annually and consults out of session when necessary to discuss current and relevant issues within the SAR community.

The National SAR Council is to be chaired by AMSA and the Secretariat for the National SAR Council is also provided by AMSA to facilitate the implementation of the IGA.

(IGA, 2017)

NATSAR Council Secretariat – The Council Secretariat performs the day-to-day functions to deliver Council business in support of the national SAR system. This includes coordinating the administrative arrangements for meetings, working groups, action items and other Council initiatives.

NATSAR Council Chair – The Council Chair is appointed to represent the broad interests of the national SAR system as outlined in the IGA, providing an impartial view on Council business.

- 3.2. Membership of the NATSAR Council comprises representatives from each of the three SAR Authorities in Australia:

- I. the Australian SAR Authority (AMSA),
- II. each of the State and Territories SAR Authorities, and
- III. the Australian Defence Force.

(IGA, 2017)

- 3.3. Representatives from each jurisdiction as above will include:

NATSAR Council Delegate – is responsible for representing their authority's strategic interests in SAR (marine, land and aviation) and provide a conduit for formal decision making through their organisational structure.

NATSAR Council Members – work through their respective delegate as determined through their organisational structure to provide operational expertise for SAR and administrative support to Council business through the secretariat.

NATSAR Council Observers – are invited by the Council to participate in Council business and nominally will be provided with all information and opportunities in line with members, unless otherwise determined on a case by case basis.

Changes to NATSAR Council membership

- 3.4. It is the jurisdictions' responsibility to ensure continuous nomination of appropriate search and rescue delegates and members; and where possible have an overlap in attendance for continuity purposes.

Council membership proposals

- 3.5. Membership proposals outside of the three SAR Authorities are to be directed to the NATSAR Council Secretariat in writing for consideration at the next NATSAR Council convening.
- 3.6. The decision of the Council will be confirmed and formally recorded in the meeting minutes.
- 3.7. The outcome of the proposal will be communicated via written correspondence from the Council Chair.

4. Council roles and responsibilities

NATSAR Council Secretariat duties

- 4.1. Provided by AMSA, the key duties performed by the Secretariat are:
 - Develop and manage the NATSAR Council's strategic and administrative framework.
 - Monitor domestic and international SAR obligations through AMSA's role as the Australian SAR Authority.
 - Maintain domestic and international linkages with the SAR community.
 - Manage and coordinate correspondence on behalf of the Council, including public enquiries received through the NATSAR Council website 'contact us' page.
 - Facilitate all NATSAR Council meetings, including Working Groups and other Council initiatives.
 - Facilitate and manage Council meeting administrative arrangements.
 - Maintain and manage the amendment process for the NATSAR Council Manuals.
 - Manage updates and information sharing on the NATSAR Council website.
 - Manage and coordinate the Australian SAR Awards program, including hosting the National SAR Awards event.

NATSAR Council Chair duties

- 4.2. Provided by AMSA, the key duties performed by the Chair are:
 - Chair the convening's of the NATSAR Council or appoint an appropriate delegate to act on their behalf.
 - Represent the NATSAR Council's broad interests of the national SAR system in line with the obligations outlined in the IGA.
 - Correspond with Police Commissioner's and other external organisations to represent the Council's position on important initiatives and ongoing business.

NATSAR Council delegate and member duties

- 4.3. Provide relevant meeting material in liaison with the Secretariat, including jurisdictional SAR statistics, reports, papers for discussion etc.
- 4.4. Review relevant material ahead of meetings in order to make important Council decisions and provide comment and feedback on Council issues.
- 4.5. Appropriate representation at NATSAR Council meetings is the responsibility of Council delegates to ensure their respective jurisdiction's views are represented. If for any reason a jurisdiction cannot be represented, members will need to advise the Secretariat ahead of the convening and ensure the official meeting outcomes once confirmed are appropriately reviewed and discussed as required with the Secretariat.
- 4.6. As indicated in the IGA, each member organisation of the National SAR Council will fund their respective member's costs and expenses incurred in the course of Council business, unless otherwise agreed.

5. NATSAR Council annual meeting cycle

NATSAR Council 12 month meeting cycle

- 5.1. **Teleconference 1** – Typically held in March following the previous year's annual meeting, the purpose of the 1st Teleconference is to discuss Council business plan progress, arrangement regarding the next annual meeting and Council administration.
- 5.2. **Teleconference 2** – Typically held in July, the purpose of the 2nd Teleconference is to socialise annual meeting documents that require NATSAR Council members' input and/or feedback and the 1st draft annual meeting agenda.
- 5.3. **Teleconference 3** – Typically held in September, the purpose of the 3rd Teleconference is to finalise jurisdiction reports, papers, other documentation and meeting arrangements ahead of the annual meeting.
- 5.4. **NATSAR Council annual meeting** – Typically held in October as a two day meeting, held over two full days or three days (one full day and two half days, from Wednesday to Friday), the annual meeting allows members to discuss in person, topical issues that impact SAR, including the provision of advice and direction on strategic topics and make important decisions that contribute to the ongoing development of the national SAR system. It also provides the opportunity to review Council achievements in the previous 12 months and plan the next year's business objectives. The annual Australian SAR Awards event is normally hosted during the second evening (Thursday) of the annual meeting.
- 5.5. **Dedicated Working Groups** – When necessary, the Council can agree to establish ongoing or ad hoc working groups that specify particular objectives to resolve particular issues or initiatives identified by the Council. Working Group members are generally appointed on a voluntarily basis attracting people with particular subject matter expertise and operate on behalf of the Council. Each working group will have an appointed Chair and operate under a Terms of Reference to set out the scope, objectives and how the

working group will operate. Recommendations and outcomes will be reported to the Council as an ongoing update until agreed to conclude/finalise.

Information sharing

- 5.6. The Secretariat facilitate many platforms for the NATSAR Council to utilise when information sharing and storing meeting documentation:

NATSAR Council website (public view)

This is the Council's public facing website, which hosts all published documentation such as the NATSAR Manual, strategic documents, meeting reports etc., which are updated on a regular basis, following the annual meeting.

NATSAR Council website member's area

The member's area of the NATSAR Council website has restricted access requiring a username and password login. This platform provides members to share relevant information and documents through the Secretariat for member's review and information. The login details are provided to the Council via mobile SMS to ensure all security measures are taken.

NATSAR Council email distribution list

The NATSAR Council email distribution list is used for everyday business and circulating information on both a group and individual basis. The distribution list is updated on an ongoing basis as new working groups form and new members join.

Meeting documentation

- 5.7. Utilising both the members' area within the NATSAR Council website and email, the NATSAR Secretariat is responsible for supplying the relevant documentation ahead of, and following each NATSAR Council convening. This includes the meeting agenda, action table, previous meeting minutes/outcomes, and other documentation relevant to Council business.
- 5.8. Following each Council convening, the Secretariat is responsible for keeping a record of meeting minutes and outcomes for circulation and confirmation with the Council. This is typically provided to the Council in draft, two weeks following a teleconference (unless otherwise agreed). Members then have the opportunity to review and provide any feedback regarding the minutes out of session with the Secretariat.
- 5.9. Once finalised, the meeting minutes are published within the members' area of the NATSAR website as finalised.
- 5.10. Following the NATSAR Council annual meeting, the Secretariat is responsible for providing the draft meeting report. The report is typically circulated within 6 - 10 weeks of the meeting where members can provide feedback and/or comment.
- 5.11. Once agreed, the official report is finalised and published on the NATSAR Council website for public view.

Rotational hosting arrangement

5.12. The current agreement for the NATSAR Council annual meeting includes a rotational arrangement with hosting responsibilities shared between the States and Territories over an eight year cycle.

5.13. The current hosting rotation exists as follows:

- Western Australia, WA Police
- Australian Capital Territory, AFP
- Northern Territory, NT Police
- South Australia, SA Police
- Victoria, VIC Police
- Tasmania, TAS Police
- New South Wales, NSW Police
- Queensland, QLD Police

5.14. Any changes to the above rotation will need to be agreed by the Council and accompanied by a letter from the Council Chair to confirm the arrangement with the respective Commissioners of the parties involved. This will involve a consultation period to brief the hosting state on the hosting requirements.

Hosting State duties

5.15. Typically the hosting State will liaise with the Secretariat to confirm meeting arrangements.

5.16. Cost associated with meeting venue hire and other meeting costs such as catering, is normally borne by the hosting state unless otherwise agreed.

6. Council Strategic Documents

- 6.1. In order for the Council to fulfil its responsibilities as outlined in the IGA, the Secretariat have developed the Council's strategic framework consisting of a number of documents. Listed below are the strategic documents currently used by the Council, including a short description on their use and purpose.

Business Plan

The purpose of the business plan is to define the priorities and actions for the next two years to achieve the intended objectives in the Strategic Outlook. The actions highlighted in this Business Plan allow the NATSAR Council to understand what needs to be executed to translate strategy into operation.

Performance Report

The purpose of the Performance Report is to provide a summary of the Council's key achievements during the last financial year against the objectives and priorities set out in the Council Business Plan. The information has been drawn from completed items that are tracked through the NATSAR Council action plan and other activities that have been substantially progressed since the last annual meeting.

Action Plan

The purpose of the action plan is to document and track progress of action items that have resulted from Council meetings. The action plan is updated on a regular basis and each entry includes the responsible agency, update on progress and status of completion.

Council Charter

The purpose of the Charter is to document in detail how the NATSAR Council operates, including its key business processes in order to fulfil its functions as described within the Inter-Governmental Agreement (IGA).

Risk Register

The purpose of the risk register is to document, track and scale any potential risks impeding the Council or Australia's SAR system. This includes a means of mitigation and consultation throughout the risk period.

International Engagement Register

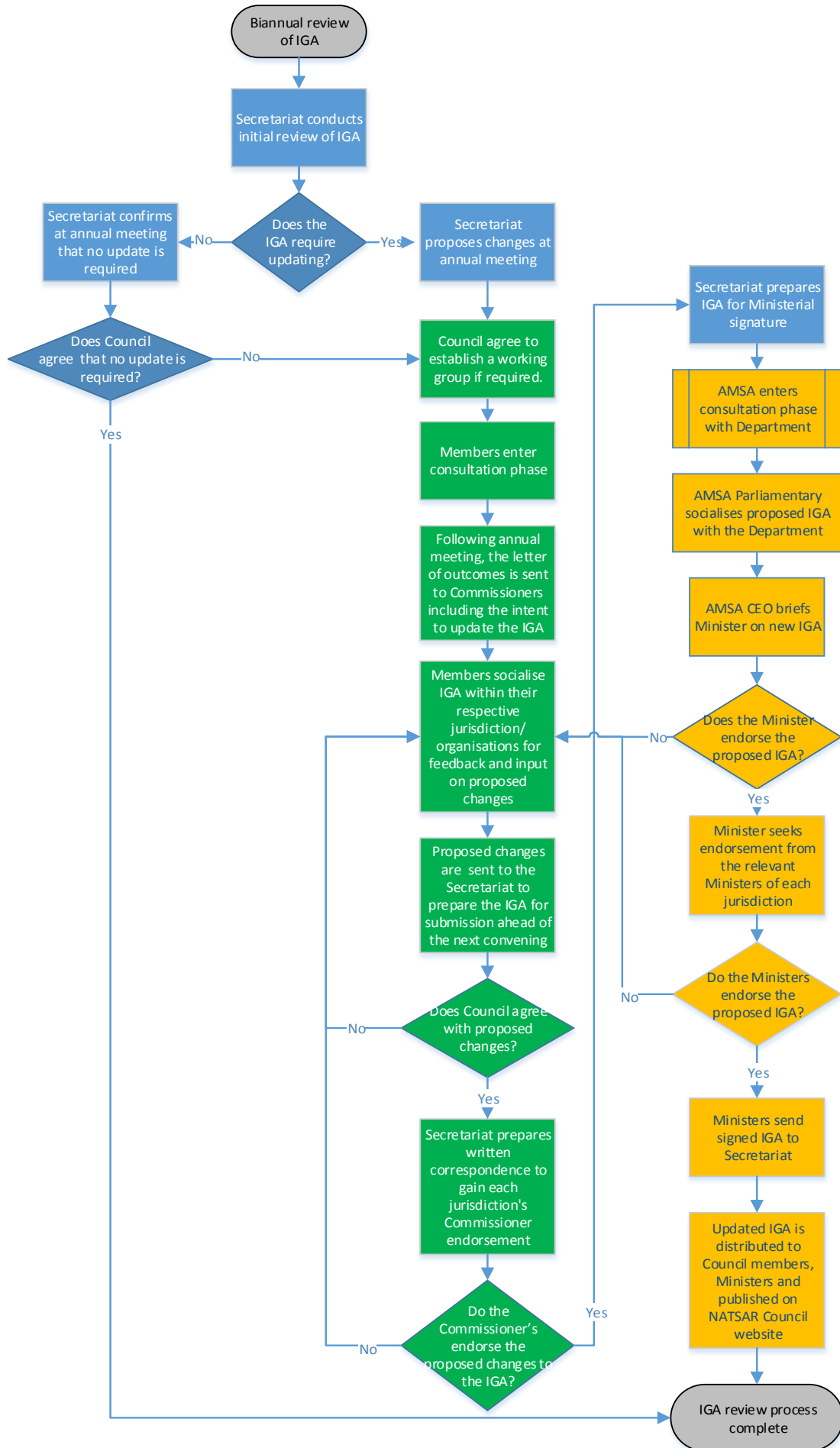
The purpose of the international engagement register is to assist to identify, document and track international liaison cross overs between NATSAR Council organisations that may benefit the Council in conducting business.

NATSAR Council Project Plan

The purpose of the NATSAR Council project plan is to document and track the 12 month calendar cycle of NATSAR arrangements. This document is used by the Secretariat to ensure a consistent and well-coordinated approach to Council business in the lead up to the annual meeting.

7. Inter-Governmental Agreement Review Process

- 7.1. The IGA review process (described over page) will be coordinated by the NATSAR Council Secretariat every 2 years to ensure the document is kept current and clearly stipulates the roles and responsibilities of each SAR Authority within the National Search and Rescue Response Arrangements.



8. NATSAR Manual amendment process

- 8.1. As per the IGA, a primary role of the Council is to sponsor and promote the development and use of the National SAR Manual, which details agreed search and rescue response and coordination procedures in Australia.
- 8.2. In order to maintain a current manual, the Secretariat manages a review and amendment process as part of the NATSAR Council annual meeting cycle each year.

Amendment process:

- I. Anyone can propose NATSAR Manual amendments to the Secretariat via the online form available on the NATSAR Council website.
- II. Secretariat collates proposed amendments and records them in the NATSAR Manual amendments schedule.
- III. The amendments schedule is submitted as a paper ahead of each NATSAR Council annual meeting.
- IV. Council members review the amendments and provide any feedback or comment during the NATSAR Manual amendment agenda item at the annual meeting.
- V. Agreed amendments are included in the next Manual edition, which is published following the annual meeting (typically in February).
- VI. Amendments that require further input are discussed out of session with the relevant parties, and re-submitted to the next Council convening or teleconference. This process will continue until the Council collectively agrees to the amendments.

Note: Typos or grammatical amendments that do not change the context of the information, are updated at the discretion of the Secretariat.

9. Australian SAR Award program

Australian SAR Award hosting arrangements

- 9.1. Every year during the NATSAR Council annual meeting the Council hosts the Australian SAR Award dinner to present awards for 'outstanding contribution to search and rescue or the saving of a human life within the Australian region'.
- 9.2. In total, the following award categories are presented by the Council:
 - **Professional** Australian SAR Award
 - **Non-professional** Australian SAR Award
 - **Commendation** Australian SAR Award
 - **Recognition of long serving Council members** NATSAR Council Award

Award criteria

- 9.3. Nominations are made from organisations or members of the general public in support of the Australian search and rescue community.
- 9.4. The awards are open to an individual, group or organisation and may relate to a particular search and rescue event or a sustained contribution to the SAR system over a period of time.
- 9.5. Nominations can be for both those who are professionally trained in SAR; or non-professional volunteers or members of the public and others who are not formally trained.
- 9.6. Nominations are open all year round and the incident should refer to one that has occurred during the financial year period (1 July to 30 June).
- 9.7. Nominations close on the 1st September ahead of the next NATSAR Council annual meeting (typically in October) to allow for Council members to vote and complete related award administration.

Nomination instructions

- 9.8. Download the Australian SAR Award nomination form from the NATSAR Council website at www.natsar.amsa.gov.au.
- 9.9. Complete the nomination form and return along with supporting documentation to the NATSAR Council Secretariat email address or by post.

Council voting process

- 9.10. Prepared by the Secretariat, the award summaries are circulated to the Council delegate(s) of each State and Territory Police service, the AFP and the ADF. Council representatives are encouraged to liaise with all relevant parties within their respective organisations to reach a consensus vote that represents an organisational view.
- 9.11. Each jurisdiction has the opportunity to exercise three votes:

- One vote worth 2 points for the full Australian SAR Award (professional)
- One vote worth 2 points for the Australian SAR Award (non-professional)
- One vote worth 1 point for a commendation recognition - It is not required to make a commendation vote and is up to the discretion of the jurisdiction whether one of the nominees is deserving of recognition.

9.12. The Secretariat collates each jurisdiction's vote to determine the successful recipient.

9.13. If the voting process indicates a draw between 2 or more nominations, AMSA may choose to exercise a vote to ensure one nomination is recognised as the winner.

9.14. Once determined, the Secretariat will contact the organisation/person that nominated the successful recipient and subsequently notify the recipient(s) of the outcome to invite them to officially receive the award at the awards dinner.

9.15. The outcome for the award is officially announced to the Council on the first day of the NATSAR Council annual meeting and through media channels to the public immediately following the event.

SAR Award Event

9.16. On behalf of the Council, the Secretariat is responsible for arranging the National SAR Awards dinner, which is held on the second evening of the meeting schedule. This includes arranging the awards and associated travel and accommodation for the SAR Award recipient(s) and appropriate media coverage.

9.17. The event is primarily funded by AMSA, unless cost sharing has otherwise been agreed.

9.18. Once the awardees are confirmed, the Secretariat will make travel and accommodation arrangements for their attendance to the dinner event unless otherwise agreed.

9.19. AMSA funds the cost associated with awardees attending the event but if the number of awardees exceeds AMSA's capacity to cover costs, a representative(s) from that respective crew/organisation will be asked to attend to accept the award on their behalf.

Attachment 1: History of rotational hosting arrangements

Year	Location	Dates
1976	Melbourne, DOT (ATG)	December
1977	Canberra, DOT (STG)	6-7December
1978	Adelaide, SA Police	5-6 December
1979	Hobart, TAS Police	27-28 November
1980	Brisbane, QLD Police	25-27 November
1981	Sydney, NSW Police	25-26 November
1983	Melbourne, VIC Police	8-10 February
1984	Canberra, Defence	18-20 September
1985	Perth, WA Police	3-5 September
1986	Darwin, NT Police	19-21 August
1987	Adelaide, SA Police	29 September - 1 October
1988	Hobart, TAS Police	20-22 September
1989	Brisbane, QLD Police	31 October - 2 November
1990	Sydney, NSW Police	23-25 October
1991	Melbourne, VIC Police	22-24 October
1992	Canberra, AFP	27-29 October
1993	Perth, WA Police	27-29 October
1994	Darwin, NT Police	17-19 August
1995	Adelaide, SA Police	27-29 September
1996	Hobart, TAS Police	19-21 November.
1997	Brisbane, QLD Police	18-20 November
1998	Sydney, NSW Police	10-12 November
1999	Melbourne, VIC Police	12-14 October
2000	Canberra, AFP	14-16 November
2001	Perth, WA Police	11-12 September
2002	Darwin, NT Police	10-11 October
2003	Adelaide, SA Police	13-14 November
2004	Hobart, TAS Police	18-19 November
2005	Brisbane, QLD Police	17-18 November
2006	Sydney, NSW Police	16-17 November
2007	Melbourne, VIC Police	15-16 November
2008	Canberra, AFP	13-14 November
2009	Perth, WA Police	12-13 November

2010	Darwin, NT Police	13-15 October
2011	Adelaide, SA Police	15-17 November
2012	Melbourne, VIC Police	16-18 October
2013	Hobart, TAS Police	6-8 November
2014	Sydney, NSW Police	1-3 October
2015	Brisbane, QLD Police	14-16 October
2016	Western Australia, WA Police	19-21 October
2017	Australian Capital Territory, AFP	18-20 October
2018	Northern Territory, NT Police	TBC
2019	South Australia, SA Police	TBC
2020	Victoria, VIC Police	TBC
2021	Tasmania, TAS Police	TBC
2022	New South Wales, NSW Police	TBC
2023	Queensland, QLD Police	TBC