



*Uniting Nations and Communications Technology  
for Greater Public Safety*

### **Emergency Services Grade Communications – Guidelines Development Status as at 28<sup>th</sup> August 2009**

APCOA's development of Guidelines for "Emergency Services Grade Communications" was endorsed at the August 2009 meeting of the APCO Global Alliance meeting, held in Las Vegas (USA).

The approval to proceed is timely given the current domestic backdrop of –

- o a Royal Commission into the tragic bushfires of February 2009, the terms of reference of which embraces every aspect of emergency services communications, operations and public notification;
- o Coronial enquiries, which among other considerations, examined whether or not public safety call-taking procedures were a contributing factor, i.e. structured call taking and the impact of rigid compliance to the script;
- o the Federal Government, five year, \$43 billion investment into national ultra-broadband infrastructure, with emergency services, education, health and communities being the main focus;
- o changing building codes for people and infrastructure development in high fire prone areas; and
- o the numerous "class actions" being prepared by some community groups against government bodies, including emergency services, due to the public's perception of inadequate resourcing, preparedness and response to emergencies. The public expectations of our public safety bodies have never been higher.

At the APCOA 2009 Annual Conference, the registered representative members of Australasian Public Safety Officials requested that APCOA focus on and prioritise the development of guidelines/recommendations/standards in three areas of immediate interest. APCOA has complied with this, as our work is feeding directly into treasury business cases for funding to remediate and/or implement improved ESO communications. These areas of interest are:

- **Intra and inter-agency interoperability at all levels of the Command and Control.** APCOA has conducted environmental scans in this area and whilst a considerable number of international white papers and debriefs have been found, no actual guidelines/recommendations/standards have been forthcoming;
- The establishment of a **“common language”** between agencies **for operational communications**;
- **Radio spectrum harmonization and utilisation for emergency services.** This work is being done at a national level and APCOA has recently been invited to participate in this forum/process.

The status of the initial tasks flagged are as follows:

- **Total Time to Dispatch (including all sub-elements).** British APCO (BAPCO) and APCOA are jointly developing the framework for this and its anticipated release is late 2009;
- **Trunked Radio System Design and Performance Measurement Guidelines.** This work is progressing, with initial input being sought from Motorola, Tait, Comgroup/SIMOCO, Telstra and Airwaves;
- **Radio Communications Site Establishment and Equipment Installation Practices** - (including High Hazard location considerations). This area is progressing and adhoc advice is already being given to the telcos. The subject has been broached with RFS, RFI, Motorola, Tait, Comgroup, Telstra and Airwaves, but more detailed discussions are yet to take place;
- **Emergency Service Call Answer Metrics for Telstra Emergency Call Person.** This work is being done at a national regulatory level and APCOA has recently participated in this forum/process (NETWG).

The current economic climate has made the sponsorship or funding of a National working party difficult, however the “in kind” assistance from the industry has been excellent.

Input of APCOA members nationally via “virtual working parties” has been slower than anticipated. Given the current high public profile and expectations of ESO performance with regard to emergency management, most are preoccupied with their own operational priorities.

We again extend an invitation to our APCOA members and supporters to assist APCOA in the establishment of these recommendations or guidelines through information portals and/or funding support.