

PLEA TO THE GILLARD LABOR GOVERNMENT MPS AND SENATORS:

ALERT: DON'T NEGLECT PUBLIC SAFETY

- The move from analogue to digital TV is freeing up the 700 MHz radio spectrum known as the Digital Dividend. It is the 'waterfront property' of radio spectrum - the most valued.
- 126 MHz of this spectrum will become available.
- This spectrum is ideal for carrying large amounts of data, at high speed, over long distances and can penetrate buildings – features that police and emergency services need to safeguard public safety, particularly during **critical incidents** when other communications systems are congested or break down e.g. the Victorian bushfires, the Brisbane floods, Cyclone Yasi and the Christchurch earthquake when the 000 service was down in the critical first five hours.
- Police and emergency services communications currently use the 400 MHz spectrum. The problem is that it doesn't have those features. It is limited to voice communications – not data, video or high speed mobile broadband.
- That's why all Australia's Police Commissioners, including the AFP, are seeking 20 MHz of the 126 MHz. That is just **16%** of the spectrum that will soon be available.
- The peak bodies representing the ambulance and fire services are also calling for this. It is clearly in the national interest to do so. COAG says emergency services communications should be seamless.
- The major telcos, like Telstra, Optus and Vodafone, will be bidding for the spectrum at auction. But police and emergency services won't be able to compete with them.
- The *Radiocommunications Act 1992* of the Keating Government recognised this problem – so one of the objects of the Act is provision of spectrum for law enforcement and emergency services at a non-commercial price.
- Cabinet is soon to consider whether or not to provide 700 MHz spectrum for these public safety agencies, and if so how.
- The only argument for not doing so is to maximize revenue from the auction as a contribution to deficit reduction. But under our plan to reserve 20 MHz, **84%** will still be available for auction.
- **Please ensure your Government does not put profit before public safety.**



Police Federation
of Australia