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THE AUDIT OFFICE
OF NEW SOUTH WALES

Mr Paul McLeay MP
Chair
Public Accounts Committee
Legislative Assembly
Parliament House, Macquarie Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000

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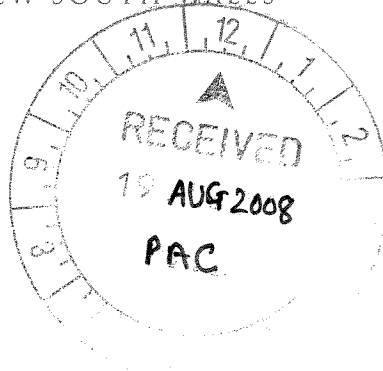
19 August 2008

Dear Mr McLeay

Examination of Auditor-General's Performance Audit Report
Dealing with Household Burglaries

We have reviewed the submissions provided by the New South Wales Police Force on the recommendations in the above performance audit report. Attachment 1 lists the report's recommendations.

Following tabling of the report, we were pleased that the Commissioner of Police indicated broad acceptance of fifteen of the seventeen recommendations made.

The submission from the NSW Police Force shows the progress being made in implementing the recommendations. We have not substantiated the submission. Our assessment of whether the response addresses the issues raised in the original report, along with an assessment of progress, is provided in attachment 2.

I plan to forward a copy of this correspondence to the Commissioner of Police for his information.

I am happy to provide any further assistance the Committee may need in completing its examination.

Yours sincerely

Peter Achterstraat
Auditor-General

attachments

Attachment 1 - Dealing with Household Burglaries

Summary of recommendations

We recommend that the NSW Police Force in regard to household burglaries:

- collects and analyses data on these crimes separately from commercial break and enters
- improves investigation and detection capability
- better targets prevention strategies and monitors results.

Detailed recommendations

We recommend that the NSW Police Force:

1. reviews what information on household burglary should be collected, and records whether or not the property has been burgled before (page 18)

2. reviews intelligence on household burglaries separately from commercial break and enters (page 18)

3. introduces quality assurance standards for checking victims' reports in terms of the sample size used in reviews (page 18)

4. as part of future system upgrades, records victims' reports in a way that can be collated (page 18)

5. clarifies when canvassing should occur, who should canvass and how it should be recorded (page 20).

6. with the victim's consent, attends all crime scenes where collectable forensic evidence is reported to exist (page 22)

7. reviews response times for the collection of forensic evidence and sets time standards for collection in 2008-09 (page 22)

8. examines the time taken for forensic analysis and determines the impact on investigations (page 25)

9. develops guidelines to help commands judge whether a specialist break and enter team is needed based on risk (page 27)

10. reviews the legal action rate and identifies factors affecting results (page 29).

11. establishes minimum standards for developing intelligence on household burglaries (page 33)

12. provides a standard information pack on household security to victims (page 35)

13. offers security assessments to all victims of a household burglary living in high risk neighbourhoods, and establishes a timeframe for completing these assessments (page 35)

14. monitors and reports on repeat victims as a measure of success of crime prevention strategies (page 35)

15. examines the appropriateness of victim-based crime prevention strategies for high risk neighbourhoods (page 35)

16. reviews the impact of prevention programs on household burglaries in high risk neighbourhoods (page 33)

17. establishes targets for household burglaries that will contribute to the outcomes expected in the State Plan (page 37).

Attachment 2 - NSW Police Force

Recommendations	Action steps address issue?	Reported Progress by Police
1.	Proposed activity would address the issue of repeat victims, but it is not clear if it would specify information to be collected on household burglaries.	**Underway** Not clear on: ■ the timeframe envisaged for implementation of proposed guidelines ■ whether the proposed guidelines will specify the information to be collected Progress is dependent on COPS enhancements project proceeding.
2.	Yes. Reported activity is consistent with intent of recommendation	**Completed**
3.	Yes. Proposed activity is consistent with intent of recommendation.	**Underway** A QA standard based on percentage of break and enters as well as a minimum number would be preferable.
4.	Yes. Proposed activity is consistent with intent of recommendation.	**Pending** Progress is dependent on COPS enhancements project proceeding. Not clear if alternatives have been considered.
5.	Yes. Proposed action consistent with intent of recommendation.	**Underway** Progress is dependent on finalising the proposed guidelines. (See Rec. 1)
6.	Not clear	**Complete** ■ Recommendation was intended to change the target of 100% assessment of break and enter scenes to only those where evidence is reported to exist. ■ Not clear if data collected through this pilot will include how many scenes were assessed as having collectable evidence and how many of these were attended.
7.	Yes. Proposed activity is consistent with intent of recommendation	**Delayed** The collection of data on response times for the collection of forensics is dependent on COPS enhancements project proceeding.
8.	Yes. Proposed activity is consistent with intent of recommendation	**Underway** Progress is dependent on COPS enhancements project proceeding.
9.	Recommendation not accepted	**Nil action**
10.	Yes. Action is consistent with intent of recommendation	**Complete**

Recommendations	Action steps address issue?	Reported Progress by Police
11.	Yes. Action is consistent with intent of recommendation	**Complete** COPS enhancements will make this task easier and more efficient.
12.	Yes. Action is consistent with intent of recommendation	**Complete**
13.	Recommendation not accepted	**Nil action**
14.	Yes. Action is consistent with intent of recommendation	**Complete**
15.	Yes. Action is consistent with intent of recommendation	**Complete**
16.	Yes. Action is consistent with intent of recommendation	**Complete**
17.	Yes. Action is consistent with intent of recommendation	**Complete**