



NSW Police Force
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OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER

Mr Paul Gibson MP
Chair, Public Accounts Committee
NSW Legislative Assembly
Parliament of New South Wales
Macquarie Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Dear Mr Gibson,

I refer to your correspondence, dated 2 June 2010, regarding recommendations arising from the Auditor-General's Report No 189: *Helping Aboriginal Defendants through the Magistrates Early Referral into Treatment (MERIT) Program* tabled on 5 August 2009 (your Ref: PAC321)

A table is attached outlining the NSW Police Force response to the police and partially police related recommendations. The NSW Police Force has no objection to this material being made publicly available.

Please note that the NSW Police Force is identified as a partner agency in recommendations five, nine, 10 and 19, with the Department of Justice and Attorney General having primary carriage of these recommendations. The NSW Police Force has worked collaboratively with other agencies on these recommendations and will continue to do so, as required.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission.

Yours sincerely,

A P Scipione APM
Commissioner of Police

14 SEP 2010



PROGRESS TOWARDS IMPLEMENTATION OF AUDITOR-GENERAL'S RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation	Accepted/rejected	Action to be taken	Target completion date	Status Completed, Delayed or On Track? Additional comments	Responsibility
List each recommendation	Does the NSWPF accept or reject the recommendation?	What steps will be taken to implement the recommendation?	When will each step be completed?	What is the current status of each step? Further comments can be added here to help explain progress to this point.	Which section of the agency is responsible for implementation?

Recommendation	Accepted/rejected	Action to be taken	Target completion date	Status Completed, Delayed or On Track? Additional comments	Responsibility
<p>1. We recommend that the NSWPF by January 2010 appoints a MERIT Liaison Officer at each command where MERIT operates.</p>	<p>Accepted.</p>	<p>The NSW Police Force Drug & Alcohol Coordination Unit (DAC), in partnership with MERIT representatives where possible, will continue to provide face to face training for newly appointed MERIT Liaison Officers (MLOs), where required.</p>	<p>Ongoing training will be provided to newly appointed MLOs, as required.</p>	<p>Completed. In May 2009 all Local Area Commands in which MERIT operates were asked to review and renew their appointment of MLOs with relevant commands responding in October 2009.</p> <p>In August 2010, DAC provided all newly appointed MLOs with information on MERIT and their roles and responsibilities. DAC has delivered 23 training sessions to newly appointed MLOs.</p>	<p>DAC, Local Area Commands.</p>

Recommendations for which the NSW Police Force is solely responsible.

Recommendation	Accepted/rejected	Action to be taken	Target completion date	Status Completed, Delayed or On Track? Additional comments	Responsibility
<p>2. We recommend that the NSWPF by January 2010 provides ongoing training to Aboriginal Community Liaison Officers (ACLOs) on MERIT.</p>	<p>Accepted.</p>	<p>Training will continue to be delivered.</p>	<p>Ongoing.</p>	<p>On track. Training has occurred in the Central Metropolitan, Northern and Western Regions. DAC will continue to train ACLOs through Regional Aboriginal Advisory Committees (RAACs) and will also deliver training at the ACLO Conference in October 2010.</p> <p>In the longer term, DAC has consulted with the Aboriginal Policy & Strategy Team (APS) and agreed to jointly develop a training package for ACLOs on MERIT. It is anticipated this will be progressed in the New Year (2011).</p>	<p>DAC, APS.</p>

Recommendation	Accepted/rejected	Action to be taken	Target completion date	Status Completed, Delayed or On Track? Additional comments	Responsibility
Recommendations for which the NSW Police Force is contributing but is not primarily responsible.					
5. We recommend that the AGs, in consultation with Health and NSWPF develop a new MERIT operational manual by July 2010 that includes a standard assessment form.	Accepted.	This document is expected to be completed in October 2010.	October 2010.	On track. A final draft of the operational manual has been compiled and circulated for comment.	DAC (note: primary responsibility rests with Department of Justice & Attorney General).
9. We recommend that the AGs, in consultation with NSWPF and Health by June 2010, simplifies MERIT eligibility criteria to focus on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Suitability for release on bail o Clients with a demonstrable drug or alcohol problem 	Accepted.	To be completed when the revision of the manual is complete (see recommendation five).	October 2010	On track. Simplifying the eligibility criteria remains under discussion.	DAC (note: primary responsibility rests with Department of Justice & Attorney General).

NSW Police Force submission prepared in September 2010 on progress towards implementation of Auditor-General's recommendations arising from the report: *Helping Aboriginal Defendants through the MERIT program.*

Recommendation	Accepted/rejected	Action to be taken	Target completion date	Status Completed, Delayed or On Track? Additional comments	Responsibility
10. We recommend that AGs, in consultation with Health and NSWPF by December 2010, develops and distribute MERIT promotional literature that is culturally appropriate for Aboriginal people.	Accepted.	Nil.	December 2010.	Completed. NSW Health has produced a culturally appropriate MERIT poster.	DAC (note: primary responsibility rests with Department of Justice & Attorney General).

NSW Police Force submission prepared in September 2010 on progress towards implementation of Auditor-General's recommendations arising from the report: Helping Aboriginal Defendants through the MERIT program.

Recommendation	Accepted/rejected	Action to be taken	Target completion date	Status Completed, Delayed or On Track? Additional comments	Responsibility
<p>19. We recommend that AGs, in consultation with Health and NSPWF by July 2010:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Regularly publish MERIT annual reports on the website o Provide quarterly reports on MERIT referral, acceptance and completion rates by court to the Chief Magistrate o Compare the performance of MERIT teams in regard to referrals, acceptances and completions and investigation inconsistencies. 	Accepted.	It is understood the remaining items will continue to be implemented through the MERIT state-wide steering group.	Remaining items ongoing.	Publication of annual and quarterly reports is complete. DJAG has advised the NSW Police Force that annual reports are now published on that organisation's website and quarterly reports are provided to the Chief Magistrate.	DAC (note: primary responsibility rests with Department of Justice & Attorney General).