

**PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY COMMITTEE**  
**Questions Taken on Notice**

**INQUIRY INTO THE NSW GOVERNMENT'S MANAGEMENT OF THE  
COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

**POLICE**

Virtual hearing: Monday 13 September 2021

**Answers due by: Monday, 11 October 2021**

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## POLICE

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**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Thank you. That has been very helpful. Would you be able to provide the Committee with the statewide plan—the two-pager that you said exists?

**Deputy Commissioner WORBOYS:** Yes, certainly. I will do that for you.

### Answer:

A copy of the Pandemic Plan can be found at:

<https://www.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/2021-04/emergency-management-subplan-human-influenza-pandemic.pdf>

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**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Obviously the key thing is, as I said, people have been very complimentary, particularly of the work of police and others with local government on those local emergency management committees. So they are obviously extremely important and it is good to hear that people like them. The concern has been that, from a statewide plan, you are not using the benefit of the wisdom of those people on the ground who understand their communities intimately. I am wondering whether you would be able to provide us—I do not want you to dig out a lot of stuff but even the local plans for, say, Wilcannia, Dubbo and Broken Hill?

**Deputy Commissioner WORBOYS:** Yes, I will take that on notice. I can certainly provide that.

### Answer:

The State Emergency Management Plan (EMPLAN) provides a coordinated and comprehensive approach to emergency management in NSW. It describes the NSW approach to emergency management, the governance and coordination arrangements, and roles and responsibilities of agencies. The Region EMPLAN and Local EMPLAN both sit under the State EMPLAN.

In addition, Community Action Plans have been developed to set out actions and responsibilities to help keep Aboriginal people and communities COVID safe.

These Action Plans are developed through the Local Emergency Management Committees in consultation with community members, NSW Health, NSW Aboriginal Affairs, Local Aboriginal Land Councils and other stakeholders and partners.

Copies of these plans can be found at:

<https://www.nsw.gov.au/resources-for-your-community/aboriginal-communities/action-plans>.

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**The CHAIR:** Mr Worboys, what I have heard from many Aboriginal organisations in western and far western New South Wales is that they have been invited into some meetings and that, indeed, there have been an increased number of invitations in the last month or so, but they are not members of the committee. They are not there when the decision is being made; their advice can be ignored. Do you accept that that is a problem, Mr Worboys—although it is a step forward—not having those Aboriginal organisations as formal members to make the decisions?

**Deputy Commissioner WORBOYS:** I would have to go back to the State Emergency and Rescue Management Act and see the exact nuances around how committees can be varied. But certainly I am not in any way, shape or form, Mr Shoebridge, denying the fact that each of these committees has a chair. Each of these committees represents an opportunity to assist local communities, not just with their health but any emergency and disaster. And if there is room to have better and more appropriate representation on that, I will certainly explore that and take that away, Mr Shoebridge. It is about local people and local communities at their greatest time of need to make choices and decisions that protect people in terms of health and their safety. So I take note of the point that you raise.

I think an extraordinary amount of effort has gone in in the last number of months and weeks in this regard, and certainly there may well even be a lesson, or lessons, to be learnt out of it. But I can say that we all understand that the pandemic, in terms of western and far western New South Wales, is far from over and we need to continue to make sure those emergency management committees represent the community and indeed then allow decisions by agencies to make sure that it is the best outcome for those people.

**The CHAIR:** Thanks, Commissioner Worboys. I look forward to some of that detail on notice.

### Answer:

The memberships for the Regional Emergency Management Committees and the Local Emergency Management Committees are determined under section 22 and 28 of the *State Emergency and Rescue Management Act 1989*.

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**Deputy Commissioner WORBOYS:** Mr Shoebridge, if you would just give me one moment. I think I answered a question about the pandemic plan earlier and undertook to provide that on notice, which I will, but I think I did my public health colleagues an injustice. The two pages were certainly about, I think, the police response, which I alluded to. The other part of the plan is many more pages, but I will certainly provide that on notice, as I have indicated.

### Answer:

A copy of the Pandemic Plan can be found at:

<https://www.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/2021-04/emergency-management-subplan-human-influenza-pandemic.pdf>

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**The CHAIR:** Thank you, Mr Worboys. Unfortunately, we have run out of time. Mr Worboys, I will ask you to take one other question on notice, if you would not mind. Have NSW Police stopped food deliveries to any Aboriginal community in western and far western New South Wales since the latest outbreak in June and, if so, what are the details of those? My office has had multiple reports as well, Mr Worboys. If you could just take that on notice and give us a response, I would appreciate that.

**Deputy Commissioner WORBOYS:** I certainly will. Thanks, Mr Shoebridge.

### Answer:

On 1 September 2021, the Bourke District Commander advised a food charity that they were not permitted to travel to Enngonia from Greater Sydney without obtaining the appropriate travel permits. A short time later, police stopped a charity food delivery bound for Enngonia. The delivery staff were found to be in breach of the public health orders, having not obtained travel permits to visit Enngonia.

Due to the current COVID-19 risk, NSW Health strongly recommends avoiding all travel to, from and between rural and remote Aboriginal communities across NSW. Travellers from Greater Sydney must obtain the appropriate travel permit.