

Ministers' media statement - 9 April 2008

Enhancing emergency radio

The government has allocated radio spectrum for the exclusive use of agencies engaged in public protection and disaster relief (PPDR), Communications and Information Technology Minister David Cunliffe announced today.

“Mobile radios are an essential tool for a range of enforcement agencies and emergency services,” said Mr Cunliffe.

“They are used to direct resources to where they are needed, to transmit vital information, to develop and pass on command decisions, to work collaboratively with other frontline agencies and, where necessary, to summon assistance.

“Accordingly this project seeks to get the best use of this spectrum across the relevant functions and agencies,” Mr Cunliffe said.

The Minister of Police Annette King says “This allocation of radio spectrum will ensure that our emergency services are able to build an interoperable, modern and secure digital radiocommunications network in the place of legacy analogue systems that will reach the end of their useful life over the next decade.

“With the advent of technically-advanced and spectrum-efficient digital radio systems, there has been considerable interest from PPDR services in updating their communications systems and thereby their operational effectiveness. This spectrum will allow that to happen.”

Background

The spectrum, in the ranges 138-144 MHz (ESB band) and 494-502 MHz (ESC band), will be used initially for a new digital radio network being developed by the NZ Police, which is intended to extend over time into a whole-of-government emergency radio system. The new network will be based on the APCO-P25 international digital standard for radiocommunications, which has recently been adopted as an e-government standard.