



Hon Michael Gallacher MLC

Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council
Minister for Police and Emergency Services
Minister for the Hunter

MEDIA RELEASE

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MINISTER GALLACHER ANNOUNCES NEW TRAFFIC AND HIGHWAY PATROL COMMAND

Minister for Police and Emergency Services Michael Gallacher today announced the establishment of a new, stand-alone Traffic and Highway Patrol Command.

“The NSW Government believe that having more police out on the roads is the best deterrent to dangerous driving,” Minister Gallacher said.

“One of the key changes is the removal of Local Area Commands boundaries for the purposes of deploying Highway Patrol Officers.

“Road tragedy has no boundaries and that is why the Government has decided we need to move away from the LAC based approach to Highway Patrol deployment.

“The new centralised Command will be headed by Assistant Commissioner John Hartley, and will have road safety as its primary focus.

“Our new structure will still ensure that officers are available to attend to urgent or life-threatening situations, but there should be less diversion of Highway Patrol officers to general duties.

“Many Highway Patrol officers will continue to be physically located in Local Area Commands, but their tasking’s will now be coordinated by the new Traffic and Highway Patrol Command instead of by LACs.

Minister Gallacher said the Government has ensured the new Command will be supported through the delivery of a number of election and Budget commitments including 100 additional Highway Patrol officers, 50 new vehicles, and for improved traffic technology.

Minister Gallacher said the Government sees a number of significant benefits flowing from the new structure, namely:

- More Highway Patrol officers out on the roads – which will help improve road safety by deterring dangerous driving; as well as improve response times to major traffic incidents;
- Less diversion of Highway Patrol officers to general duties;

- More strategic deployment of Highway Patrol officers and better linking of Highway Patrol tasking's to state-wide road safety priorities;
- More training and promotional opportunities for Highway officers – which will help attract and retain officers to this area of policing; and
- Reducing some of the duplication that may occur if road safety activities and operations are pursued locally rather than centrally.

NSW Police Commissioner Andrew Scipione said he welcomed the announcement by the Government as a positive approach to tackling road safety.

“I have been working with senior police to put in place this new Command which commences today in the lead up to the busy Christmas period.

“The NSW Police Force trialled this new Command operational structure over the Easter long weekend and following evaluation of this trial we are now in a position to make the structure permanent

“Staff consultation will start immediately, but will occur in earnest after the completion of the two major Christmas and Holiday road safety traffic operations in December and January.

“Furthermore, a new Operational Planning and Performance Unit has been established within the new Command, and it has already created an electronic ‘Request for Assistance’ program on the Command’s intranet site.

Commissioner Scipione said the new model will allow Local Area Commands to log road safety issues and seek additional Highway Patrol assistance as required.

Mr Gallacher said the Government has committed \$3.6 million to install an additional 100 Mobile Automatic Number Plate Recognition units in Highway Patrol vehicles.

“This is in addition to the \$1.37 million already provided to fund the current roll-out of Mobile ANPR; and it will be matched by another \$3.6 million next year.

“The new Command will put Highway Patrol officers out on the road – where they community expects them to be, and where they need to be,” Minister Gallacher concluded.

The transition to the new Traffic and Highway Patrol Command formally commences today, and is expected to be complete by 2014.

Clint McGilvray 0413 285 186 (Minister) or Zdenka Vaughan (Commissioner)