



# The Hon Barry O'Farrell MP

## Premier of NSW

### Minister for Western Sydney

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## MEDIA RELEASE

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Friday 5 August 2011

### NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH ENTERS THE 21<sup>st</sup> CENTURY

NSW Premier Barry O'Farrell, Minister for Police and Emergency Services Michael Gallacher and Commissioner of Police Andrew Scipione today launched the new Neighbourhood Watch pilot program – Project **eyewatch**.

Mr O'Farrell said local residents will be given the opportunity to participate with their local Police in active crime prevention using the social network site *Facebook* under the new initiative.

“The reinvigorated concept of the old Neighbourhood Watch program is about re-engaging the community in active crime fighting, and also delivers on one of our key election commitments,” Mr O'Farrell said.

“We want communities to be at the forefront of not only reporting crimes, but active crime prevention in their areas,” he said.

“Local residents have a wealth of knowledge about their own area and what is happening around them.

“By working together and building intelligence, we can help reduce crime,” he said.

Minister Gallacher said **eyewatch** brings back fundamental community-based policing.

“Police are only as good as the information they receive and there is no better CCTV cameras in this state than the human eye,” Mr Gallacher said.

“The ability to interpret and report what is being seen is paramount to successful community policing, **eyewatch** is about communities regaining control over their local areas and over crime,” Minister Gallacher said

Pilot programs have been established in ten Local Area Commands to trial **eyewatch**:

- Tweed-Byron
- Sutherland
- Newcastle
- Parramatta
- Griffith
- Quakers Hill
- Orana
- Campbelltown
- Barrier
- Cabramatta

“These ten pilot programs are now up and running. Police will be promoting them in local communities following today’s launch,” Minister Gallacher said.

“Already some of these commands have had incredible results, just through word of mouth.

“The Quakers Hill LAC Facebook page has 191 active fans, 434 monthly active users and there have been some 42,000 hits on the page where information was obtained from the site, since it was ‘switched on’ on July 6.

“Sutherland LAC attracted 64 fans and 2,531 hits in less than 48 hours, while Campbelltown LAC had 630 hits and 63 fans in less than 24 hours,” he said.

Commissioner Scipione said customer service and finding ways of engaging with the community are crucial for Police to do their work.

“We can’t do our job without the community’s help and that’s why this project is so critical for New South Wales Police.

“Times have changed and the old Neighbourhood Watch model struggled as people’s lives became busier – they couldn’t get to meetings, time is short and that’s a fact of everyday life,” Commissioner Scipione said.

“Through Project *eyewatch*, community members can be involved via the internet, using hand-held devices such as smart phones as well as computers, laptops and tablet devices.

“I should also emphasise that we still want people to report crime in the usual way through Crime Stoppers (1800 333 000), Triple Zero (000) for urgent help and the Police Assistance Line (131 444),” Commissioner Scipione said.

ENDS

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