

# SLED Advisory Council

Communique 16 February 2023

**Cameron Smith, Director of the Security Licensing & Enforcement Directorate (SLED)** welcomed the new Industry Representatives to their first meeting, including some who had previously served on the Council. He provided an overview of his time at SLED, and Industry Representatives and SLED staff introduced themselves and described their backgrounds and current roles.

Mr Smith listed the additional functions SLED has been assigned over the years and explained SLED would become the industry regulator for the tattooing industry from 1 September 2023. Currently, SLED performs probity checks for NSW Fair Trading, the existing regulator. Other SLED functions he covered included performing probity checks for SafeWork NSW for explosives licences, for the NSW Office of Sport for combat sports registrations, for the Australian Office of Drug Control for medicinal cannabis-related licences and for the NSW Department of Primary Industries for poppy cultivation licences. He also explained SLED's administrative role in managing registers for Scrap Metal dealers and the *Wool, Hide & Skin Dealers Act 2004*.

Mr Smith described SLED's position within the NSW Police Force, SLED's budget, how its revenue is remitted directly to Treasury and explained SLED's expenses and the recent savings made by changing some processes. He then detailed his plans to allocate more resources to the Industry Regulation teams.

Mr Smith was asked if it was usual practice for local licensing police to attend security site audits. He said all police officers have the same powers as SLED's Enforcement Officers and can undertake site audits at their discretion, and that SLED is not responsible for or in charge of licensing police.

**Victor Chang, Principal Policy Officer, Legislation & Policy, NSW Police Force** then explained how he worked with SLED on legislative matters. Mr Smith described the role of the Legislation & Policy Branch and how the legislative review and reform process works. He also gave the Industry Representatives a SLED organisation chart and explained SLED's structure.

Mr Smith told the meeting there had been no Assistant Director (Industry Regulation) since Lisa Stockley left SLED. **Rochelle Blue** is acting in this role, but her substantive position is **Manager, Compliance & Enforcement**. Mr Smith explained that Industry Regulation is made up of the Compliance & Enforcement (C&E) and Training Regulation (TR) teams. He said C&E conducts audits and investigations of businesses across the state, as well as assisting licensing police in their targeted licensed premises operations and attending festivals and other major events to target security guards and Master licensees. TR focuses mainly on Class 1 security licence courses and develops courses based on the National Training Package requirements with mandatory assessments the Registered Training Organisations must deliver. He said TR auditors also conduct unannounced visits to verify the courses are being correctly delivered.

Mr Smith then told Industry Representatives about the pre-licence knowledge test being developed with Service NSW, which is proposed to start with new applicants and progress to renewals and then Master licence holders. He said SLED is negotiating costs associated with the test.

He was asked how many security licensees were required to meet the needs of the NSW industry, and if it was possible to get funding to attract more people to the security industry. Mr Smith said SLED had no way of knowing how many licensees the industry required or how many current licensees were active in the industry. It was noted it isn't SLED's role to attract people to the security

industry, but it was asked if it was possible for SLED to ask people if they'd worked in the past 12 months when they renewed their licence. Mr Smith said that question would be better suited to an optional survey of licensees that could be developed in consultation with the Council.

**Brian Moir, Assistant Director (Service Delivery)**, then outlined the role of the Service Delivery unit, including the upcoming transition to the NSW government licensing system (AMANDA) and the current licence processing timeframes. He pointed out that a large percentage of outstanding licence applications are waiting for some form of action from the applicant. He also said comprehensive information about the upcoming legislative amendments will be posted on the SLED website from the end of February.

He was asked why there was a long delay from when an applicant gets their photograph taken to receiving their licence. Mr Moir said postal timeframes were the main contributor to any delays and Mr Smith said, after the legislative amendments come into force on 1 June 2023, the licence would come into force after the photograph was taken and new licensees could work from that moment.

Mr Smith was asked if photographs could be taken when applicants were fingerprinted, but Mr Smith said police station weren't set up to do this, but SLED would investigate it as a possibility. Mr Moir was also asked if the online application system allowed an applicant to progress if they didn't upload the required documents. Mr Moir said the system requires an applicant to upload copies of specified documents but the system can't verify the correct document has been uploaded. This is identified when applications are assessed by SLED.

Mr Smith suggested to Industry Representatives that finding ways to increase female participation in the industry might address the reported labour shortages, as only 11 per cent of security operatives are female.

**Sharyn Byrnes, acting Assistant Director (Determinations)**, provided an overview of the work the Adjudication and Assessments teams do. Ms Byrnes, whose substantive role is Manager, Adjudication, described how the Adjudication team determines if a security licence should be granted or revoked, how probity checks are conducted on all applicants and how licence holders are monitored throughout the duration of their licence. Licences can be refused or revoked if an applicant or licensee is convicted or found guilty of a mandatory prescribed offence. Licences can also be refused or revoked if the team determines an applicant or licensee is not a "fit and proper" person to hold a licence, or if they believe it's not in the public interest for them to hold a security licence. Ms Byrnes said the Assessment team receives complaints about unlicensed security activities and other types of non-compliance from industry and the public, external agencies and other police units. They assess these tips and refer information to C&E, local police or other agencies for investigation, or they contact the business directly to discuss the non-compliance.

Mr Smith was asked if SLED assisted in joint investigations and Mr Smith said these rarely happen due to evidentiary difficulties, but that there is regular information sharing between SLED and other agencies. He also noted that SLED regularly provides information related to cash-in-hand and under award payments to the appropriate agencies for their consideration.

In general business, **Kerrie Armstrong, Senior Customer Relations Officer, SLED** invited the new Industry Representatives to have their profile posted on the SLED Facebook page to introduce them to the industry and provided examples of profiles of previous Industry Representatives. An Industry Representative mentioned they had received feedback indicating that content on SLED's website differs to what is posted on the Facebook page. Ms Armstrong explained information posted to

Facebook needs to be summarised, but the message will always be the same as what's on the website.

In closing the meeting, Mr Smith encouraged Industry Representatives to bring issues to the table and said agenda papers should be provided prior to meetings for more complex issues. He said agenda papers could be submitted by people outside the Council and, if necessary, they could be invited to address the meeting on their issue.

There being no further items for discussion, the meeting was closed. The next meeting is scheduled for May 2023.