

Cameron Smith retirement article

End of an era as SLED Director Cameron Smith retires

Director Cameron Smith has been synonymous with the Security Licensing & Enforcement Directorate (SLED) and the NSW security industry for the past 23 years.

But as of Friday 28 August 2026, that era comes to an end as he retires from the Directorate he established to help build a safer and more professional security industry in NSW.

Cameron joined the Security Industry Registry, as it was then known, in March 2003, becoming the Registrar in June 2007. He then became Director in August 2010 when the Registry was reformed as SLED with a significantly expanded remit and staff.

"I'm grateful to have had the opportunity to establish the Directorate and lead it throughout its development," Cameron said.

"Around the time SLED was established, there were fewer than 4,000 Master licensees and 40,000 licensed security operatives in NSW. Today, there are more than 6,600 Master licensees and over 62,000 licensed security operatives.

"The industry has also become considerably more sophisticated and professional over that time."

Over his 23 years regulating the industry, Cameron said change had been the one constant.

"The security industry, technology, community expectations and government priorities have all evolved significantly over the past two decades," he said.

"SLED has had to continually innovate and adapt to meet increasing responsibilities and expectations while operating with largely unchanged resources."

However, the challenges SLED faces don't end with Cameron's retirement. He said difficulties related to mutual recognition continue to challenge the Directorate.

"We have worked hard over many years to raise regulatory standards in NSW, but those standards can be undermined when people who live and intend to work in NSW obtain a licence in another jurisdiction with different licensing requirements and then rely on mutual recognition to obtain a NSW licence," he said.

"Mutual recognition serves an important national purpose by facilitating mobility across jurisdictions, but differences between regulatory regimes can create pathways that are capable of being exploited.

"Finding ways to maintain appropriate NSW standards within the constraints of the mutual recognition framework has therefore been an ongoing challenge."

Managing industry expectations around SLED's role as a regulator was also an ongoing undertaking for the Directorate.

"SLED is the regulator of the NSW security industry, but that doesn't mean we have the legislative authority to address every form of non-compliance that occurs within it," Cameron said.

“SLED cannot lawfully take action in areas that fall outside our jurisdiction, no matter how strongly we may share the concerns being raised.

“I know there has sometimes been frustration within the industry about what is perceived as a lack of regulatory action on certain issues, but in many cases those issues are matters for other regulators.”

When asked to consider what he was most proud of during his time at SLED, Cameron was clear.

“I’m proud of so many of my current and former staff whose commitment, expertise and hard work have led to SLED being what it is today,” he said.

“Over the years, together, we have successfully implemented significant legislative and policy reforms, strengthened our compliance and enforcement capabilities, modernised licensing systems and improved customer service.

“I’ve spent a very significant part of my working life regulating the security industry. I’m proud of what SLED has become, grateful to the many people who helped build it, and confident that it and the security industry have a bright future ahead.

“To look back 16 years later and see SLED recognised internationally as a leading security industry regulator is very satisfying.

“SLED is now entering a new phase. I’ve been its Director since it was established, so inevitably many aspects of SLED reflect decisions I’ve made over a long period of time.

“But just as the security industry continues to evolve, so must SLED. I hope the next Director brings their own ideas and leaves their own mark on SLED.”