MEDIA RELEASE

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POLICE MINISTER WELCOMES THE COMMENCEMENT OF NEW ARRANGEMENTS AT IMMIGRATION DETENTION CENTRES

Police and Emergency Services Minister, Michael Gallacher, has today welcomed the resolution of the Standing Council on Police and Emergency Management (SCPEM) to commence discussion on the provision of Police services at Immigration Detention Facilities.

“Following the riots at the Villawood Detention centre on April 20 2011, it became clear these arrangements needed to be settled as a matter of urgency,” Minister Gallacher said.

Led by the Commonwealth Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC), the new arrangements will be incorporated into a Memorandum of Understanding which is being developed following a series of workshops across Australia.

Comprising of representatives from Serco, the Australian Federal Police, State and Territory Police and DIAC, the workshops aimed to review existing incident management planning for each Immigration Detention Facility owned by the Commonwealth.

“Law enforcement agencies have been concerned for some time about the lack of clarity regarding their powers, responsibilities and liabilities in relation to immigration detention centres across Australia,” Minister Gallacher said.

The MOU will establish agency responsibilities between DIAC, the direct service provider (currently Serco), AFP and the relevant State or Territory Police Force.

The DIAC will also chair a working group of representatives from each jurisdiction to examine whether there are any legislative impediments to the exercise of State and Territory police powers at Immigration Detention Facilities.

The outcomes of the working group will be reported back to SCPEM out of session.

ENDS

MEDIA: Tess Salmon 0467 740 017