



Victoria Police Online News Centre - Country police to trial conduct energy devices (CED)

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Victoria Police will begin trialling the use of conducted energy devices in country Victoria from 1 July with a pilot to be held in Bendigo and Latrobe.

Chief Commissioner Simon Overland said the 12-month pilot would enable Victoria Police to determine whether conducted energy devices are an effective and necessary tool for regional police officers.

"We have strengthened our capability through the Critical Incident Response Teams in the metropolitan area and I am satisfied that our level of capacity is appropriate. Our specialist squads are well trained in the use of conducted energy devices and can provide back-up support to incidents right across metropolitan Melbourne within a short space of time," Mr Overland said.

"Ensuring the same level of specialist support in country areas has always been a challenge for us. It is a complex issue, and we have spent considerable time reviewing reports and research from other Australian police jurisdictions and international police on the use of these devices.

"I understand that there are many differing views, however following changes to our tactics training I now believe we are in a much stronger place to test the use of controlled energy devices in country Victoria."

All uniform and Traffic Management Unit police at Bendigo and Morwell police stations will be trained in the use of conducted energy devices in coming months. A conducted energy device will only be carried by one police member in a police vehicle and this will be in addition to their firearm. This will ensure that the other police member can use their firearm as a last resort should the CED be ineffective.

Bendigo and Latrobe have been chosen as they both experience a high number of incidents involving use of force. This includes high use of OC spray, incidents involving people with a mental illness, sieges and instances where offenders have used weapons against police.

Mr Overland said the decision to conduct a pilot had not been made lightly and he believed the timing appropriate, given the significant improvements to police training over the past six months.

"Earlier this year we introduced a new training package which strongly focuses on critical incident response, in particular communicating with vulnerable people and better understanding mental disorder," Mr Overland said.

"It provides members with the best possible skills to respond to volatile situations and bring about a safe resolution.

"We need to provide our police with a range of tactical options from verbal communication



through to the use of lethal force as a last resort. Having reviewed and refocussed our tactical safety training to better equip members to deal with vulnerable people, we are now in a better position to consider the use of more specialised equipment."

Mr Overland said the pilot would enable Victoria Police to evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of using the devices in regional areas.

He stressed that the devices would not be used for compliance purposes and instead as a last option before police had to resort to a firearm.

Mr Overland has appointed Deputy Commissioner Kieran Walshe to personally oversee the pilot to ensure that usage is tightly monitored and that strong accountability mechanisms are put in place. All of the devices are equipped with cameras with audio and visual capability, so that all incidents are recorded.

"This will be a careful and controlled pilot. I've made my expectations to our police very clear as to when they should or should not be using the devices. The device is only to be used to prevent death and serious injury in highly volatile incidents. They are absolutely not to be used for compliance," Mr Overland said.

"I'm confident that our police will use the devices appropriately and when justified but we have mechanisms in place to identify and address any misuse. All incidents will be subject to review at both a local level and by Deputy Commissioner Kieran Walshe."

Mr Overland said members will be trained to use the devices as part of their updated tactics training, which will also include training in the use of semi-automatic firearms.

The conducted energy devices can be carried in members' personally tailored Integrated Operational Equipment Vests.

The pilot will be formally evaluated upon its conclusion in July 2011 however a progress report will be compiled in January next year.

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