

Media release

Embargoed till 11 am

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New cellular network visibility tool takes the guess work out of cellular coverage availability for emergency services

A new world-leading service delivered by Next Generation Critical Communications (NGCC) to assist the emergency services in their operational planning has been launched by Ministers Mark Mitchell and Paul Goldsmith today.

The Public Safety Network (PSN) Cellular Network Visibility Service (NVS) forms part of the new Public Safety Network Te Kupenga Marutau and will give emergency services near real-time and future (up to two weeks) visibility of the cellular network status of One NZ and Spark.

New Zealand Police, Fire and Emergency New Zealand, Hato Hone St John, and Wellington Free Ambulance will be the first agencies to use the service.

Developed by Hourua for NGCC, the service consolidates network information from Spark and One NZ into one centralised digital system view.

The system combines current network status with predicted outage data and scheduled maintenance information, creating a single reference point for emergency communications and operational teams.

“Having near real-time visibility of Spark and One NZ’s cellular network status across the country is a game-changer for emergency services and will help them plan effective and safe operations with confidence,” says NGCC Director Steve Ferguson.

“The Network Visibility Service gives our emergency services a clear view of where coverage is strong, and where it might be impacted, so they can make decisions when responding to emergencies, including large scale events like Cyclone Gabrielle, or planning future operations.”

The service has been built on the ArcGIS platform, a comprehensive geographic information system (GIS) developed by Environmental Systems Research Institute (Esri).

The cloud-based service means authorised personnel can access the system on a PC from any location with internet connectivity. This flexibility supports both routine dispatch planning and responses to large-scale emergencies.

It will serve as an important component in strengthening the emergency services' national emergency preparedness, helping them maintain connectivity during both everyday incidents and major disasters.

"This is the third PSN Cellular Service delivered to us by Spark and One NZ's joint venture Hourua on time and on budget. Together, it's great to have already provided a significant uplift in cellular capability for the people who rely on their phones and mobile devices to do their jobs and keep us all safe," Mr Ferguson said.

Ends

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About Next Generation Critical Communications Poutama Whai Tikanga Pāpāho

Next Generation Critical Communications (NGCC) is the government's leading advisor on critical communications for public safety in New Zealand. NGCC's mission is to modernise the communications capability of New Zealand's emergency services to deliver more information, to more places in real time. It is responsible for delivering the new Public Safety Network www.ngcc.govt.nz

About the Public Safety Network Te Kupenga Marutau

The Public Safety Network is a significant infrastructure project, investing \$1.4 billion over 10 years to build and operate the networks and services, and roll out new devices to emergency services staff, stations and vehicles. It consists of three complementary elements: a digital land mobile radio network, cellular services and personal alerting. The Public Safety Network will provide the emergency services with modern, secure and resilient critical communications that enable them to do their jobs, stay safe and support our communities. There is scope for other public safety organisations to join in the future and further services to be added.