



The Coalition of
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COMPPS RESPONSE TO THE PROPOSED POLICE REGULATION (FEES AND CHARGES) REGULATIONS 2013

SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE, MELBOURNE, VICTORIA

6 NOVEMBER 2013



Background

COMPPS

COMPPS consists of the following organisations:

- Australian Football League (**AFL**);
- Australian Rugby Union (**ARU**);
- Cricket Australia (**CA**);
- Football Federation Australia (**FFA**);
- National Rugby League (**NRL**);
- Netball Australia (**NA**); and
- Tennis Australia (**TA**).

Each of these organisations is the governing body and custodian of a major professional sport in Australia. They are not-for-profit bodies and are responsible for the long-term development and sustainability of their sport in Australia.

In general, COMPPS members provide a wide range of public benefits through a self-funding business model. A large portion of their revenue is devoted to enhancing, promoting and developing sport for all Australians both at national and 'grassroots' level.

One of COMPPS' roles is to provide a collective response on behalf of its member sports where their interests are aligned.

COMPPS makes the following comments in relation to the request for submissions on the Regulatory Impact Statement regarding the proposed *Police Regulation (Fees and Charges) Regulations 2013*.

COMPPS MEMBERS ENJOY A STRONG RELATIONSHIP WITH VICTORIA POLICE

COMPPS members enjoy a strong and positive working relationship with Victoria Police and acknowledge the vital role they play at major sporting events across Victoria. The sports appreciate the support and services they receive from Victoria Police and we hope this positive engagement continues over the coming years.

COMPPS will restrict its comments on the proposed regulations to event management, and note that COMPPS members are important stakeholders when it comes to the provision of these services. Of the 53,680 hours of police personnel deployed for event management in 2012-13, more than half (about 52 per cent) were deployed for sporting events covering COMPPS' seven member sports.

As a result, it is clear that Victoria Police plays a vital role in ensuring the safety and proper management of the general public at these events, but that equally COMPPS is a major stakeholder when it comes to the ongoing provision of these services.

CONCERNS WITH PROPOSED REGULATIONS

Our primary concern with the proposed fees and charges increases is that it is a substantial increase which will have a sudden impact on COMPPS sports. COMPPS members do not begrudge Victoria Police officers being awarded an increase in salary in recognition of the valuable work they do, which also delivers parity with other jurisdictions around of Australia. However, COMPPS believes that such a fee increase should not necessarily be absorbed in full by the COMPPS members themselves, and that any increase should be more gradual and measured over time.

A fee increase of between 16.9 and 29.0 per cent is a tremendous amount to absorb, especially so quickly, and we request that this figure be reconsidered to enable a smoother and longer transition towards a full cost recovery model.

In addition, the proposed implementation date of 1 January 2014 is simply far too soon when considering that this present consultation phase did not commence until last month, and that event managers generally set their budgets well in advance.

As a result, COMPPS members submit that an implementation date of 1 January 2015 would enable a smoother transition to the proposed regulations.

To this end, COMPPS would prefer a more regular review of these Regulations, which recommends a reduced fee increase slightly above the rate of indexation, as opposed to what has occurred on this occasion, which is a review for the first time in nine years which has proposed a steep increase well above the rate of indexation.

We note that the vast majority of services at major sporting events are delivered by police officers of either constable or senior constable rank (76.4% of personnel), which will attract a 16.9 per cent fee increase. However, even a 16.9 per cent increase is still a considerable amount to absorb in a short period of time.

PARITY WITH OTHER JURISIDCTIONS

COMPPS members note that the fees currently charged for sworn members in Victoria (at sub-officer rank) are below those set for equivalent officers in New South Wales and Queensland, and that there is a strong argument for parity with other jurisdictions. However, the proposed fee increase for officer rank clearly exceeds that in New South Wales and Queensland, irrespective of the fact that in those states it is a flat rate across all ranks.

COMPPS understands the principle of parity across jurisdictions, but if parity is the objective then the fees charged for the rank of Officers should remain relatively unchanged, as they still account for 1.2 per cent of the personnel deployed for event management, and attract a fee of almost two sworn members of other rank.

Further, due to Melbourne and Victoria's impressive "major events" calendar, the COMPPS members query whether Victoria Police's continued (and even enhanced future) planning and coordination across these events would in fact lead to cost savings and economies of scale when compared against other jurisdictions with less impressive "major events" calendars.

COMPPS members would also appreciate clarification on whether the proposed increases will apply to Victoria Police services that are deployed peripheral to the event and/or unilaterally at the discretion of Victoria Police. For example, at the Australian Open or a Boxing Day Test match in the Jolimont sports precinct, would a charge be attracted for mounted horse police in the Botanic Gardens or police officers stationed on nearby tram stops or train stations?

COMPPS members are also concerned whether such a rapid fee increase may lead to a scenario where Victoria Police is then encouraged and incentivized to deploy additional and unnecessary services, the costs of which event managers will then be obligated to bear.

It is imperative that the agreements that event managers have with Victoria Police on the agreed numbers of officers and type of services at each event is allowed to continue unobstructed, particularly given the user-pays model that exists in Victoria. We presume and hope that this will not occur but wish to place our concerns about this on the record.

VICTORIA'S REPUTATION AS A SPORTING HUB

Victoria plays host to a catalogue of major events, and Melbourne is considered one of the sporting capitals of the world. It is in everyone's interests for this reputation to be sustained for the long-term, and for there to be minimal elements acting as a disincentive towards this objective. Being a major events hub means providing certain services to enable members of the public to safely access, egress and use our sporting venues. It is essentially a public service which privately-managed event managers absorb.

While we accept that it is a public service not enjoyed equally by the general community (i.e. at the Australian Open it is enjoyed solely by tennis supporters; or at an A-League match solely by football supporters), major events in Victoria are openly supported by government and still enjoyed by large numbers of the public, and we would not wish to see an environment where there is a disincentive to hosting major events in Victoria.

As a result, COMPPS members submit that while it may be equitable for sports and event managers to meet a greater proportion of the costs, the taxpayer should also expect that it will need to meet some of the costs associated with these services. We believe that it is unrealistic to expect that these services should be provided with full recovery in mind met solely by event managers. It is appropriate for public monies to be allocated to the provision of these services.

SERVICE STANDARDS

If COMPPS members, and other event managers, are required to pay increased fees for use of Victoria Police services, then Victoria Police should be required to offer more accountability for the delivery of these services, including KPI's, auditing of performance, and transparency on the value of services provided by Victoria Police. This is consistent with any "user pays" service delivery model.

CONCLUSION

To conclude, COMPPS would like to thank the Department of Justice for the opportunity to provide a submission in response to the Regulatory Impact Statement, and makes these points in summary:

- The proposed fee increase of 16.9 to 29.0 per cent is too sharp, and should not be borne in full by COMPPS members and other major events organizers. Additionally, we propose a more gradual introduction of fee increase over a longer period of time.
- The implementation date of 1 January 2014 is simply too soon, and the Department should give consideration towards a 1 January 2015 implementation date, to enable a smoother transition to the new model and to give users more time to fully assess the impacts and absorb the increased costs.
- COMPPS supports a more regular review of police fees and charges. This is in contrast to the current scenario: a review for the first time in nine years, which has subsequently foreshadowed a steep increase that is proposed to be implemented within only ten weeks from when stakeholders were first consulted.
- A true “user pays” service delivery model would require the service provider to be accountable for their performance of the services.

COMPPS members look forward to being engaged in this process as you move towards implementation of these proposed regulations.

Signed for and on behalf of the COMPPS' Members.

6 November, 2013.

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