



Queensland
Government

Office of the
Commissioner

Queensland
Corrective Services

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Dr Sean Turner
Committee Secretary
Parliamentary Joint Committee on Law Enforcement
le.committee@aph.gov.au

Dear Dr Turner

Thank you for your email of 7 November 2019 about the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Law Enforcement (the Committee) inquiry into the development and introduction of an Australian Standard for the training and use of privately contracted security and detection dogs.

Queensland Corrective Services (QCS) welcomes the opportunity to provide this submission to the Committee.

QCS Dog Squad operations overview

The QCS Dog Squad currently provides comprehensive training across the state to ensure that all dog squad officers have the capability to undertake emergency response and incident management within a complex and often dangerous environment. This training also engages services from the Queensland Police Service and Australian Border Force.

QCS deploys both general purpose (GP) and passive alert drug detection (PADD) dogs across all correctional facilities, and the training curriculum has been developed to support both the management of incidents and detection and management of prohibited substances, as well as supporting emerging operational requirements.

The corrections environment continues to evolve and become more complex. I have determined that a full review of current dog squad operations and the training program will be undertaken to ensure that the QCS Dog Squad operations remain relevant to a contemporary correctional facility and its operating environment.

Training standards development

Australian Industry Standards is working with industry reference groups and is coordinating a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) to review current dog handling units of competence. It is intended that these will cover such things as canine health and welfare and the utilisation of canines for detection and security purposes.

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QCS has representation on the TAC through the Manager, State Dog Squad, Development and Standards. It is anticipated that the work being undertaken by the TAC will be presented to Australian Industry Standards and Skills Committee by 31 August 2020.

Consideration of national training standards

National training standards are useful in benchmarking required standards for organisations delivering training that has a common society interest, in this case, law enforcement. While QCS recognises the advantages of national training standards, it also acknowledges the unique circumstances faced within the correctional environment and the operations of QCS.

QCS views the work being conducted by the TAC outlined above as a priority, and QCS will continue to advance the development of our state dog squad training curriculum on that basis. QCS also welcomes the additional advantages gained by contributing to the development and deployment of a set of national standards for law enforcement agencies to inform our current practices.

Private contractors

At this time, it is not the intent of QCS to consider the engagement of privately operated services for the provision of canine services. QCS has a rigorous selection process requiring applicants for dog squad officer positions to have a prescribed set of skills, experience and qualifications based on the inherent requirements for success in the role of a QCS dog squad officer.

It is our view that the integrity of this process and our mandatory training put in place to ensure that the professionalism of our dog squad operations would be compromised should we lose oversight and control over how this training is delivered.

I trust that this information is helpful to the Committee.

Yours sincerely

Peter Martin APM
Commissioner

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