

South Australia Police



Customer

- South Australia Police

Industry

- Government

Challenges

- To fight crime, reduce paperwork and secure community safety
- The successful delivery of the first mobile identity management solution for an Australian police service
- Strict budgetary and communication security constraints

Solution

- NEC Mobile Device Management architecture
- Integration to national CrimTrac information sharing service
- Highly secure information flow

Results

- Immediate access to accurate identity verification and risk level information to support frontline patrol capabilities
- Growing community satisfaction
- More rewarding workplace for police officers

Hardware/Applications

- NEC developed mobile biometric scanner
- Bluetooth transmission technology
- Android smart device

The Customer

The 5,000 officers and civilian employees of South Australia Police (SAPOL) strive to provide the highest possible security for the State's diverse community. Its population of more than 1.6 million live across a vast area of almost one million square kilometres. With a focus on crime reduction, SAPOL operates from 13 Local Service Areas (LSAs) that are backed by specialist expertise and resources of the centralised Crime and Operations Support Services division.

The Challenges

SAPOL is committed to equipping its officers with the latest technologies to fight crime, reduce paperwork and keep the State's community safe. It sought an advanced identity management solution that would, within strict budgetary constraints, meet its operational needs and address public service requirements for policing across South Australia.

Without a mobile solution, it was a lengthy process for officers to confirm the identity of persons of interest. In extreme cases, this involved taking suspects to the nearest police station for questioning which, in a State the size of South Australia, could be many hours away.

Garry Dickie, Director of Information Systems and Technology, South Australia Police said in commissioning the project: "SAPOL seeks to be at the forefront of modern policing by moving to capitalise on the technological advances in biometrics and mobility."

The Solution

SAPOL was able to confidently accept NEC's high quality proposal that seamlessly combined NEC's proven methodologies and application building capabilities with robust, easy to use, market leading technologies.

Award winning solution responds to frontline crime fighting.

“The MFS represents a quantum change in SAPOL’s operational efficiency and workplace safety. It immediately improved our capabilities and responsiveness. Patrol officers have access to accurate identity verification and risk level information, in real-time, to support frontline decision making.”

- Garry Dickie, Director of Information Systems and Technology, South Australia Police

NEC’s Melbourne-based Biometrics Public Safety and Wireless Mobility Management Groups designed the Mobile Fingerprint Scanning (MFS) solution. Its fingerprint algorithm was ranked as one of the most accurate systems available under benchmark tests performed by the U.S. National Institute of Standards and Technology.

The MFS solution pairs a small, lightweight mobile BlueFiN BF-C2 biometric scanner, via Bluetooth technology, to an Android smart device, in this case a Samsung Galaxy Note 3 Smartphone device.

On scanning a fingerprint, SAPOL officers access CrimTrac, the national information-sharing service for Australia’s police, law enforcement and national security agencies. The database enables officers to share biometrics, police referencing and child protection services information across state and territory borders. The system verifies whether the fingerprint is registered in CrimTrac’s National Automated Fingerprint Identification System (NAFIS) which contains 5.6 million sets of finger and palm records for 3.3 million people.

Security was a paramount feature of the application design, particularly as the scanned fingerprints are submitted to SAPOL’s backend systems via 3G and 4G mobile networks, and then transferred to the CrimTrac National Portable Biometric Identification (NPBI) server. The MFS’s unique application drives a highly secure flow of information that includes a dedicated gateway to provide an authenticated communication tunnel and log all transactions for audit reports.

Also, in accordance with SAPOL’s specific requirements, NEC’s solution ensures that no fingerprints are captured for the CrimTrac database or stored on the field devices. Access to the service is further protected by logon credentials that are defined by SAPOL’s existing LDAP authentication.

The CPU/RAM requirements for the NEC MFS Gateway are very low and do not impact on the performance of the Livescan servers. At go-live, the project was delivered to schedule and budget, due in no small part to the calibre of the NEC and the SAPOL teams and the quality of their joint planning and project management skills.

Following a highly successful trial of 30 MFS units in late 2013, a further 100 were deployed across the State.

Results

Winner of the prestigious SA iAward, this is the first identity management solution to be successfully deployed by an Australian police service using the portability and cost effectiveness of smart, mobile devices.

Officers equipped with NEC’s mobility solution can now quickly and accurately identify persons of interest, in real time, at the scene of a crime or during other questioning.

Within a minute of sending a scanned fingerprint, officers receive a ‘Hit’ or ‘No Hit’ notification on their smart device. If a ‘Hit’ is registered, it is accompanied by a powerful range of CrimTrac background information on that person. This may include criminal histories, outstanding warrants, other wanted criteria (ie breaching bail), photographs, address and other data including ‘tendency to violence’ which is critical to the safety of both officers and the public.

Garry Dickie said: “From the outset, our officers reported examples where they were able to make arrests on the spot. They identified a number of persons of interest with outstanding warrants and who had been wanted for other matters. The MFS is now also instrumental in our investigations into missing persons.

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