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## 17.0 ALTERNATIVE MODELS

### 17.1 Background

The Taskforce analysed a number of methods of delivery of forensic sciences using various techniques. As part of the analysis the Taskforce visited a number of interstate jurisdictions, conducted internet searches, and spoke to senior operators from ESR in New Zealand. The Taskforce discovered there is no one set method of service delivery.

### 17.2 Forensic and Scientific Service Delivery

Specific models have evolved according to resources, local requirements, efficiency, economy and degree of separation desired between investigators and scientific staff. Across the jurisdictions, there are varying staffing models depending on the governance arrangements in place.

Within Australia, each State and Territory has its own method of providing forensic sciences services. For example:

- *Queensland and New South Wales* have a mixed model governed by both Police and Health. The benefits are division of effort and specialisation, with placement of specialist staff in organisations able to support professional needs. However there is a need to have well-developed systems of communication and means to co-ordinate activities:
  - *Queensland* has forensic science services provided by two large agencies, QH and QPS, both with well defined areas of responsibilities. The laboratories in each agency have NATA accreditation; and
  - *New South Wales* has a Forensic Science Division within the NSW Police, some forensic science services are provided by Division of Analytical Laboratories (DAL), part of the NSW Department of Health and some are purchased from the National Measurement Institute (NMI).
- *South Australia* has Forensic Sciences South Australia (FSSA), part of the South Australian Department of Administrative and Information Services. FSSA provides forensic science and pathology services to the criminal justice system for the benefit of the South Australian community. Its primary clients are the South Australian Police and the Coroner, with the DPP being a key stakeholder as well. The relationship is based on partnership principles rather than purchaser/provider arrangements.
- Both *Victoria* and the *Australian Federal Police* have a Police governed model. This model allows for close liaison between scientists and investigators.
  - *Victoria* has the Victorian Institute of Forensic Medicine attached to the Coroner and the Forensic Services Department attached to the Police;
  - *Australian Federal Police (AFP)* has the Forensic and Technical Services area as part of its operation. Services are also purchased from NMI. AFP provides forensic science services to the ACT Police via a Service Level Agreement (SLA); and
- *Australian Capital Territory* uses the ACT Government Analytical Laboratory as well as purchasing services from AFP.

As indicated above, some jurisdictions have varying types of agreements in place. However there is no true fee for service model in place as cost and pricing models have not been fully developed.

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No individual model of service delivery provides the perfect answer. However all jurisdictions talked about the value of having a triage process implemented to enable more efficient practices and processes. Also each jurisdiction acknowledged the need to work with the University sector. Some have formal professional relationships to access highly technical equipment and conduct research to the benefit of both parties.

### **17.3 International Models of Service Delivery**

ESR is a New Zealand Government owned organisation operating as a Crown Institute in a commercial environment with an independent board of directors. ESR provides scientific services in environmental health as well as forensic science. It provides services in food safety, water quality, population and environmental health and communicable disease through its Environmental Health section. The focus is on how human and naturally occurring influences in the environment impact on the health and well-being of people.

ESR Forensic Science service covers all aspects of crime scene examination, forensic biology, physical evidence, illicit drugs, and toxicology, including blood and breath alcohol analysis. The ESR Forensic Scientists are available 24 hours a day for advice and attendance at crime scenes. ESR provides forensic science services to New Zealand Police under a 3 year contract.

The main benefit of this model allows for operations to be independent and for clearly defined management. However funding may be uncertain, scientists may distance themselves from investigation, becoming more committed to the science rather than the outcomes, and scientists and investigators may not develop common approaches to forensic sciences.

In England and Wales, FSS provides forensic science services to the criminal justice system. FSS is recognised as an internationally renowned centre of excellence for casework, research, training and consultancy. It operates under a Management Board model. The major benefits of this model are the perceived independence and the ability to become a centre of excellence in forensic sciences. However the model does not have the financial security that being part of a large government department can provide.

The United States Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) has one of the largest and most comprehensive forensic laboratories in the world. All forensic services, including expert witness testimonies are given free of charge with some conditions applying. The FBI laboratories accept evidence related to all crimes under investigation by FBI Field Officers. It only analyses evidence related to violent crime investigations by State and local law enforcement agencies. It does not normally analyse evidence in cases involving property crime unless there is personal injury or intent to cause personal injury.

In Canada, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) provides forensic science services. There are six laboratories spread across Canada. The RCMP has a Case Receipt Unit which has case coordinators who are the main contact point between the investigator and the laboratory. They use a triage process. They also have an agreement with their customers that only two samples for each break and enter case will be lodged. They negotiate the minimum sample numbers for all other cases based on the case scenario.