

## **Review of Trial Period of Nowra CBD CCTV Project.**

### **Introduction**

The equipment for the Nowra CBD CCTV Project was activated on 5 November 2010. The trial period of this project commenced at this date and ran until the 30 March 2011.

This review will discuss the following issues:

- Review of the CCTV equipment
- Requests for data from Police
- Requests for data by members of the public
- Complaints received
- Crime statistics
- Signage
- Survey results
- Ongoing costs

### **Review of CCTV Equipment**

The Nowra CBD CCTV Project currently involves the use of 18 cameras linked to the Nowra Police Station. Data is stored at the Nowra Police Station on a secure hard drive. If data is to be retrieved from the hard drive a representative from Shoalcom attends the station to perform the task.

Staff from Shoalcom believe that the current equipment is adequate as far as storage of information and retrieval of information is concerned.

The current CCTV system has the capacity to be expanded through the provision of additional modules and cameras. If new equipment was not from the existing provider, Council would have to install new infrastructure at the police station to support the new equipment.

Shoalcom have suggested that the following is considered in future development of the project:

- Night vision cameras would be more appropriate for most location. Although the current cameras record at night there are cameras available with better night vision capability. These cameras are now at a more competitive price than when the project was first tendered;
- The current configuration of the system does not allow the Police to review footage prior to making a request to obtain footage. This is in line with the current Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Shoalhaven City Council and the NSW Police Force. If this MOU was revised to allow the Police to review footage it would make it possible for them to determine a more accurate timeframe for an incident and therefore limit the amount of footage technical staff are required to obtain. The MOU can be reviewed if a formal request from the Police is received. The Police have been notified of this requirement but have not yet supplied such a request;
- If technical staff could be given remote access to the system so the diagnosis of faults would be possible without attending the Police Station;
- The system could further be streamlined by the use of a remote power cycle for the remote equipment.

The Police believe the system is functioning well although it occasionally requires re-booting when a number of the cameras go off-line.

Police have also requested that should further funding for cameras become available cameras be installed in the following locations:

- Egans Lane area covering both small parks and immediate area;
- Berry Street from the Library south to the Standish Medical Centre.

### **Requests for data from the Police**

In the period November 5, 2010 to 31 March, 2011 11 requests (totalling 44 hours of labour) were received from the Police for data to be retrieved. The time involved to retrieve information has averaged approximately 4 hours per request. Nowra Police have noted that the time taken to download footage equals the real time of the footage requested and have now tried to narrow the timeframe of requested material. This shortened the labour to 2 hours on the most recent request.

Each request has also taken up to an hour in staff administration time.

Some of the suggestions made by Shoalcom (listed above) could reduce this drain on time and resources.

### **Requests for data from members of the public**

Two requests were received from members of the public during the trial period. These have both come from the same person. These requests have taken between 2 to 5 hours each to action by technical staff.

### **Complaints received**

No complaints were received during the trial period.

### **Crime Statistics**

During the period 5 November 2010 to 30 March 2011 there were 5 assaults and 4 incidents of malicious damage in the area covered by the cameras.

Nowra Police report the CCTV cameras have been of assistance in various investigations. They report they are invaluable in several ways:

- a) confirming any evidence obtained from victim statements by enabling police to track the movements of the victim/offender using the CCTV cameras. This has been used in several assault matters;
- b) in conjunction with other evidence the CCTV cameras assist in the identification of the offenders;
- c) has assisted in evidence in relation to street offences which have occurred in Kinghorn Street surrounding the Kebab Shop and Junction Street in the Post Office Tavern area.

d) has assisted police in matters relating to compliance with licensing laws.

## Signage

Signage is located at the boundary of the range of the CCTV cameras. There are also some additional signs in the CBD. These signs advise users of the CBD that cameras are operating, that they are the property of Shoalhaven City Council and provide a contact number. As such they are adequate for this purpose.

Signs are not under each camera but indicate clearly the presence of cameras in the CBD. Additional signs could be provided in the vicinity of each camera if Council decided this to be necessary.

## Survey Results

A survey was conducted at the end of the trial period of the cameras. Following are the results of this survey (figures in parentheses are from a similar survey in 2008 prior to the installation of CCTV. The 2008 survey included both face to face interviews and an online survey while the 2011 survey comprised only face to face street interviews):

- 97 people were surveyed in the CBD (205).
- 67% were residents (79%);
- 26% retailers (13%);
- 7% visitors (8%).
- 19% were aged 12-24 (15%);
- 36% were aged 25-55 (57%);
- 33% were aged 55-70 (23%);
- 12% were aged over 70 years of age (4%);
- No respondents were under 12 years of age (1%);
- 63% female (68%);
- 37% male (32%);
- 72% agreed Junction Street to be safe during the day (71%);
- 19% disagreed Junction Street was safe during the day (13%);
- 8% agreed Junction Street safe at night (12%) – 31% were unsure in 2011;
- 61% disagreed Junction Street was safe at night (53%);
- 42% agreed Junction Court safe during the day (43%);
- 36% disagreed Junction Court safe during the day (25%);
- 4% agreed Junction Court safe at night (6%);
- 70% disagreed Junction Court safe at night (63%);
- Main safety issues in the CBD: Stealing 15% (17%); Assault 16% (24%); Alcohol 30%; Drugs 17% (32%-2008 alcohol was included with drugs); Graffiti 14% (18%); Traffic Offences 8% (9%);
- 77% knew Council had installed CCTV (45%);
- 65% thought that CCTV made the CBD safer (76%);
- 18% thought CCTV did not make the CBD safer (24%)- 2011 17% unsure;
- 18% felt much safer with CCTV (21%)
- 56% felt a little safer (55%)
- 26% No change (20%).

**Comments:** While it is difficult to compare the results of these surveys due largely to differing sample of respondents and the 2008 having an online component could result in non users of the CBD responding the following could be drawn from the results:

- Although there is a perception in the community that CCTV makes people feel safer this is not reflected in considerations of locations being safer. For example respondents perceived that CCTV made them feel safer but this is not reflected in responses to the CBD being safer during the day and night
- Most interviewed knew CCTV had been installed in the CBD. This may be due to the large amount of media attention to privacy complaints.

### Ongoing Costs

CCTV requires an ongoing budgetary commitment. Following is a list of costs incurred during the trial period of the system. While some of these costs were covered by the grant funding most of the costs fall outside of this and will require a commitment to maintenance; staff time to copy data and future replacement of equipment:

#### Training costs

Training of Police	\$1393.20 (covered by grant funds)
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#### Repairs and maintenance

Repairs and maintenance	\$2207.53
Line Rental	\$435.72

#### Burning and copying data

Burning and copying data	\$2013.23
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If present costs are consistent for a full year a budget of \$5500 for maintenance and repairs and a budget of \$5000 for burning and copying data.

These costs do not cover the cost of eventual replacement of cameras and other equipment or ongoing costs such as line rental.

### Summary

The Nowra CBD CCTV Project has been in operation since 5 November 2010.

The current equipment used operates well but future upgrades and replacement of equipment should look at cameras that have greater night vision capabilities. These cameras are more affordable than they were when the project commenced.

Police who use the system feel that it is a useful and effective tool in crime prevention and investigation. They have experienced only minor problems with its operation. The ability to have a live feed from the cameras has enhanced their capacity to respond to incidents as they occur. In this sense the system is being used a proactive crime prevention tool.

Shoalcom technical staff have streamlined the process to retrieve data from the hard drive in the Nowra Police Station. This will assist in reducing the cost of retrieval.

Council will need to factor in an ongoing maintenance and operating budget for the system. There will also be the requirement to upgrade and replace the system as the technology ages.

## Recommendations

- **Upgrade current cameras to night vision cameras.** Although the current cameras record at night there are cameras available with better night vision capability.
  - These cameras are now at a more competitive price than when the project was first tendered. For example a 2 Megapixel camera. This camera comes with night vision capability (IR) to 25m. Cost \$995 ex gst;
  - This is a midrange camera as cost can vary between \$400 to \$3000 depending on the picture quality and the illumination level required.
  - The labour would be roughly 1 to 2 hours per camera to change at \$78.95 an hour.
  - lighting could be improved in some of the existing camera positions.
  - The higher frame rate and compression of these new cameras will require higher bandwidth usage on the wireless network so if too many new cameras are installed an extra access point might be required on the police tower.
  - The extra frame rates and compression the storage required per day would be larger so we might need to look at upgrading the 1 Terabyte Hard drives to 2 Terabytes each.
  - Recommendation purchase one camera for testing purposes to see whether picture quality is satisfactory or not.
- **The revision of the Memorandum of Understanding between Shaoalhaven City Council and the NSW Police Force** to allow the Police to review footage prior to making a request to obtain footage;
- **Remote access to the system be granted to technical staff so that the diagnosis of faults would be possible without attending the Police Station.**  
This is possible using a number of technologies including:
  - provision of a hosted service costing a bit more than \$1700.00 a year;
  - Provide a link from the Council admin building to the police station that will connect the CCTV system to the council network providing a fast, high bandwidth connection. Roughly \$7500.00 Installed.
- The system could further be streamlined by the use of a remote power cycle for the cameras and head end equipment. Material costs to set up 240 volt power cycling at each location would be around \$750.00 . Install time would be around one hour per and it would be best if they were installed at 7 locations.
- If present costs are consistent for a full year a budget of \$5500 for maintenance and repairs and a budget of \$5000 for burning and copying data