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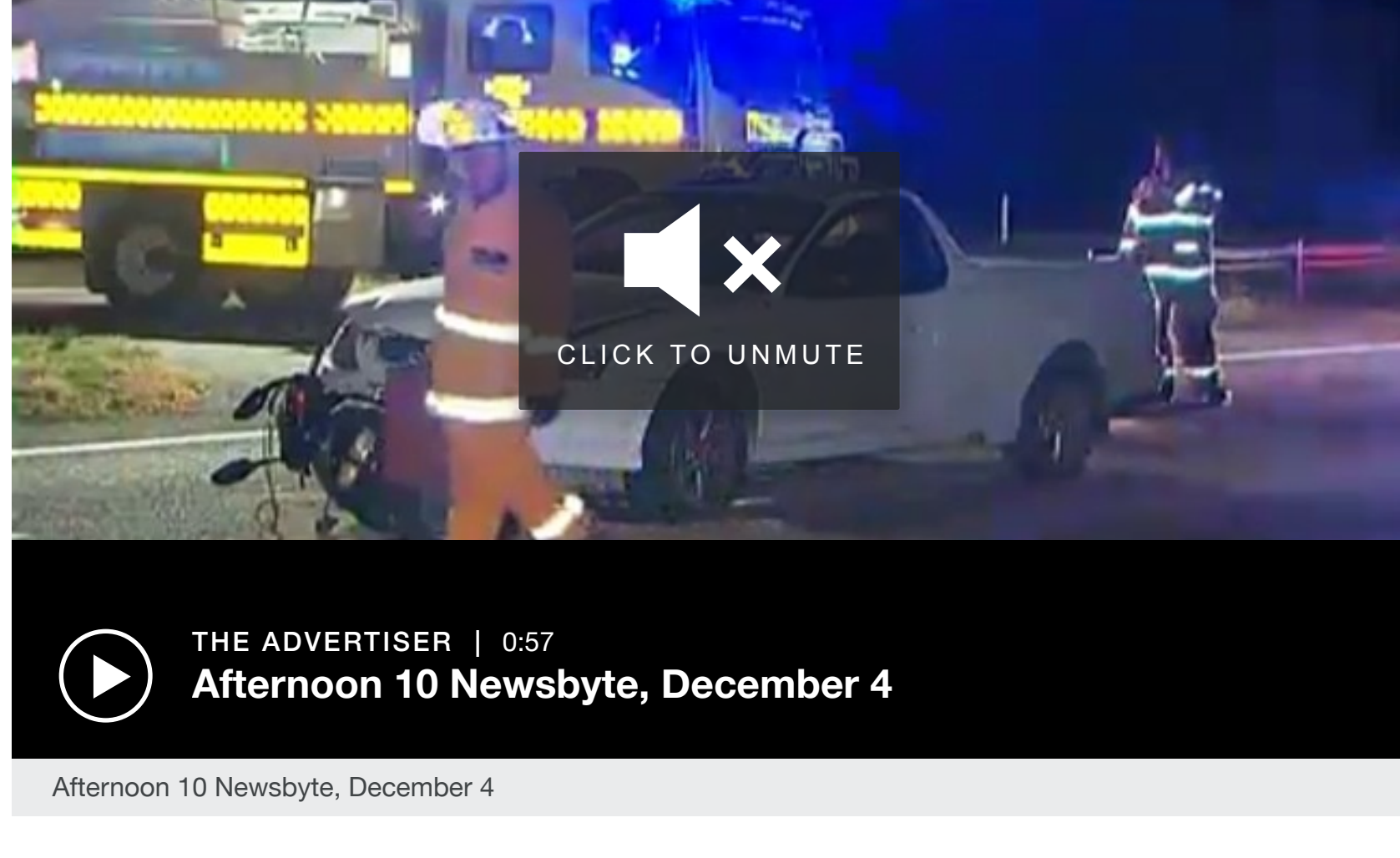
State Government trials stab-proof vests for officers, but Police Association says it's a waste and they're needed

Police officers could be waiting until the end of next September to access stab-proof and ballistic vests – but the Police Association and Opposition want them fast-tracked.

Elizabeth Henson Political reporter

@Eliz_henson December 4, 2018 - 8:00PM The Advertiser

1 comments



Police officers could be waiting until the end of next September to access stab-proof and ballistic vests.

The timeframe for the potential rollout of the protective vests has prompted the Opposition and Police Association of SA to call on the State Government to fast-track the process to ensure officers' safety.

In the lead-up to the state election in March, Labor promised police a \$5 million package that included up to 2500 ballistic vests, tasers, drones and handheld X-ray machines, while the then-Liberal Opposition pledged to trial vests before buying any.

The Government released a tender document on Monday, seeking stab-resistant and ballistic vests for the trial.



Ballistic vests seized by ABF officers at Sydney Airport on 15 June

The document provides an "indicative timetable" for the project, showing the trial's estimated completion date is August 9, 2019 and a "secondary procurement process", if required, will be done by September 30.

The Opposition says the Government is continuing to demand a trial "despite the light armoured vests having already been fully rolled out in NSW following a successful six-month trial".

It is understood there are concerns over the NSW vests being outdated. Opposition police spokesman Lee Odenwalder urged the Government to speed up the rollout.

"Our police face challenging and dangerous situations every day, ensuring our police and kept safe must be a priority. It's been over nine months since funding was made available for this program and it now appears that frontline police will not have access to these vest until the end of 2019.

"Corey Wingard must reverse his decision and fast-track the rollout of this important equipment to our frontline police officers."

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Police Association of SA president Mark Carroll said the trial was a waste of time.

"NSW police currently have these type of vests," he said.

"The Police Association has highlighted previously that these vests underwent trialling and testing in NSW and should be rolled out in SA. The tender and evaluation process until late in 2019 is extraordinary."



"NSW police currently have these type of vests," said Police Association of SA president Mark Carroll.

Mr Wingard said the Government was pushing forward with its trial and had funded the testing of 100 light armoured vests for officers.

"The purpose of the trial is to inform the operational suitability of the vests, provision of necessary protection and performance under different weather conditions," he said.

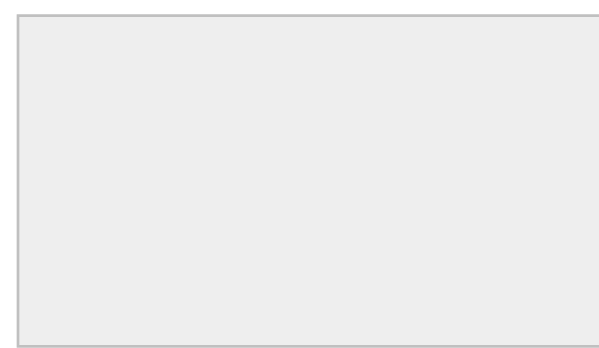
"The Police Commissioner has made it very clear to me he won't be rushing this."

Comment was sought from SA Police.



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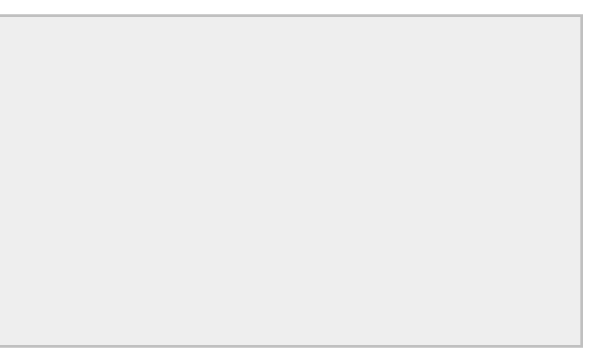
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