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## New protective vests for police, almost three years after promised

Almost three years after being promised, SA police are to get new protective vests in an \$8.5m budget funding allocation.

Nigel Hunt

November 1, 2020 - 11:54AM The Advertiser

17 comments



Community constable Reeda Zaffar, Senior Sgt Vince Scotland, Sgt Chris Head, Community constable Lauren Lovell, Sgt Annette Gilbert, Sgt Daniel Lissiman and Senior Constable 1st Class David Fox pose in the Safety Vests being trialled by SA Police in 2019. Picture: AAP/Mark Brake

Frontline police will finally get load bearing protective vests following an \$8.5m allocation in the upcoming state budget.

A 2018 election promise by both major parties, the move follows an extensive trial by police that has selected the most suitable and up-to-date vest – resistant to sharp-edged weapons and firearms – now available.

Police Minister Vincent Tarzia said the introduction of the vests would be staged over a two-year period.

The first 800 vests are expected this financial year with a further 2200 vests expected in 2021/22. The \$8.5m funding allocation also supports changes to lockers to secure the vests.

“These new vests are an advanced piece of equipment that will provide extra safety and security for our police officers during situations that involve armed offenders,” Mr Tarzia said.

“Officers deserve modern equipment to perform day-to-day duties. That’s why these vests have been tested on the frontline by SAPOL to ensure they meet the rigorous standards

needed by operational personnel.

“The rollout of this personal protective equipment is another step in consolidating the security of the community and safety of the officers who protect it.”

The funding follows a three-month trial, that started in August last year that tested 105 vests from a variety of manufacturers.

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The trial examined protection qualities, comfort and performance of the

vests under different weather conditions across metropolitan Adelaide and regional South Australia.

“These vests have increased capability to withstand attacks from people with edged weapons or who may be in possession of firearms,” Mr Tarzia said.

Police Association president Mark Carroll welcomed the announcement, but said it was “long overdue.”

“This issue has been years in the making while other police services in Australia and the world already have this type of vest,” he said.

“This equipment will help protect police and the sooner it is delivered, the better, but this issue should have been above politics from the beginning.”

Police Commissioner Grant Stevens said the vests would be issued to frontline officers “on a priority basis.”

“It is a large scale project that will be rolled out over two years,” he said.

“The vests are individually fitted to each officer. It will take some time to do this obviously.

“It means officers will have another layer of protection when they go into dangerous situations.”

Labor Leader Peter Malinauskas said he “welcomed the decision by the Marshall Liberal Government to reinstate funding Labor allocated in February 2018 for stab-proof vests.”

“However, at a time knife crime is surging some police officers will still be without this much needed protection for a further two years. This is simply too long,” he said.

“The safety and protection of our police must be a priority, if funding wasn’t cut, most South Australian police officers would already have this vital piece of equipment.”

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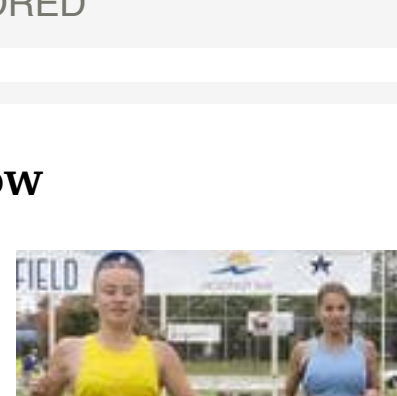
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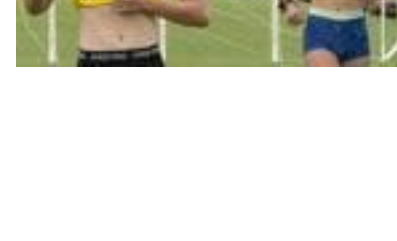


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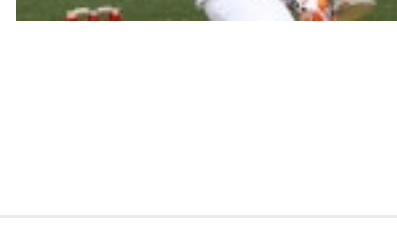


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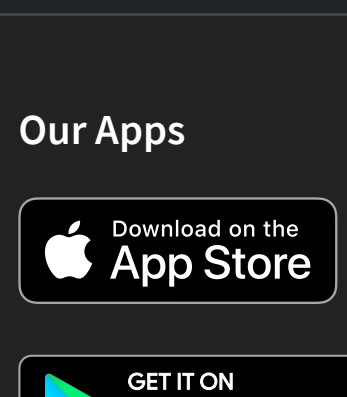
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