

Minister Kyam Maher
Minister for Manufacturing and Innovation

Minister Tony Piccolo
Minister for Emergency Services

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Five innovators to develop emergency service tracking technology

The State Government has awarded five innovative local firms \$100,000 each to take up the challenge of developing a better way of tracking emergency service workers and equipment during major incidents.

The grants have been made through the *Small Business Innovation Research Pilot Program*, which provides research and development funding for small and medium enterprises to come up with innovative ways to address specific problems faced by State Government departments.

Manufacturing and Innovation Minister Kyam Maher said a technology and software solution being developed for the SES under the program would have broader applications outside of South Australia.

“The challenge is to develop a solution that will enable emergency services workers to check-in and respond in real time. This would replace the current system of physically recording the position of vehicles at incidents, and which personnel are on board each vehicle,” he said.

“With the frequency of very high and extreme fire danger days expected to rise, there’s an opportunity for local companies to turn their research and development into improved incident management products for the global market.”

The businesses awarded funding in Phase One of the program are:

Auspace - integrates systems and has extensive background in satellite technologies specialising in solving business and technical problems using independent, innovative, and cost effective solutions.

Cohda Wireless - Founded at the University of South Australia's Institute for Telecommunications Research in 2004, Cohda Wireless makes hardware products and complete software solutions. It is collaborating with Ebor Computing, another innovative South Australian small business. Ebor Computing will be contributing their expertise gained from the SmartMove taxi dispatching system.

elmTEK - an Australian-owned and operated software engineering and systems integration business in the Australian defence and government market, it provides engineering solutions using expertise in networked land and aerospace systems in collaboration with the University of Adelaide.

Jackson Care Technologies - Specialists in solving business and technical communications problems, JCT is a lead supplier to the health sector and the Country Fire Service. JCT is partnering with the University of Adelaide.

SRA Information Technology - provides software, business intelligence and data management experts to solve problems by developing custom technologies. It helped develop the South Australian Resource Information GeoServer (SARIG), the State’s award-winning mineral exploration data portal. SRA is collaborating with the University of Adelaide.

Emergency Services Minister Tony Piccolo said the benefits of an electronic responder and check-in system, which includes real-time information, could lead to precise location tracking of personnel and improved logistical support for accommodation and catering.

“It could also lead to a more effective transfer of essential information during escalating emergency situations and an overall improvement in incident management and personnel safety,” Minister Piccolo said.

SES Chief Officer Chris Beattie said the recent devastating fires in the Adelaide Hills highlighted the challenges in tracking and managing hundreds of resources from many agencies moving around a major incident.

“An electronic responder tracking tool will significantly increase the safety and welfare of crews while assisting with planning and logistics for those personnel,” Mr Beattie said.

“The project has the potential to benefit all emergency services personnel from the SA Country Fire Service, SA Metropolitan Fire Service and firefighting personnel from the Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources.

“We are looking forward to working with innovative South Australian companies to address this long-standing challenge of tracking emergency service personnel and vehicles during emergencies.”

Modelled on similar programs in the US and the UK, the *Small Business Innovation Research Pilot Program* provides funding for South Australian SMEs to develop new, innovative products and services that solve problems.

The pilot program is an initiative within the State Government’s *Manufacturing Works* strategy and aligns with the Growth through Innovation objectives to be reached by 2017.