

## SHOOTING FROM THE LIP



# SWITCHING ON SMART SAFETY

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I REMEMBER vividly, huddled ‘round a tiny black-and-white TV.

The reception snowy – but a wire coat-hanger, jammed into the broken aerial, helped. Sometimes.

As tech prices fell, we upgraded to colour.

There was a time when smart tech was a luxury. Non-essential. A treat for those who could afford it. But those days are a distant past. Smart tech’s now a fundamental enabler for progressive, actualised society – and the framework of constitutional rights and responsibilities. Massive headway has been made to ensure universal access to the basics.

Because our society is profoundly unsafe, it’s crucial we now switch on “smart safety”. Urgently.

Why? One: safety is the *raison d’être* – the reason for being – of the modern state. That’s the original “Social Contract”. And two: safety is a fundamental enabler of almost everything else.

Here are 12 core enablers – to harness the whole of society, to partner with SAPS and the national agencies.

1: Connectivity – all the broadband, all hotspots – public, private.

2: Digital citizen portals, e-government for citizens. To banish citizens’ long, wasteful travels to connect to essential services. For a live, responsive, relevant relationship.

3: A smart training venue. “Team Learning” is the Fifth Discipline, the ultimate success factor for any team.

4: An eLearning syllabus.

Comprehensive.

5: A camera network. Start, then build. Plugged into the right state agencies – and their increasingly integrated data, analysis and co-ordinating platforms.

6: A Neighbourhood Safety Officer (NSO), or highly organised Community Police Forum (CPF). To co-ordinate, locally.

7: A precinct management system. Like City Improvement Districts (CIDs) use.

8: Accredited, equipped Neighbourhood Watches (NHWs), fully skilled as Community Emergency Response Teams (CERTs). Smartly connected.

9: A Business Safety Partnership. Self-explanatory. Connecting all available resources.

10: An accurately deployed Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP), focused on enabling activities, to harness citizens’ own contributions.

11: A government “Community Investment Programme” (CIP), harnessing the state’s human resources, where they live. Using readily available micro-jobbing platforms.

12: A full “Strategic Relationship Management” network, with the communications tools and processes to keep the partners connected and relationships healthy.

That’s it: “Twelve Enablers for Smart Communities”. Needed in every place. Like each of our 387 Wards, 150 SAPS station precincts.

How do we transition to smart communities?

Determine the strategy and model. Focused and clear.

Develop robust and sustainable implementation plans. For every place. No one suburb is more important than another.

Identify existing resources. Join the dots. Stitch them together, with common purpose and innovative partnerships. With the right enablers, we can flick the switch: ON.

For smart safety everywhere.