

Media release

23 June 2026

First CE appointed to new government entity uplifting communication capability of NZ's public safety sector

Rob Fyfe, Interim Chair of SafetyNet Critical Communications, is pleased to announce the appointment of Steve Ferguson as Chief Executive of the newly created government organisation, SafetyNet (active 1 July), following an independent recruitment process.

With more than 25 years' leadership experience across finance, energy, logistics and central and local government, Steve has been Entity Director of SafetyNet's predecessor, Next Generation Critical Communications (NGCC) since 2020. He was responsible for establishing NGCC as an independent business unit within Police to scope, develop and deliver the \$1.7b Public Safety Network (PSN) solutions for Hato Hone St John, Police, Wellington Free Ambulance and Fire and Emergency New Zealand.

Rob says, "under Steve's leadership, NGCC has delivered the Public Safety Network's globally leading multi-network cellular services on time and on budget. There are 28,000 frontline emergency responders now benefitting from more resilient and reliable access to cellular coverage on their phones and mobile devices."

"Working on behalf of four emergency service agencies, and with multiple technology vendors, Steve has been an enormously capable leader and relationship manager. Under real pressure, he has created a collaborative, cross agency approach to the delivery of critical, secure communications infrastructure and services for the organisations we rely on to keep our communities safe."

SafetyNet is a new government entity from 1 July

In November 2025, [Cabinet approved NGCC's exit from Police](#) to become an independent limited liability Crown company on 1 July 2026. Steve will lead the establishment of SafetyNet as the government's first dedicated critical communications organisation with a mandate to deliver an ongoing evolution of shared infrastructure and services for the wider public safety sector.

Steve's short-term priorities are to lead SafetyNet to deliver the PSN's 500-site digital Land Mobile Radio network for the emergency services, ensure continuous delivery and operation of PSN Cellular Services for the emergency services, and to make the PSN Cellular Services available on a user-pays basis to other organisations working in public safety and emergency management.

Steve is excited to be the new entity's first Chief Executive.

“I feel extremely privileged to be leading SafetyNet on a mission to help modernise the communication capabilities of New Zealand’s public safety organisations. We have an excellent team in place,” Steve says.

“SafetyNet will build on our successful approach of strong relationships and collaboration to work with the sector and government. We will add real enduring value to New Zealand through the development, delivery and maintenance of shared critical communications services and infrastructure.”

SafetyNet leadership team appointments

The SafetyNet leadership team has also been appointed effective 1 July: Annuschka Martinsen is the Head of Strategy, Governance and Reporting; Nicola Wright is Head of Programme Delivery; Mark Flintoff is the Commercial and Finance Director; Steve Lawrence is the Head of Product, Design and Innovation. The Head of Customer Engagement and Service Management, and Head of Enabling Services roles are now being recruited.

ENDS

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About SafetyNet Critical Communications (SafetyNet)

From 1 July, SafetyNet will be the Government’s dedicated critical communications entity, helping the people and organisations that protect New Zealanders stay connected when it matters most.

Working alongside the emergency services, and public safety agencies, community organisations and infrastructure and utilities organisations, SafetyNet will deliver and support trusted communications services enabling faster decisions, better coordination and more effective responses during emergencies and everyday operations. This includes delivering the Public Safety Network solutions and Location Information Services.

SafetyNet brings together technology expertise and partnerships to build and strengthen New Zealand’s public safety communications ecosystem today, while preparing for the challenges of tomorrow.

About the Public Safety Network Te Kupenga Marutau

The Public Safety Network is a significant infrastructure project, investing \$1.7 billion over 10 years to build and operate the networks and services, and roll out new devices to emergency services staff, stations and vehicles. Delivered by SafetyNet, the PSN consists of three complementary elements: a digital Land Mobile Radio network under construction, Cellular Roaming, Priority and Network Visibility Services now in operation, and the ongoing provision of personal alerting.