September 6, 2009

NSW police today took possession of almost 2,000 Taser stun guns – a $10 million NSW Government investment ensuring frontline officers have the state-of the-art equipment they need.

“The NSW Government makes no apology for supporting our frontline officers on the beat,” Mr Rees said.

“We gave a commitment to them and today I’m happy to report we are making good on that promise.”

The first 500 of the 1,962 Tasers will be sent to Weapons Trainers across the State who are charged with the responsibility of training the police.

As police are trained the remaining Tasers will be rolled out to Local Area Commands across the State over the next 18 months.

“This NSW Government investment has ensured all first response police officers will carry tasers as part of their standard equipment,” Mr Rees said.

“This means police responding to situations where people are agitated, armed or threatening harm to themselves and others now have an alternative to drawing their gun.”

Police Minister Tony Kelly said earlier this year the NSW Police Commissioner advised that after a successful trial period tasers should be deployed to frontline officers.

“Police have trialled the tasers for a number of years and found they were effective in reducing confrontation,” Mr Kelly said.

“The specialist police units trailing the equipment found that mere sight of the taser was enough to resolve the conflict in more than half the times it was pulled from the holster.”

Police officers are now undertaking rigorous training before being armed with a taser, including:

- Eight hours of initial instruction;
- Passing a written test with a minimum score of 80 per cent; and
- Annual recertification.

Mr Kelly said strict accountability measures for the use of tasers were in place.

“Through taserCam, audio and visual data will be recorded each time a unit is used – information which will then be reviewed by senior police.”