



'World class' communications

KALGOORLIE-BOULDER was the first regional centre to be connected to the new Digital Community Safety Network.

Deputy Police Commissioner Chris Dawson, along with Police Minister Liza Harvey and Regional Development Minister Brendon Grylls officially unveiled the network on Friday, but the system has been already been in use for a few weeks.

The new infrastructure will connect the radio communications of emergency services, including the police, the Department of Corrective Services and the Department of Fire and Emergency Service on one system.

It replaces the Police Regional Radio Network and will cover an area of more than 18,000sq km.

Over this area, existing telecommunications tower sites have been used to accommodate the new system.

The upgrade was funded by a \$94.5 million allocation under Royalties for Regions, with \$4.5m for the Kalgoorlie Trunked Network component.

Mr Dawson described the "world class" system as essential.

"It is historic, but it is different from cracking champagne over a helicopter or a boat," he said in opening the network.

Mr Grylls said the project was not an election promise, but upgrading the network had been necessary. "It is a great project because it saves lives – it is as simple as that," Mr Grylls said.

"It was plain to see this had to

be done. It wasn't (just) an option at all."

Ms Harvey said the new radio network could cater for expansion and access for other agencies.

"This modern and effective radio network will benefit regional communities by providing a more informed, responsive and co-ordinated service," she said.

The rollout of the digital system comes in response to concerns over the old analogue system, which was criticised for being prone to failures. The State Opposition has previously attacked the Government over the delay in delivering upgrades.

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Groundbreaking: Police Minister Liza Harvey, Regional Development Minister Brendon Grylls and Acting Superintendent Darren Seivwright get to grips with the new digital communications system.

Photo: HELEN MCDONALD