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## Making the leap to LINK

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Victoria Police is set to leap into a new era with the replacement of its Law Enforcement Assistance Program (LEAP).

A new records management system known as LINK will be progressively rolled out from late 2009 after Victoria Police recently selected an internationally renowned package to replace the LEAP system.

The development follows an extensive consultation and tender process with Victoria Police awarding the software contract to Canadian company, Niche Technology.

Considered a market leader in the delivery of operational policing systems, Niche's Records Management System is currently used by 26 police organisations across Canada, the United Kingdom and Queensland.

Victoria Police Deputy Commissioner Kieran Walshe said the LINK project was progressing well and improved security and audit features will increase data security for police and the community.

He said the new system is capable of supporting streamlined data collection processes.

"LINK is an advanced system that will provide our members with an easy 'link' to secure, quality data. It will be more efficient and user friendly and this investment in technology will meet the needs of Victoria Police now and for many years to come," Mr Walshe said.

The LINK project team worked closely with the Commissioner for Law Enforcement Data Security (CLEDS) on system security issues as part of the tender process.

Mr Walshe said Victoria Police will continue to work with CLEDS to ensure LINK complies with the required standards for the security of law enforcement data systems.

"We understand that the community demands the collection, storage, access and use of information on Victoria Police systems be tightly controlled and that all privacy guidelines are stringently met."

"We have significantly tightened our processes regarding LEAP in recent years and conduct regular and thorough audits to identify misuse and make members accountable. Only those members who require LEAP as part of their core duties are now authorised to access the system.

"Our LEAP Taskforce has done a significant amount of work across the organisation in educating members about their responsibilities.

"We have already seen a significant change in behaviour as highlighted by the notable drop in LEAP breaches last financial year.

"We believe the new LINK system and further training for police on the appropriate access of law enforcement data will continue to contribute to a drop in the number of breaches."

In 2007-08 there were 26 confirmed LEAP breaches which fell from 47 the previous year. Another 21 information security allegations are still under investigation, however the majority of these are not related to LEAP.

The figures highlight a notable drop in members checking LEAP for curiosity, training purposes or personal convenience, such as checking their personal vehicle registration details.

LEAP was implemented in 1993 and in 2005 the State Government announced that it would fund the replacement of the system. The LINK project commenced in mid 2006 and is scheduled to be completed over a five-year period.

Implementation of the system and training for LINK users are due to be progressively rolled out across Victoria, over 12 months, commencing in late 2009.

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**Victoria Police Centre 637 Flinders Street Melbourne 3005 | Ph 03 9247 6666 | Fax 03 9247 5727**  
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