

CONFERENCE AGENDA

Takina Wellington Convention & Exhibition Centre

27-28 May 2026

COMMS
CONNECT

CONFERENCE AGENDA

Wednesday, 27 May 2026

PLENARY/THEATRE 1	
8.50 am – 9.00 am Welcome & opening remarks: MC, Chris Stevens – Managing Director, CartGIS	
9.00 am – 9.10 am Ministerial Welcome and Opening Hon Paul Goldsmith – Minister of Communications Hon Mark Mitchell – Minister of Emergency Management & Recovery	
9.10 am – 9.20 am Emergency Management Update Q+A Hon Mark Mitchell – Minister of Emergency Management & Recovery	
9.20 am – 9.30 am Communications Q+A Hon Paul Goldsmith – Minister of Communications	
9.30 am – 10.00 am NGCC's evolution: new Public Safety Network cellular customers and beyond Steve Ferguson – Director, Next Generation Critical Communications Steve Lawrence – Chief Technical Director, Next Generation Critical Communications	
10.00 am – 10.30 am The secret sauce behind NZ's world-leading Public Safety Network Cellular Services Jason Novak – Principal Engineer, One NZ	
10.30 AM – 11.30 AM MORNING BREAK	
THEATRE 1	THEATRE 2
11.30 am – 12.00 pm Radio Spectrum Management update – 2026 and beyond Claire Smollett – National Manager, RSM Daniel O'Grady – Manager, Policy & Planning, MBIE	11.30 am – 12.00 pm The impact of voice quality in mission-critical IP networks using PoLQA Senthil Sundram – Head of Telco Solutions, Rohde & Schwarz
12.00 pm – 12.30 pm The importance of rapid response during critical emergency events Inspector Kerei Gray – PSN Implementation Manager, NZ Police Dylan Earle – Customer Solutions Manager, Tait Communications	12.00 pm – 12.30 pm Ad hoc comms networks using mmWave-enabled UAVs: real-world problems and solutions Dylan Jorgensen – CEO, Qamcom
12.30 pm – 1.00 pm Private 5G network improves safety & strengthens digital resilience for Lyttelton Port Company	12.30 pm – 1.00 pm Terrestrial-first, space-enabled: designing universal outdoor coverage for Aotearoa Matthew Schultz – Partner, Gravelroad
1.00 PM – 2.00 PM LUNCH BREAK	
2.00 pm – 2.30 pm From dedicated networks to hybrid ecosystems: cyber resilience is now operational resilience Vanessa Leite – Strategic Cyber Advisor	2.00 pm – 3.00 pm RFUANZ AGM
2.30 pm – 3.00 pm Presentation TBC	
3.00 pm – 3.30 pm Real-world experiences from LMR/P25 to MCX/broadband wireless migration & interworking in international mission-critical networks David Deacon – CEO, Etherstack Pascal Béglin – CEO, StreamWide	3.00 pm – 3.30 pm High-capacity voice backhaul links enhance NZDF comms platform Jez Wright – Deputy Director Information Delivery, Capability Branch, NZDF Clément Dieudonné – APAC Sales, Ubiik
3.30 PM – 4.15 PM AFTERNOON BREAK	
4.15 pm – 5.00 pm Panel Session – Women in Critical Comms Progress with purpose Moderator: Katrina Curry – General Manager, Hourua Panellists: Annouschka Martinsen – Strategic Advisor and Governance Manager, NGCC; Claire Smollett – National Manager, RSM; Sam Piper – Operations Manager, Hourua; Bidar Homsey – Head of Public Safety Business, Frequentis Australasia & Chair, Australasian Critical Communications Forum	
5.00 PM – 6.00 PM: Networking Drinks on the Exhibition Floor — sponsored by Motorola Solutions	
6.30 PM – 11.30 PM: RFUANZ Gala Awards Dinner	

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Thursday, 28 May 2026

PLENARY/THEATRE 1	
9.00 am – 9.05 am Welcome Soren Low – Chairman, RFUANZ	
9.05 am – 9.15 am Opening remarks MC, Chris Stevens – Managing Director, CartGIS	
9.15 am – 9.45 am Keynote From preparedness to response Aligning operations and connectivity in emergencies Andrew Howe – Operational Readiness Coordinator, Canterbury Civil Defence Emergency Management Group Darren Cooley – Head of Enterprise & Government, Pivotal Satellite	
9.45 am – 10.15 am AI for drowning prevention – groundbreaking tech from Surf Life Saving NSW Matt Ingersole – CIO, Surf Life Saving NSW	
10.15 am – 10.45 am The AI shift that's rewiring emergency services communications Louise Francis – NZ Country Manager, Ecosystem	
10.45 AM – 11.30 AM MORNING BREAK	
THEATRE 1	THEATRE 2
11.30 am – 12.00 pm Powering public safety with 5G – secure, resilient, cyber-ready Ashish Verma – Head of Business Development, Mission-Critical Networks, Ericsson	11.30 am – 12.00 pm Ultra-early fire detection in practice: 2025 edge-AI + LoRaWAN deployments Sohan Domingo – VP Operations, Dryad Networks
12.00 pm – 12.30 pm Modernising utility communications towards AI-ready infrastructure Tafadzwa Nyambira – RF Engineer, Agile Networks	12.00 pm – 12.30 pm Integrating voice communications with IoT and GIS for operational efficiency Michael Clarke – Senior Communications Consultant, Omnitronics
12.30 pm – 1.00 pm IoT in the wild: How LoRaWAN is used to protect Brook Waimārama Sanctuary wildlife for the next generation Murray Neill – Field Ops Coordinator, Waimārama Sanctuary Thomas Bennett – IoT Solutions Specialist, Go Wireless NZ	12.30 pm – 1.00 pm From alerting to action: How integrated critical event management improves emergency response outcomes Michael Pride – Director of Resilience, Everbridge
1.00 PM – 1.45 PM LUNCH BREAK	
THEATRE 1	
1.45 pm – 2.15 pm Global Critical Comms update – highlights from CCW, MWC and IWCE Kevin Graham – CEO, The Critical Communications Forum (TCCA); Bidar Homsey – Head of Public Safety Business, Frequentis Australasia & Chair, Australasian Critical Communications Forum (ACCF); Rhys Clare – Director, ACCF	
2.15 pm – 3.00 pm Panel session: AI in critical communications – reality v hype plus real-life use cases Moderator: Chris Stevens – Comms Connect MC + MD, CartGIS Panellists: Matt Ingersole – CIO, Surf Life Saving NSW; Louise Francis – NZ Country Manager, Ecosystem; Tafadzwa Nyambira – RF Engineer, Agile Networks +2 TBC	
3.00 PM EXHIBITION & CONFERENCE CLOSE	

Change of program content – The Comms Connect team at WF Media will endeavour to ensure that this conference program is correct at the time of the event. We may need to alter the program prior to the event and reserve the right to do so without notice