

## **Monitoring Centre Standard AS2201-2**

### **Commentary provided by Doug McCormick, Gallgher**

Myself and Matt Stevenson joined the Australian Standards committee, EL-031, to review the monitoring centre standard. Unfortunately the standard is defined as AS 2201-2 and Standards Australia have been unwilling to allow the standard to be referred to as AS NZS 2201-2. Notwithstanding the contribution both Matt and myself have contributed to its content. I was appointed document scribe for the review so had the role of interpreting the wishes of the working group members into the draft standard document. The group met regularly in Sydney and then during the COVID lockdown, remote meeting were the obvious option.

An important requirement of any working group is accept a consensus outcome. This means that unfortunately not all wishes can be accommodated!

The starting point for the review was the current release version which is dated 2004. In carrying out the review, in keeping with international standards formats there was a need to remove all prescriptive requirements. There was also a need to bring the standard up to date by reflecting current technologies. Examples being the move from copper connections to fibre connections and the greater use of computer based communication systems.

The standard addresses three main areas: Building accommodation, the monitoring equipment and staffing. The outcome being the grading system covering building (A, B C) and equipment and operation (1, 2, 3). Challenges arise when dealing with subjects such as building construction and information technology matters. The working group members' primary expertise is in security equipment and security operations. It would have been ideal to have IT and building expertise on the working group but with the absence of these subject matter experts, I believe the working group still managed to provide a sound document. Reference to minimum electrical, fire and staff qualification items have been removed from the draft as these matters are already covered by national and local legislation requirements. Requirements outside of legislation are still included (ie building strength, fire extinguishers, etc).

Some thoughts I have on the draft standard, that do not necessarily reflect the views of the wider working group membership are:

- The standard focuses on the physical monitoring centre so does not give much consideration to the customer needs. Focusing on the wider "customer – monitoring centre – response" could have placed a different slant on the draft standard.
- Although we have introduced an element of risk assessment, there still needs to be greater weight on the assessment and review process. Is the greater risk a physical attack on the monitoring centre premises or a cyber attack on the system? Attention is also needed for mitigation against external risks to a monitoring centre – flood, earthquake external fire etc in terms of construction needs and hand-over to an alternative centre.

- The standard addresses building construction but the language tends to still be subjective. The building industry as a whole does not seem to have any current standards that address vulnerability to physical attack or various external risks so the group had to provide the wording. The closest standard being the obsolete *AS 3555.1 (2003); Building Elements, testing and rating for intruder resistance*. Obsoleted probably because AS 2201-2 didn't refer to it!
- Cyber security has been covered but the industry needs to be given notice that a future review of this standard will likely require stronger requirements around cyber security.
- There is limited trust in 3<sup>rd</sup> party cloud operation and storage services.

I believe the monitoring centre industry needs to be put on notice for the next review of the standard that there will need to be greater emphasis on technology solutions and less on concrete bunker construction.