

STATE GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND JUSTICE STANDING COMMITTEE

HOW DO THEY MANAGE? AN INVESTIGATION OF THE MEASURES WA POLICE HAS IN PLACE TO EVALUATE MANAGEMENT OF PERSONNEL - REPORT NO. 12 (MARCH 2016)

	Recommendation	Response
1	<p>That WA Police use section 51 of the Equal Opportunity Act 1984 to increase the diversity of its higher ranks.</p> <p>51 - Measures intended to achieve equality Nothing in Division 2 or 3 renders it unlawful to do an act a purpose of which is —</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) to ensure that persons of a particular race have equal opportunities with other persons in circumstances in relation to which provision is made by this Act; or (b) to afford persons of a particular race access to facilities, services or opportunities to meet their special needs in relation to employment, education, training or welfare, or any ancillary benefits. 	<p>Policing is a rank based system and vacancies at higher ranks are filled by means of a promotion process. Once promoted to a particular rank, officers are able to transfer between roles as they are not promoted to a particular position, unlike public servants. To apply for promotion, an officer must have progressed to the required eligibility rank and they are then assessed to establish a capacity to undertake the function of the higher rank in a number of roles. As promotion is not on the basis that the officer will only undertake that role, it is not practical to isolate certain positions to be used for section 51.</p> <p>However, the rank based system is not the primary reason why section 51 would not have a significant impact on diversity representation at higher ranks. It has been acknowledged by WA Police that Aboriginal representation within the workforce is very low and likewise CaLD representation is only slowly increasing. Where there is low diversity representation, generally speaking, there is subsequently low numbers of officers from diverse backgrounds available to apply for promotion. WA Police currently focused on diversity at initial recruitment entry stage. Several recruitment and selection diversity strategies are currently in place with further work continuing to establish a Diversity Employment Program, aimed at the cadet entry stream.</p>
2	<p>That WA Police provide feedback to ex-police officers who seek to re-engage but whose applications are unsuccessful, outlining the criteria that they failed to meet and/or areas for improvement.</p>	<p>Due to the complexities with providing specific feedback relating to some of the recruitment process assessments, applicants are not provided with individual feedback relating to the outcome of their application. Currently, diverse applicants and former WA Police Officers may also make contact with Police Recruiting in order to receive some general recruiting feedback and guidance. Unfortunately, it is not practical to provide detailed feedback to all applicants and it can be counterproductive as the applicant</p>

		focusses on one area of improvement to the detriment of others.
3	That WA Police reviews the efficacy of disability awareness training and, if a lack of understanding of how to interact with people living with disabilities and their carers is found to be widespread, implement a more robust training program.	<p>Whilst the example cited in the report to support the recommendation is not conclusive proof that there is a wide spread lack of understanding rather than the failure of individuals to demonstrate flexibility, common sense and empathy, it serves as a useful example for training purposes.</p> <p>WA Policy will review the disability awareness delivered to recruits.</p>
4	WA Police should provide a description and analysis of the online Statistical Appendix of Professional Standards data, to provide the public with a better understanding of the performance and outcomes of the Professional Standards portfolio and misconduct investigations.	<p>Despite there being no statutory obligation, WA Police Professional Standards have provided an annual statistical overview of all complaint related data (internal and externally reported), together with a list of investigation and disciplinary outcomes for a number of years, to provide an open and transparent process.</p> <p>The Statistical Appendix as previously published, provides comprehensive detailed and comparative data with previous years, together with brief explanatory notes.</p> <p>Given the feedback from the Committee, highlighting the complexity and difficulty in interpreting the data, Western Australia Police Professional Standards are reviewing the statistical format, with a view of simplifying the tables and providing explanation of the data to assist in its interpretation.</p> <p>Data accuracy and improving the statistical reporting value and management relevance is currently the subject of an internal Professional Standards project.</p>
5	WA Police should establish a memorandum of understanding with the Hollywood Clinic or an equivalent program to ensure its officers have the same access to PTSD programs as Australian Defence Force personnel.	Western Australia Police will review the MOU between Hollywood Clinic and the ADF to identify whether there is a benefit in such an arrangement. However, Government procurement requirements must also be taken into consideration.

6	Mental Health First Aid training should be compulsory for WA Police officers (rather than voluntary, as it is at present) with additional resources allocated to ensure 100 per cent of the workforce receive the training as a matter of urgency.	As advised during the Committee hearings, Mental Health related training is currently being reviewed with a view to determine how such training can be modified, made fit for purpose and extended across the entire workforce.
7	WA Police must establish within its Health and Safety Division practices which engender trust and address conflicts of interest. An analysis of cultural issues within the Division should be undertaken.	<p>In the 2011 Price Waterhouse review of the Health & Welfare Division, it was found that sworn officers do not trust and respect the Health and Safety Division and suggested that this appears to be, in part, as a result of the Division's dual role of protecting agency's interests while managing individual employee relationships.</p> <p>In order to separate and distinguish the role of the Health and Safety Division to support and manage individual officer's health issues with the Commissioner of Police's duty to properly manage officers in the workplace, Western Australia Police has enacted changes.</p> <p>The introduction of HR Business Partners during 2015 to front line Districts and Portfolios provides professional, local, immediate, consistent and direct support to supervisors and Officers in Charge. This enables them to effectively manage ill or injured officers in the workplace, allowing the Health and Safety Division to concentrate on the medical aspects and recommendations of the officers' management.</p> <p>Statistics for the 2015 calendar year show that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 213 police officers self-referred to the Psychology Unit for counselling. • 108 police officers accessed the EAP during this period. • 170 police officers accessed external psychological/psychiatric services for both work and non-work related issues. <p>These figures demonstrate that many officers are prepared to seek the assistance of the Division.</p> <p>WA Police remain focused on making sure officers are being</p>

		supported and treated as required.
8	The resources of the Health and Safety Division should be boosted to provide better service coverage for officers in all areas of the State.	Resourcing in a number of areas, including Health & Safety Division, will be assessed as part of the Workforce Optimisation Project.
9	Awareness training must be provided to all staff – from recruits through to those in leadership positions – to ensure that officers are able to reveal a mental health condition or an inability to cope, without the fear of being victimised or feeling stigmatised.	<p>Mental Health related training is currently being reviewed to determine how such training can be extended across the entire workforce and integrated into the existing training programs.</p> <p>Health and Safety Division have been engaged and have extended the awareness training to both recruits and their families, commencing at the day of engagement. The Division are also working with Learning and Development areas on developing a psychological wellbeing stream for all levels of staff in line with the Psychological Health, Safety and Wellbeing Strategy currently in development.</p> <p>Western Australia Police is also working with “Beyond Blue” and the Mental Health Commission and will continue to develop and adapt programs in line with contemporary information.</p>
10	In line with the <i>Expert Guidelines: Diagnosis and Treatment of Post-traumatic Stress Disorder in Emergency Service Workers</i> , WA Police must ensure that officers with PTSD are provided with positions that allow for rehabilitation and ongoing employment, commensurate with their experience, level of seniority and previous earning capacity.	<p>WA Police applies the Expert Guidelines referred to in the Recommendation. The Vocational Rehabilitation Unit works closely with officers and their managers to identify suitable roles and functions as part of return to work programs.</p> <p>The creation of the HR Business Partners in the portfolios will enhance the level of assistance and support that is provided.</p>
11	WA Police should implement a formal mode of recognition for officers who have been dismissed on medical grounds, acknowledging that their illness or injury was sustained in the line of duty.	<p>A proposal is being considered to establish the Police Star - an award that would be available in recognition of police employees killed or seriously injured in the line of duty.</p> <p>In order to be eligible for the award, the death or serious injury must be in relation to an operational incident, and/or an attack on an employee as a result of that person being identified as an employee of Western Australia Police.</p>

12	That the Minister for Police works with the Police Commissioner, in concert with the WA Police Union, to institute a compensation scheme for medically retired officers and so bring Western Australia in line with the other States.	<p>The State Government and the WA Police Workforce Optimisation project are currently working collaboratively and considering a range of options to manage and assist police officers who are ill or injured, including coverage under the current state based workers' compensation legislation.</p> <p>The WA Police Union have been and will continue to be consulted during the process.</p>
13	WA Police should upgrade its data management systems in the Health and Safety Division to facilitate meaningful analysis of statistics related to sick and injured officers.	The WA Police Workforce Optimisation project will consider a range of options for data management at the Health and Safety Division.