

# Police Dog Squad

Dogs are ideal for police work because of their natural hunting instinct and superior senses of smell and hearing. In the Queensland Police Service (QPS), each dog works exclusively with one handler, and handler/dog teams are located throughout all regions in the State. Currently there are about 76 operational police dogs and demand is increasing.

Developing from a Brisbane based squad the QPS Dog Squad has expanded and now operates in every region from Cairns in Far North Queensland to the Gold Coast and Ipswich.

The QPS Dog Squad uses purpose-bred working dogs such as German Shepherds, Labradors and Belgian Shepherds which are trained alongside their handlers as either General Purpose or Specialist dogs. General purpose teams track offenders and missing persons, search buildings, enclosed areas and bushland for property or discarded evidence, apprehend violent offenders and assist with control of crowds threatening the safety of the general public. Specialist teams may be employed to search for drugs, explosives and firearms or to detect chemical accelerants at the scene of a fire.

Persons wishing to become a police dog handler must have successfully completed their tenure as a General Duties Officer, normally comprising 3 - 5 years service. During that time they will gather the necessary knowledge and skills to become a professional and competent police officer. At the end of this period officers are then able to apply for positions within specialist areas such as the Dog Squad.

Applicants must have a love of animals, the ability to work alone and at times unsupervised.



QPS Police Dogs have a great life. Handlers take their dogs home with them, where they are kennelled and exercised, but not treated as a family pet. The bond between the dog and handler is strong and on retirement, they are often adopted by the handler.

Handlers complete a 14 week initial training course with their dogs, which is a combination of theory and practical exercises. At the end of the initial training the new team is partnered with an experienced operational team to integrate them into the working environment. Handlers and dogs receive ongoing assessment throughout the dog's working life to ensure competency is maintained.

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