

Queensland Mounted Police Unit

The Queensland Mounted Police Unit came into existence in 1846, some 13 years before Queensland actually became a State in its own right in 1859 following its separation from New South Wales.

Since that time, the members of the Unit have maintained an unbroken tradition of performing mounted police duties to the present time. Many of its former members performed incredible feats of bravery and endurance, while others were involved in important events which now form part of the history of Australia.

In the 1920's, the Queensland Mounted Police Unit was relegated to a largely ceremonial role with the introduction of motor vehicles. However, thanks to a resurgence in the 1980s, mounted police are now an integral part of modern policing, providing operational and public relations support for the Service.

Operational duties include conducting searches of bushland for missing persons or drug crops, patrolling recreational areas or trouble spots to prevent crime, and attending large public gatherings to provide crowd management and VIP protection. The public relations role includes ceremonial engagements such as the Anzac Day march, providing escorts for visiting dignitaries and hosting visits from schools or clubs.

The Queensland Mounted Police Unit has approximately 20 horses and is based at Moggill, Brisbane. All police horses are received by donation. Members are employed



on either a full-time or part-time basis, and are responsible for the care and maintenance of horses, saddlery and other equipment, as well as the cleanliness of the stables and complex.

To be eligible to apply for a vacancy in the Mounted Police Unit, officers must first serve as a general duties officer for a number of years and then undertake a test of their equestrian skills. There is no provision to train beginners. Once appointed, members complete an orientation course, followed by ongoing weekly training sessions.

Police horses can take several months to train, beginning with regular riding and handling to ensure they can walk, trot and canter on command. New horses are ridden on suburban streets alongside a trained horse to accustom the new horse to different sounds, sights and obstacles normally encountered on duty.

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