

Ethical Standards Command— a preventative health program for the police service's reputation



The Queensland Police Service (QPS) is a large police organisation by international standards. After February's induction ceremony, the number of police officers exceeded 10,000 for the first time, and with 4,000 public servants, the Service has increased in size considerably over the past decade. Given the likely population increases in the future the QPS is likely to grow further in size and complexity.

Naturally, in any large organisation, particularly public sector agencies, the governance arrangements are vitally important to the 'health' and reputation of the organisation. Police agencies which do not have the highest ideals and systems to ensure that organisational, community and government requirements are met run the risk of alienating the community.

The Ethical Standards Command (ESC) is important to the QPS in terms of monitoring and managing discipline practices throughout the Service. Increasingly the ESC is being used by police regions and commands as an expert source of advice in dealing with discipline related issues at the local level.

Assistant Commissioner Peter Martin of the ESC said while the Service currently enjoyed a good reputation, it was vital to have checks and balances in place to ensure the Service maintained its integrity.

"It is important to recognise the vast majority of QPS members go about their duties in a professional manner," Assistant Commissioner Martin said.

"These people meet the organisational expectation

and in fact, exceed it. A very small number of people do not meet this expectation and it is comforting to know we have a robust system that caters for such occasions."

Assistant Commissioner Martin said one of the most important partnerships the Service had was with the Crime and Misconduct Commission (CMC).

"The CMC provides an important oversight capacity for the Service and also for the public sector generally."

"This oversight not only gives the government assurance that the Service meets its obligations, but is a source of comfort to the public."

Commissioner Bob Atkinson said the QPS was well placed to deal with complaints and focused on maintaining the high

degree of respect afforded by the community.

"It is vital to western policing agencies that police services have the respect of the public—no police agency can work effectively without that," Commissioner Atkinson said.

"It is therefore appropriate that the Service has excellent systems to identify and manage complaints and that our partnerships with oversight agencies like the CMC are professional and effective."

"In this way we have the greatest opportunity to ensure public confidence in us as a 21st century professional policing jurisdiction."