

145 years of policing as a profession

The police are the public and the public are the police

In the United Kingdom in 1829, Home Secretary Sir Robert Peel coined nine principals of policing. The seventh of his 'Peelian Principles' stated that:

Police, at all times, should maintain a relationship with the public that gives reality to the historic tradition that the police are the public and the public are the police; the police being the only members of the public who are paid to give full-time attention to duties which are incumbent on every citizen in the interest of community welfare and existence.

This is the most quoted of these principals because it speaks most plainly of the relationship between the police and the community.

It is from the community that police officers are drawn to serve, while an understanding of the mechanics of community by the police is essential to ensure the vision and mission of a police service remains true.

The *Queensland Police Act* came into being in 1863 and the then Queensland Police Force was inaugurated on January 1, 1864.

The Act outlined the type of men which would be accepted as police constables:

...they were to be fit and proper and of sound constitution ...able bodied and under the age of forty years, of good character for honesty, fidelity and activity and be able to read and write and no person shall be appointed Constable who shall have been convicted of a felony...

The Queensland community was by majority populated by people from the United Kingdom and Ireland, and the average police officer reflected this ethnic

background. The other main policing force in Queensland between 1864 and 1900 was the Native Mounted Police. These detachments included Indigenous troopers and Caucasian officers, and were assigned the responsibility of maintaining law and order in the 'unsettled' parts of the state.

In the 1860s and 1870s, police officers came from diverse backgrounds that reflected the types of jobs and community opportunities of the time. These included men who had previously served in other Australian and foreign police services, notably the Royal Irish Constabulary, as well as blacksmiths,



Native Mounted Police patrolled the more 'unsettled' parts of the state, and included Indigenous troopers (*back row*). In November 1867, government employee Gold Commissioner Thomas Griffin (*seated, right*) murdered Constables John Power and Patrick Cahill (*second and third from right*) and stole more than £4,000 while on gold escort duty at Mackenzie River Crossing, 130 miles from Rockhampton.

It was considered of great importance that Constables were to be respected by all classes, and could obtain their good opinion. They were to be extremely cautious in their demeanour and to have sober, orderly and regular habits, and a ready zeal to execute lawful orders and commands.

carpenters, drovers, engineers, farmers, grooms, miners, pioneers, saddlers, sail makers, servants, soldiers, sailors and stockmen.

Recruits were between 5ft 6in and 6ft 3in tall, with an average age of 26 years.

William Finucane served as Chief Clerk in Police Commissioner Seymour's office from 1881 to 1896. His annual wage was £500.



1864

1930

1931

1934

1864

First Commissioner David Thompson Seymour is appointed, inheriting a force of 157 police and 120 Native Mounted Police.

The number of extraneous duties performed by police peaks at 72.

Zara Dare and Eileen O'Donnell are the first women to join the Queensland Police Force.

Cadet training system is introduced, allowing 18-year-olds to gain experience before applying to join at the age of 21.

Some of these men would have been looking for a steady income which the police force guaranteed—£100 per annum. Others obviously wished to continue in a familiar profession after serving in the armed services both in Australia and other British colonies. No doubt many of them joined in the belief that as police officers they could work towards making society a better place.

A constable's duty as set out in the Police Manual of 1869 outlined that:

...His first duty is perfect obedience to his superiors... he is to be ever on the alert for the prevention of crime and the protection of person and property... he should make himself perfectly acquainted with all the parts of his beat or section, with the streets, thoroughfares, courts, and houses. He will be expected to possess such knowledge of the inhabitants of each house as to enable him to recognise their persons, and thus prevent mistakes, and be enabled to render assistance to the inhabitants when called for. He should see every part of his beat in the time allotted... he will pay particular attention to all public houses within his beat, reporting the hour at which each is closed, and whether they appear to be conducted in an orderly manner...

In country areas and the more far flung police stations and districts, duties were associated with maintaining the peace and

solving farm related crime such as cattle stealing. Escort duties—whether of prisoners or treasure—were also prescribed tasks of a constable. Patrols of districts were a necessary part of policing and often officers were away from the station for weeks at a time.

As well as acting as agents of law and order, police officers were also called on by the Queensland Government to serve as agents of social control. This meant more work to do. In 1908 the number of extraneous duties numbered 50, which included everything from School Attendance Officer to Inspector of Sheep. By 1930 the list had expanded to 72, with the majority of these extra duties affecting country police more than their town colleagues.

Expanding and diversifying

By the mid-1930s, policing was a very different profession from that of 75 years previously. Skill specialisation began to appear. Fingerprint analysis had become a crime fighting tool of choice in 1904; motorisation came to the Queensland Police in 1925 with the purchase of two motorbikes; and history was made on March 16, 1931, when Zara Dare and Eileen O'Donnell became the first female police officers in the state—although they were not actually sworn-in and had no uniform or powers of arrest.

By the 1930s people wanting to join the Queensland Police had to be taller than 5ft 7in and under 27 years of age.

The police force still attracted recruits from all walks of life but now the backgrounds included motor drivers, firemen, book-keepers, motorcycle deliverers, railway engine cleaners, shop assistants, telegraph operators and wool classers.

In 1934 the police entrance exam was introduced as well as the cadet system, where 18-year-olds with a junior pass were attached to Police Headquarters, Criminal Investigation Branch or Traffic Branch. Cadets then went on to train as constables when they turned 21.

With the arrival of the Second World War, police acquired many new duties to accompany their responsibility for the internal security of the state and protection of its civilians. Today, it is still the country police officer who

undertakes the remaining extraneous duties, such as driving tests, accepting registration payments and acting as insurance agents.

In 1965 women took the Oath of Office and became fully sworn police officers. The first uniformed female officers appeared in Brisbane in June of that year. Since then, women have made many advances, and currently undertake a great variety of duties within the Service. Today, nearly 27 percent of serving police are women.

As the Service progressed and expanded, the number of specialist branches also grew, attracting police officers with particular skills. In 1970 the upper age limit for recruitment was extended to 45 years to allow the appointment of people with specialist qualifications.

Police recruits undertake revolver training at Petrie Terrace Police Depot, circa 1930.



1958

Queensland Police Pipes & Drums is established.

1960

Stock Investigation Squad is formed.

1963

Juvenile Aid Bureau is established.

1965

Eight women are inducted as police officers, with uniforms and the same powers as their male counterparts.

1968

Crime Prevention Bureau is established.

Facing modern challenges

As Queensland's urban and country population grew, the police force became more automated, phasing out the use of bicycles and horses, and purchasing more cars and motorcycles. In October 1975, the Police Air Wing became operational following the purchase of two single-engine aircraft, and by 1976, every station had access to a police car.

The policing profession is by definition a dangerous one, and during the 1980s the Service lost officers to traffic accidents and by the hand of others. Senior Constable Peter Kidd was shot in 1987 during a raid as a member of the Tactical Response Group.

Constable Michael Low in 1984 and Constable Brett Handran in 1989 were both shot while attending domestic disputes.

In 1992 the Police Liaison Officer (PLO) Scheme was introduced following a trial in the Torres Strait. PLOs were employed to establish and maintain a positive rapport between culturally specific communities and the Queensland Police Service.

Today's officers are older than those of years ago and are expected to display personal integrity; accept responsibility; be accepting of diversity; and be adaptable in their response to different events and situations. There is no age or height restrictions associated with joining, but applicants must be fit and

healthy. Modern policing in a culturally diverse society requires police officers who reflect the gender, cultural, linguistic and regional diversity of the Queensland community.

The average age of recruits is 28 years at the Oxley Police Academy, and 35 at the Townsville Academy. Previous vocations range from baristas to barristers, and include doctors, nurses, teachers, truck drivers, correctional service officers, youth workers, counsellors, sales people, small business owners, and mums getting back into the workforce. Currently, 35 percent of recruits are women.

Nearly a century and a half ago, an officer walked or rode his beat and was expected to know his community

intimately in order to protect the individual. Although technology has become ingrained in the workings of the Queensland Police Service, and an officer is more likely to be driving a car and using a computer, today's police officer is not that different from those that walked the beat in 1864.

Ultimately their interest and commitment to their profession was, and still is, protecting life and property, preserving peace and safety, preventing crime, and upholding laws in a manner that has regard for the public good and the rights of the individual.

*By Lisa Jones,
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Eileen O'Donnell (pictured above) and Zara Dare became the first female police officers in the state in March 1931, although they were not actually sworn-in and had no uniform or powers of arrest. One task they had was escorting female prisoners, sometimes on long train journeys. On occasions they were required to search female prisoners. They do not appear to have received any formal training. It would be another 34 years before women police officers gained the same status as men.

1987

The Fitzgerald Enquiry begins, ushering in an era of reform.

1990

The Police Force becomes the Queensland Police Service, with the new motto *With Honour We Serve* replacing *Firmness with Courtesy*.

1992

The first Police Liaison Officers start work in Townsville.

2002

The State Flying Squad is established to provide specialist investigative assistance to regional police.



Staff of the Modus Operandi section pose outside the Executive Building, Brisbane, circa 1956. Employing civilians for office duties became imperative during World War I and continued thereafter.



Women are sworn in as police officers for the first time at a ceremony on March 31, 1965.



Police Liaison Officers Malakai Taumoha'apai and Sabrina Hadzic joined in the Queensland Police Service's celebrations for NAIDOC Week in July 2009. Police Liaison Officers were introduced in 1992 to establish and maintain a positive rapport between culturally specific communities and police.

Civilian workers

Queensland police have always relied on civilian workers to keep the paperwork moving. William Finucane served the first Commissioner for 15 years, signing his memorandums and letters up until 1896.

Most civilian workers came in the form of police wives who were often left in charge while their husbands were out on patrol. There was a general hesitancy by police authorities to use civilians for office duties but during World War I their use became imperative and continued thereafter.

By 1986 there were 790 public servants working for the police and today there are more than 4,000 spread across the state and working in many different sections.



Senior Constable Mokhtiar Singh became the first orthodox Sikh to be sworn in as a Queensland police officer in 1993, and is currently serving in the Fraud and Corporate Crime Squad. Since then many others have followed his example and joined the Service.

2003

The Counter Terrorism Coordination Unit is formed.

2004

The Justice Entry Traineeship is introduced to provide greater opportunities for Indigenous people to gain employment as Queensland police officers.

2005

The QPS engages an additional 17 Police Liaison Officers from Sudanese, Muslim, Chinese, Spanish, Vietnamese and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds.

→ 2009