

A brief history of the Queensland Police uniform



Modern recruits model the uniforms of their predecessors (above and other photos). This is the first official Queensland police uniform and was in use from 1864-1896.



A tracker wears town dress for this full-length portrait taken in 1900.

With the establishment of the Queensland Police Force in 1864, the government took steps to ensure its officers behaved and dressed in an appropriate manner.

Rules for the general government and discipline of the members of the Police Force were published in the Queensland Government Gazette, 'in order that it may be conducted upon one uniform system and that its members may not be embarrassed in the execution of their several duties from want of proper instructions'.

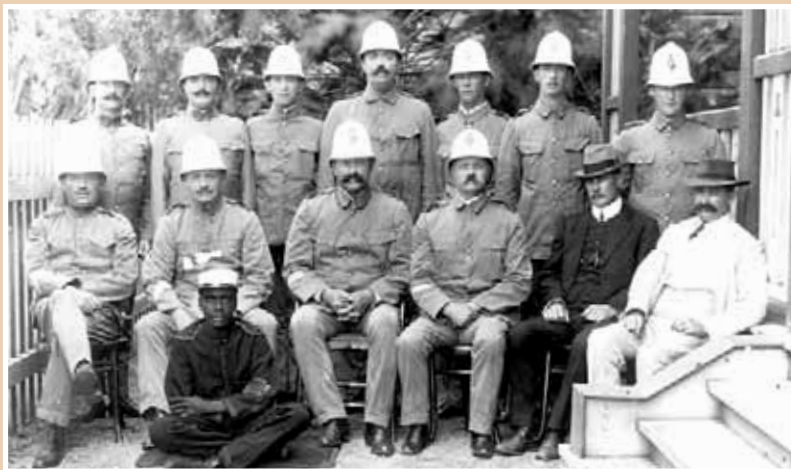
The government of the day agreed to supply police with work clothing on the condition that the wearer was responsible for the uniform's care. Uniforms were inspected before the officers received their monthly salary, and money

was deducted if they were not found to be in "good and serviceable order".

Financial difficulties in 1866 resulted in uniform supplies being delayed. Due to these delays, police officers often had to dress in civilian clothes. When the uniforms did arrive, they were quite often ill-fitting and made with material of poor quality.

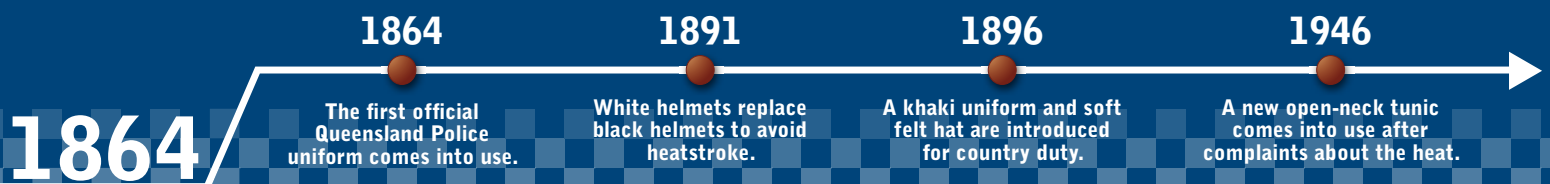
By 1871, Commissioner David Thomas Seymour had transferred the responsibility of obtaining uniforms to police officers, who were given an allowance of six pence per day to meet this expense. This system was meant to encourage police officers to take good care of their clothing and save government funds.

This early uniform consisted of a short jacket with a standing collar, called a jumper, and was made of dark blue fabric, tightly fitted at the waistband. The trousers were made of the same fabric. Mounted police also had the option of wearing white or drab cord breeches that were often quite tight. This was topped off with a navy blue serge cap, bearing the officer's district letter and number.



Foot police, a tracker and detectives attend the opening of the new police station at Cairns in 1913. The foot police are wearing the white helmet introduced in 1891.

Helmets were introduced as a means of affording greater protection from the heat of the sun, as it was not safe to let the men wear caps during the day. In the early 1880s, the helmet was changed from white to black. This was met with disapproval by the men, as some suffered sunstroke. In 1891 Police Commissioner Seymour relaxed his stand and allowed the wearing of white helmets.



In 1896, Commissioner William Parry-Okeden introduced a new uniform. A tender process was undertaken for its manufacture to ensure uniformity in colour, material and quality. A loose tunic was adopted in place of the existing jumper for the police uniform.

It was deemed that the cloth uniform be worn in winter with the serge uniform for summer, while the khaki uniform could be worn with the regulation soft felt hat for bush or other duty. White helmets were worn during the day with caps at night, except in wet weather when caps with waterproof covers were worn both day and night.

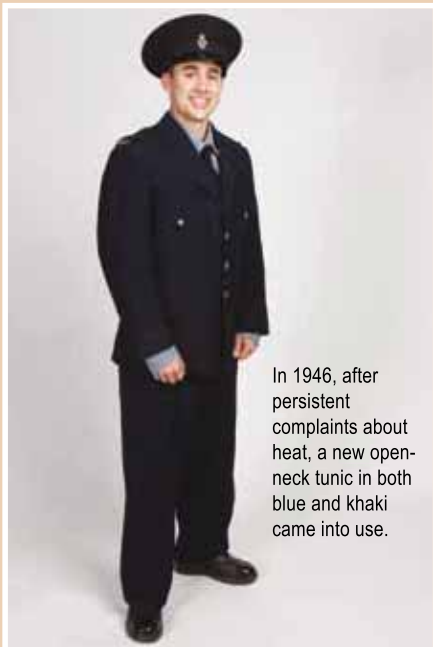


Commissioned officers had been wearing a loose tunic for a number of years, but their uniforms were embellished with braiding on the shoulder straps, chest and sleeves. Helmets were embellished with a spike finial, a metal bullion thread badge, and chainwork, or a cap was worn with a badge similar to those worn on helmets. Over the tunic a pouch belt with a lion's head badge would be worn from which a chain and whistle were also attached.

Inspector John Stuart wears the embellished uniform of the commissioned officer in this portrait taken in 1879.



From 1896 to 1946 officers working in the bush wore a khaki uniform with regulation soft felt hat.



In 1946, after persistent complaints about heat, a new open-neck tunic in both blue and khaki came into use.

Further requests for cooler uniforms resulted in another uniform change in 1960. This time the uniform was drab olive in colour, and the fabric a 60/40 wool and Terylene mix. The tie, belt and shoes were brown, and this was crowned with a new style cap and helmet badge, affectionately known as the 'pineapple'.

In June 1965, the drab olive uniform was issued to newly sworn-in policewomen. The winter uniform consisted of a tunic, skirt, cream blouse and dark brown shoes and gloves. The summer uniform was a belted short-sleeved dress. The women also wore the same cap as the men, and it

was distinguished from the men's cap by a partial silver band. Commissioned officers also considered changing from the blue to olive, but felt that the 'man in blue' should not disappear entirely. They decided to purchase a standard blue material, and select a standard style of uniform, ensuring they appeared in uniformity.

As summer approached each year complaints about the uniform for the ranks below commissioned officers became persistent. In 1946, a new open-neck tunic in both blue and khaki came into use. The blue serge trousers featured a royal blue stripe down the outside leg. A new style white, step crown helmet was also introduced. By 1950 the long-sleeved shirt sported pockets and shoulder straps; and it was permissible to wear this without the tunic as the official summer uniform. Commissioned officers were able to wear the new open-neck tunic from 1954.



Three policewomen pose for an informal photograph in their winter uniforms at their swearing-in parade at Petrie Police Barracks in 1969. They are wearing the same drab colour as their male counterparts.



A constable directs traffic in Brisbane near the William Jolly Bridge in 1965. He is wearing the considerably cooler, olive uniform in use between 1960-1970.

1960

The official uniform changes to a drab olive colour with brown shoes, tie and belt.

1965

Police women are issued with uniforms.

1971

The uniform changes from khaki back to blue. Short sleeves are issued for summer.

1977

Police women are issued with slacks for optional winter wear.

1983

Police women are issued with broad-brimmed hats.



Above—Uniforms were changed from khaki back to blue in 1971. This officer wears the winter uniform in use from 1970-1980.



Left—A male and a female officer patrol their beat in their winter uniforms in 1975.



Policewomen were issued with navy broad-brimmed hats to replace their hard caps. This promotional photo was taken in 1984.

A uniform review resulted in a change back to blue uniforms on January 1, 1971. The shirts were light blue in colour, and for the first time police were issued with short-sleeved shirts as part of the summer uniform. In February 1973, wearing ties as part of the male summer uniform was dispensed with, and open-neck shirts introduced. The cap was navy blue with a black peak, and white nylax top with a chequered band. The policewomen's cap was changed to a bowler style hat with white top, black fabric trim, and a black and white chequered band. In May 1977, approval was given for policewomen to be issued with slacks for optional winter wear.

Other recommendations by the Uniform Review Committee ushered in more changes in 1979. The new uniforms were a lighter blue and based on the New Zealand police uniforms. The women's uniforms included a safari jacket for summer, and shorts for the men in the country or water police. For winter, policemen were able to wear a lumber jacket as an alternative to the tunic. The epaulettes depicting rank gave way to shoulder patches and stripes of rank on the sleeves. The motto adopted on the shoulder patches was 'Constantia ac Comitata', which was translated into English in 1983 as 'Firmness with Courtesy'. September 1983 saw policewomen issued with navy broad-brimmed hats which replaced their hard caps.

The passing of the new *Police Administration Act* in 1990 resulted in a name change from the Queensland Police Force to the Queensland Police Service, and a new police badge and logo *With Honour We Serve*. These changes were reflected in a redesigned shoulder patch and cap badge. All officers were issued with nametags to be worn on the uniform shirt or tunic. Epaulettes made a return; this time in soft cloth which slid over the shoulder straps of the shirts.

In 1991, Water Police officers also came into line with the rest of the Police Service and exchanged their white shirts and uniform for the regulation blue. Leather jackets came into use in 1993. Shorts for female officers were introduced in 1996, along with new caps in 2001.

In 2003, navy patrol jackets were introduced. They superseded the Castro jackets used by specialist units and as cold weather jackets in designated areas. Beanies have also been added to the standard uniform issue especially in the cold-weather regions of Queensland.

On July 2, 2009, changes to Queensland Police Service patches and epaulettes were approved. The new patch is slightly larger, with a new white border. The epaulettes for the ranks from constable to senior sergeant now incorporate the words 'Queensland Police' in white at the base.

By Virginia Gordon, Assistant Curator, Queensland Police Museum



In July 2009, the Queensland Police Service patches and epaulettes were changed to include a new white border, and the words 'Queensland Police' on epaulettes for the ranks of constable to senior sergeant.

1990

Shoulder patches and badges are redesigned with the new motto *With Honour We Serve*. All officers are issued with name tags.

1991

Water Police officers adopt the regulation blue uniform.

1996

Shorts are introduced for female officers.

2009