

# Commissioner's 100-Day Review of the Queensland Police Service – Final Report



June 2025

‘Police are real estate agents, mediators, teachers, lawyers, removalists, childcare workers, corrective services, social workers, security guards and often magicians.’

Sergeant  
Far Northern Region 2025

## Acknowledgements

The review team would like to acknowledge the contribution of the Independent Advisory Panel – Ms Mischa Fahl, former Deputy Commissioner Brett Pointing APM, former Deputy Commissioner Ross Barnett APM and former Detective Superintendent Mark Ainsworth APM - in developing this document. The panel members provided valuable insights and advice across the full range of issues canvassed in the review terms of reference and were key in shaping the recommendations to ensure they were both meaningful and reflected the Commissioner's intent.

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We would also like to acknowledge and remember our colleague, Inspector Jay Notaro, who was lost to us on 25 March 2025. We wish to acknowledge Jay's commitment to the community of Queensland, and just as importantly his commitment to his colleagues. Jay made a significant contribution to frontline policing in Queensland. He also made a considerable contribution to the development of the Integrated Wellbeing program of work in South Eastern Region, which is mentioned in this report and is one of the recommendations of this review. With honour he served.

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# Executive Summary

This report presents the findings and recommendations of the Commissioner's 100-Day Review of the Queensland Police Service (QPS), conducted between March and June 2025. The review was initiated to assess the organisation's alignment with its legislative mandate under Section 2.3 of the *Police Service Administration Act 1990* (PSAA), and to provide a roadmap for realigning QPS functions, structures, and culture to better support frontline policing and community safety.

The review was commissioned to guide improvement and transformation across the QPS by:

- Refocusing the organisation on its core policing functions.
- Enhancing the wellbeing and capability of its workforce.
- Improving organisational efficiency and leadership effectiveness.
- Rebuilding trust and morale across all levels of the Service.

The review was guided by four objectives: to support frontline police by addressing resource, capability and wellbeing deficits; to improve organisational efficiency through enhanced leadership and governance; to rebuild workforce morale by fostering trust between leadership and the frontline; and to enhance accountability through transparent and aligned decision-making.

The scope of the review encompassed all areas of QPS operations that directly or indirectly impact frontline service delivery, with a particular emphasis on resourcing, wellbeing, attrition, and organisational structure. Marine Rescue Queensland and the State Emergency Service were excluded from scope.

The review has made 65 recommendations across the three review priorities:

- Resource and wellbeing prioritisation.
- Attrition and retention.
- The outcomes of an organisational assessment.

## Key findings

### Review of section 2.3 of the PSAA

The review confirmed the QPS has experienced significant mission creep, with officers increasingly tasked with non-core responsibilities such as non-critical mental health responses and prisoner transport. These extraneous duties have diluted the Service's ability to deliver core policing services and contributed to resource strain, diminished officer wellbeing, and reduced operational agility. The review recommends amending section 2.3 of the PSAA to clearly delineate core policing functions, supported by the development of a QPS service charter and a demand management framework. It also proposes the establishment of a Service Delivery Office and an Operations Command Centre (Q-Com) to better manage, and balance service delivery demands across the state.

### Resource and wellbeing prioritisation

The review identified widespread fatigue, burnout, and psychological stress among QPS members, exacerbated by poor rostering practices, limited wellbeing support, and a lack of integrated systems to manage workload and risk. It found that current wellbeing initiatives are fragmented, reactive, and disconnected from operational realities. To address these issues, and amongst other recommendations, the review recommends implementation of a comprehensive fatigue risk management framework and

development of a new wellbeing strategy that supports members throughout their entire journey in our organisation – from ‘hire to retire’ and beyond.

It also calls for the establishment of locally led and centrally supported wellbeing networks, or communities of practice in each region, along with the development of meaningful training and support resources, to better support our members.

## Attrition

Attrition has risen to 3.2 percent in 2024–25, with the highest rates among first year constables and general duties officers. The review found that contributing factors include poor leadership engagement, limited career development, inflexible work arrangements, and a perceived lack of recognition. It recommends making workforce retention a strategic priority, expanding flexible work options, developing supplementary workforce models (including exploration of casual workforces), and enhancing leadership development, mentoring, and career planning. The review also proposes simplifying the award nomination process and improving the separations process to be more person centric.

## Organisational assessment

The review found the current centralised model of corporate support is Brisbane-centric and disconnected from regional needs, limiting responsiveness and operational agility. It recommends transitioning corporate services from a centralised model to a locally led, centrally supported approach. The review found centrally hosted resources lacked responsiveness and strategic oversight. It recommends the CORE model (Central Oversight with Regional Execution) be implemented to shift from hosted to locally led resources, ensuring strategic alignment and governance while empowering regions to deliver services more efficiently. The review assessed the growth and impact of the QPS Executive Leadership Team and identified underrepresentation of regional and operational members, as well as disparities in resource allocation affecting frontline service delivery and organisational efficiency.

The review calls for the establishment of a capability management team, refinement of delegations to empower frontline leaders, and a holistic review of spans of control and resource allocation. It emphasises the need for a more balanced and regionally responsive leadership structure that supports operational efficiency and officer wellbeing.

## Conclusion

The review concludes that the QPS must urgently realign its legislative mandate, operational structures, and internal culture to better support its frontline workforce and meet the evolving needs of the Queensland community. Implementing the 65 recommendations through a structured actionable plan and associated implementation framework will support the QPS in restoring public confidence, improving service delivery, and ensuring the safety and wellbeing of both its members and the communities they serve. This review represents a fundamental opportunity to modernise the QPS, reaffirm its core purpose, and build a resilient, responsive, and community-focused policing organisation for the future.



## Recommendations

The following recommendations, which form the basis of the Actionable Plan, were derived from a variety of sources. In essence the recommendations evolved from the information the review team received and analysed throughout the 100-Day Review (see 'Consultation and Engagement' on page 14). The recommendations were further shaped through the guidance of the Independent Advisory Panel. This approach ensured the recommendations contained in the Actionable Plan were not only focused on the review priorities but were also (ultimately) aimed at supporting the Commissioner's key focus areas:

- Making our community safer and feeling safer; and
- Better supporting our people and making them feel supported.

This report outlines a summary of the information discovered during the review, along with an examination of the issues and problems experienced by the organisation and its members. The intent of the recommendations, and the associated 'deliverables' and 'key activities within the Actionable Plan, are based on the evidence unearthed by the review team and summarised in this report.

These recommendations represent an opportunity for the QPS to reset and realign the organisation towards its purpose of improved community safety, through effective and accountable leadership. The review also believes these recommendations both compliment and build upon the Commissioner's Transformation Reform Priorities and the Strategic Futures Project (2024).

Each of the recommendations contained in the Actionable Plan, (and outlined below) was developed after extensive and regular consultation between the review team and the members of the Independent Advisory Panel, along with the Deputy Commissioner, Regional Operations who oversaw the review team. The recommendations are presented here in the order in which they appear in the Actionable Plan:

Rec No.	Recommendation
1	Establish and operationalise integrated wellbeing networks to provide members with holistic support.
2	Improve the standard of employee housing.
3	Develop an integrated system to support members' well-being to manage exposure to traumatic subject matter.
4	Develop and implement a new health and wellbeing strategy.
5	Prioritise delivery of a new mental health support framework for serving and separated members.
6	Formalise the establishment of the Workforce Support and Engagement Group (WSEG) to support safer workplaces.
7	Establish a QPS centralised rostering capability.
8	Develop and implement a demand-based rostering system, underpinned by robust, whole-of-service rostering guidelines / principles.
9	Implement a case management approach in support of injured and absent members.
10	In consultation with the workforce, develop and implement wellbeing training and support mechanisms.
11	QPS to develop a 'safety first' culture within the organisation.
12	Reorient the activities of the former Safety Strategy Division to ensure they are appropriate to a policing organisation.
13	Develop and implement a fatigue risk management framework (FRMF) tailored to QPS operations.

14	Develop guidance and training for managers to improve the management of performance.
15	Explore an ICT solution to enable effective management of member work time.
16	Review current Outside Employment Guidelines.
17	Amend Section 2.3 of the <i>Police Service Administration Act 1990</i> to clearly articulate the functions of the Service.
18	Review non-portfolio statutory obligations.
19	Investigate options to cease or limit QPS involvement in non-core activities.
20	Strengthen a multi-agency approach in response to mental health calls for service.
21	Work with QCS and Youth Justice to address the unsustainable reliance on QPS for prisoner transport and custody management.
22	Continue to support domestic and family violence (DFV) reform.
23	Embed a risk appetite statement that empowers members and promotes trust in frontline decision-making.
24	Create a QPS Service Charter to clearly communicate the scope of policing services internally and externally.
25	Reform the QPS weapons licensing strategy.
26	Clarify the scope of services for the Aviation Capability Group.
27	Explore opportunities to reduce third-party receipting (TPR) responsibilities.
28	Review costing methodology applied to special duties.
29	Establish a service delivery capability to centralise and operationalise demand forecasting and management across the Service.
30	Develop a QPS Demand Management Framework.
31	Establishment of an Operational Command Centre (Q-Comm) in SEQ to load balance service delivery demands.
32	Review QPS crime prevention programs and strategies and reorient to evidence based, frontline-focussed strategies.
33	Investigate a fee-for-service (FFS) Model to address frontline demand.
34	Expand the role of protective services and assistant watchhouse officers to better support frontline police.
35	Explore frontline staffing supplementation models, including development of a casual workforce.
36	Expansion of Special Constables (State Officer) Program.
37	Develop and introduce realistic, robust and role specific training for officers in charge.
38	Prioritise delivery of the Leadership Capability Development Project and undertake a leadership capability review across all levels of the Service.
39	Implement measures to ensure the QPS separations process is person centric.
40	Prioritise retention as a key workforce strategy.
41	Fund the regions/districts to deliver locally focussed professional development program/initiatives.
42	Allocate supplementary resources to the Recruit Training Program and review the FYC-FTO training arrangements.
43	Establish consultative forums across the QPS.
44	Review the governance and administration of flexible work arrangements.
45	Simplify award nomination process and expand criteria.
46	Develop a career planning and progression capability.

47	Simplify process for officers voluntarily transitioning to non-sworn (entry level) and casual roles.
48	Revisit and revise the marketing of police recruitment.
49	Realign the QPS Executive Leadership cohort and Executive Leadership Team membership.
50	Establish a locally led, centrally supported frontline support model.
51	Refine and implement new business rules to support decentralisation of corporate services and better business partnering between commands and regions.
52	Review current spans of control for commissioned officers and directors in consideration of business complexity and risk.
53	Undertake a review of the existing 15 districts and establish clear, consistent policies and guidelines for determining the appropriate designation levels for both District Officer and Commissioned Officer positions.
54	Elevate and consolidate strategic policy functions and associated positions within the new Office of the Commissioner portfolio.
55	Elevate and consolidate research functions and associated positions within the new Office of the Commissioner portfolio.
56	Undertake holistic review of approved growth, vacant positions and impacted members across the organisation.
57	Review service delivery in Policelink and specialist units and explore increasing accessibility of police officers to improve community policing.
58	Review the QPS organisational performance management framework.
59	Review SIG and Intelligence Directorate to establish a robust intelligence system that integrates tactical, operational, and strategic functions and prioritises frontline requirements and frontline resource allocations.
60	Redesign the QPS IT operating model, including an enterprise systems strategy and the exploration of cloud-based opportunities.
61	Review of Public Safety Response Team (PSRT).
62	Amend human resource and finance delegations to better enable localised decision making.
63	Independently review Emergency Management Coordination Group structure, spans of control and resourcing.
64	Establish Strategic Assets Division.
65	Establish the People and Assets portfolio.

# Introduction

The QPS workforce is committed to ensuring the safety of the Queensland community and upholding the rule of law. However, the organisation is facing increasing challenges as a consequence of a dynamic policing environment, rising demand and broadening expectations of stakeholders.

In meeting those challenges, police agencies are revisiting the scope of the services they provide and the activities they undertake to ensure the sustainability of meeting core community obligations, improving the circumstances of frontline members and delivering services efficiently.

The QPS Review (the review), conducted over 100 days between 17 March and 24 June 2025, sought to improve understanding of these challenges and provide options to address the impediments to performance and mitigate the impacts upon members in three specific areas.

The intended purpose of the review was to guide improvement and realignment of functions as described in section 2.3 of the PSAA. The review terms of reference (see appendix A) explicitly note the issues of rising demand and mission creep as factors adversely impacting upon the organisation in terms of morale, trust in leadership and, ultimately, increased attrition.

More specifically, the terms of reference for the review sought the following:

## 1. Resource and Wellbeing Prioritisation –

- The development of measures to address resourcing, fatigue management and improve response.
- Prioritising officer wellbeing through locally led and centrally supported injury management and mental health support services and welfare management programs including for separated police officers.
- Inculcate a decision-making mindset that aligns with the following question: *‘Does this improve and support the work of frontline police and the tenets of s 2.3 of the PSAA?’*

## 2. Attrition Rates –

- An investigation of the drivers of increased attrition to identify the opportunities existing to address the accelerated rates of separation from the Service to reduce the direct impact on frontline service delivery.

## 3. Organisational Assessment –

- An assessment of the growth of the QPS senior leadership including the Senior Executive cohort and the Executive Leadership Team against their impact on frontline service delivery and operational efficiency.

The review document closely follows and aligns with the requirements of the terms of reference.

## Guiding principles

The guiding principles articulated in the review terms of reference form the foundation for the actionable plan, shaping decision-making and driving consistency in our approach. These principles reflect QPS core values, ensuring that actions taken are aligned with our vision:

- No redundancies; as per government policy, any necessary adjustments will utilise natural attrition and internal realignment of positions.

- Fit-for-purpose model that provides structure, roles and capacity based on the skills and expertise needed.
- Community-focused with an emphasis on maintaining and strengthening frontline service delivery whilst meeting community needs and expectations.
- Frontline-First: Application of a decision-making mindset that aligns with the tenets of s2.3 of the PSAA.

## Focus areas

The focus areas represent the key domains where strategic effort will be concentrated to achieve our overarching objectives:

- Support frontline policing by identifying and addressing resource, capability and wellbeing deficits.
- Improve organisational efficiency through enhancing leadership, knowledge management, and governance structures to ensure the QPS benefits from the skills, experience and knowledge of its workforce.
- Rebuild workforce morale by fostering engagement and trust between QPS leadership at all levels and frontline policing.
- Enhance accountability by establishing mechanisms to ensure transparency and alignment with organisational processes and objectives.

## Out of scope

Marine Rescue Queensland and State Emergency Service functions and construct were excluded from the review scope. Consideration has, however, been given to the corporate support model required to support these functions as part of the QPS corporate operating model.

## Project team deliverables

The terms of reference called for two specific deliverables:

- An actionable plan addressing the review objectives and detailing objectives, timelines, costings and measurable performance indicators.
- An implementation framework representing a clear roadmap for executing the actionable plan including assigned responsibilities and monitoring mechanisms.

This paper, whilst not a deliverable, was compiled to provide the Commissioner with the requisite evidence base to support the actionable plan and implementation framework.

## Schedule

Whilst the terms of reference were silent on this issue, the review schedule of 100 days was interpreted as including weekends and public holidays. The review commenced on 17 March 2025 and concluded on 24 June 2025.

## Independent Advisory Panel

The terms of reference called for the establishment of an advisory panel of highly experienced individuals, including former QPS police officers who have other agency experience and relevant expertise, to guide and support the Commissioner during the review.

Human resource consultancy principal Ms. Mischa Fahl was appointed as Chair to work alongside a panel of experienced former QPS officers including:

- Former Deputy Commissioner Ross Barnett APM.
- Former Deputy Commissioner Brett Pointing APM.
- Former Detective Superintendent Mark Ainsworth APM.

## Related government commitments

The Queensland State Government has made a number of commitments consistent with the objects and intent of the review. The most recent Ministerial Charter Letter highlights a commitment to improve workplace culture and specifically seeks the reduction of officer attrition to 3% through safer and supportive work environments. To further support the reduction of attrition, the Charter Letter commits the Government to returning police to their core functions as outlined in section 2.3 of the PSAA.

## Approach

The review schedule was broken into five phases with key activities as follows:

- Initiation (9 days) – scope confirmation; development of stakeholder engagement approach; project artefacts.
- Consultation, data collection and reporting (43 days) – execute engagement plan; conduct research including literature reviews and interjurisdictional inquiries; review report.
- Action plan and implementation framework development (21 days).
- Finalisation of actionable plan and implementation framework (20 days).
- Handover of project deliverables (7 days).

Review objectives were achieved by distilling the focus areas into the following four work packages:

- **Functions (2.3 of PSAA):** Promote a frontline-first decision making mindset by guiding decisions through the lens of whether they enhance and support frontline policing and uphold the principles of section 2.3 of the *Police Service Administration Act 1990* (PSAA).
- **Structures:** Evaluate the growth and effectiveness of QPS senior leadership and operational structures to ensure they are optimised for resource allocation, leadership impact, and frontline officer wellbeing.
- **Attrition Rates:** Examine the causes of increased attrition to identify opportunities to reduce separation rates and mitigate their impact on frontline service delivery.
- **Wellbeing:** Strengthen officer wellbeing through targeted support programs, improved injury and mental health services, and initiatives addressing resourcing, fatigue management, and response to calls for service.

A project team from various backgrounds and disciplines, including frontline members, was brought together to deliver the work. Led by an assistant commissioner and using the review priorities as a guide, the four work packages were developed and led by inspectors supported by senior sergeants. The sworn members were supported by senior and experienced unsworn members from human resource, finance, policy and communication specialities.

## Consultation and engagement

The review was informed by a comprehensive and inclusive engagement strategy to ensure meaningful participation from a diverse range of stakeholders. Targeted engagements were conducted with members across various regions, corporate divisions and commands including executive leadership, unions, frontline officers, specialists, commissioned officers, corporate members, and external agencies. Stakeholders were actively involved through presentations, written submissions, and consultative forums, contributing critical insights into each of the review priorities.

The workstreams gathered and exchanged information from other jurisdictions and reviewed relevant literature to verify assumptions and support findings. The recommendations made by the review represent a distillation of member feedback, engagement with external agencies and academic literature.

## Defining ‘frontline’

For the purpose of the review, the scope of frontline policing was considered to include police officers and members who respond to incidents and engage directly with the community. This includes general duties officers attending calls for service as well as specialist members who interact directly with the community, ensuring public safety and upholding the law.

## Review of section 2.3 of the *Police Service Administration Act 1990* (PSAA)

The review has confirmed the QPS is experiencing significant mission creep, with a growing number of non-core responsibilities challenging its ability to deliver frontline policing effectively. This has led to resource strain, diminished officer wellbeing, unplanned separations and reduced operational agility. Mission creep underpins each of the review priorities, as it is intrinsically linked to member wellbeing and attrition, and the capacity of the leaders within the organisation to deliver improved circumstances for the frontline.

The purpose and scope of this chapter is to examine the construct of core policing as it applies to section 2.3 of the PSAA (appendix B), and understand the impacts of mission creep on resourcing, and the delivery of policing services to the Queensland community.

In that regard, three hypotheses were explored. The first, that the QPS is performing functions outside of core policing and the tenets of section 2.3 of the PSAA. Secondly, that this mission creep has had a significant and negative impact on resourcing, member wellbeing and the organisation's ability to deliver optimal policing services to the community. Finally, that leadership and the absence of a frontline first mindset have contributed to the current state.

A mapping exercise was undertaken to guide and direct the progress of this work with two distinct but connected bodies of work. The first body of work addresses s.2.3 of the PSAA while the second addresses leadership, in particular a frontline first decision making mindset.

### Developing criteria to identify core functions and activities

As part of the review, a focused assessment was undertaken of the legislative foundation underpinning the operations of the organisation, specifically section 2.3 of the PSAA. The objective was to evaluate whether the existing legislative remit effectively supports modern frontline policing and aligns with the broader organisational transformation agenda. Anchored by a 'Frontline First' ethos, the review aimed to understand how the current legislative framework either enables or constrains the QPS in fulfilling its core mission, and to define more clearly the legislative role of police in a contemporary context.

The review findings are intended to support the development of actionable options for the Commissioner to realign service functions, improve operational efficiency, and reinforce the role of frontline officers as foundational to public trust and community safety.

Literature relative to this topic was explored with a focus on 'core' policing functions versus 'non-core' policing functions. It was considered this would provide insight into those functions and activities the QPS is performing outside its purview, and the associated impacts on frontline resourcing, officer wellbeing and response to calls for service.

### Analysis of section 2.3 of the *Police Service Administration Act 1990*

There are eight tenets to section 2.3 of the PSAA:

- **(a) Preservation of peace and good order** – refers to the QPS responsibility to maintain public order, prevent breaches of the peace, and ensure that society can function without disruption. It encompasses a wide range of activities, from managing public assemblies and protests to responding to incidents of disorderly conduct. Legal definitions of 'breach of the peace' often involve acts that cause or are likely to cause alarm, fear, or disturbance to others.



- **(b) Protection of communities and members** – highlights the QPS role in safeguarding the safety and wellbeing of individuals and communities. It involves protecting people from harm, preventing criminal activity, and providing assistance to those in need. This includes responding to threats, providing security, and working with communities to address their safety concerns.
- **(c) Prevention of crime** – emphasises the proactive role of the QPS in deterring and preventing criminal activity before it occurs. This involves a range of strategies, including high-visibility policing, community engagement, intelligence gathering, and targeted interventions to address the root causes of crime.
- **(d) Detection and apprehension of offenders** – refers to the QPS responsibility to investigate crimes, identify those responsible, and bring them to justice. This involves gathering evidence, conducting interviews, making arrests, and working with the courts to ensure that offenders are held accountable for their actions.
- **(e) Upholding the law** – underscores the QPS fundamental duty to enforce all laws within its jurisdiction, ensuring that the law is applied fairly and consistently to all individuals. This includes a broad mandate to ensure compliance with legislation and regulations.
- **(f) Administration of the law** – relates to the QPS role in the broader justice system, including processes such as the laying of charges, the serving of summonses, and the execution of warrants. It involves working in conjunction with the courts and other agencies to ensure the smooth functioning of the legal process.
- **(g) Provision of services and rendering help** – provides our members protection and further acknowledges that the QPS provides a wide range of services to the community beyond traditional law enforcement. This includes responding to emergencies, providing assistance to victims of crime, offering advice and support, connecting people with other support services and providing government flexibility with our workforce.
- **(h) Provision of services for the security of state buildings** – **describes** the function and responsibility given to the Commissioner of Police regarding security of state buildings, however, fails to recognise the functions of the QPS as per the Administrative Arrangements Amendment Order (No.3) 2024 which also incorporates the State Emergency Service, Marine Rescue and Disaster Management, and Queensland Government Air.

This review questions the prescriptive nature of sub-section (h) and sees an opportunity for a non-specific provision that reflects the changing portfolios attributed to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services and responsibilities of the Commissioner of Police under section 4.8, 'Commissioner's responsibility' of the PSAA.

There have only been two minor amendments to section 2.3 of the PSAA since it was introduced in 1990 with no notable change in application (beyond modernisation of presentation and drafting). Conversely, over that 35-year period there has been significant change to the policing landscape.

In considering the construction of section 2.3 of the PSAA, two distinct themes become apparent. The first relates to 'core' policing roles which is reflected in similar legislation in other Australian jurisdictions and the United Kingdom (UK), albeit the wording is not as concise and there is a notable absence of the tenet 'protect life and property'. The functions described in the legislation for the Northern Territory, Victoria, and South Australia police are succinct and explicit in nature.

Another theme, evident in subsections (f), (g), and (h) when considered collectively, is the delineation of non-core policing functions. These functions are articulated with reference to other agency legislation and generalised statements that are open to interpretation, affording opportunities for potential mission creep. Notably, this includes the use of terms such as 'reasonable', 'reasonably', and 'required'. These terms are embedded within subsection (g) and are key in articulating the discretionary activities of the QPS.

The term 'required' (Garner, 2019) connotes an action or duty that is mandated by law or regulation. Within section 2.3, when a function is 'required,' it signifies a compulsory obligation imposed on the QPS. This term leaves little room for discretion, indicating that the specified action must be performed as stipulated by the statute.

The term 'reasonable' (Stapleton in Dietrich & Field, 2017) is inherently flexible and context dependent. It embodies the standard of what a typical, prudent person would consider fair, appropriate, and moderate under similar circumstances. In the context of the PSAA, 'reasonable' serves as a benchmark to assess the appropriateness of police actions, ensuring they are proportionate and justifiable given the specific situation.

The term 'reasonably' (Endicott, 2005) functions as an adverb, qualifying how an action is performed. It implies that the action should be carried out in a manner that aligns with rationality and fairness, adhering to the standards of a prudent individual. When the PSAA stipulates that a function should be performed 'reasonably,' it underscores the expectation that police conduct should be balanced, fair, and devoid of arbitrariness.

Whilst the terms 'reasonable' and 'reasonably' introduce standards of fairness, proportionality, and objectivity into police operations the term 'required' under subsection (g)(i) imposes mandatory obligations on the QPS. When coupled with the term 'must' in other legislation, this limits the Commissioner's authority to balance the requests of another agency against the priorities of the Service. For example:

- Section 269 of the *Corrective Services Act 2006* –
  - (1) The Chief Executive (of QCS) may ask the commissioner to provide police officers to help the chief executive in the performance of the chief executive's functions.
  - (2) The **commissioner must** comply with the request.
- Section 308 of the *Corrective Services Act*–
  - (2) To help the proper officer of the court perform the proper officer's functions, the proper officer may ask—
    - (a) the chief executive to provide corrective services officers; or
    - (b) the commissioner to provide police officers or, to the extent the commissioner considers it appropriate, watchhouse officers.
  - (3) The chief executive or **commissioner must** comply with the request.

The ability of the Commissioner to maintain ultimate authority and prioritise the functions of the Service above that of another agency is critical to the success of addressing mission creep, realigning the functions of the Service with core policing, and meeting the obligations as detailed in section 4.8, 'Commissioner's responsibility' of the PSAA.

When considering the discussion above with community sentiment studies (that is, the public are supportive of police refocusing on 'core' policing activities but maintaining a commitment to respond in the first instance regarding public safety) there is strong evidence supporting the categorisation of policing activity in terms of the two themes described. This approach can be used to enhance the readability and interpretation of section 2.3 by separating the functions into two distinct categories: 'core functions' and 'other services'. This approach is similar to that used in the New South Wales police legislation.

A dividend of this approach is a change in frontline mindset and appreciation that the QPS is not the ‘everything’ agency noting, however, there may be occasions when the QPS are called upon to provide other services in addition to core police activities. The key point being that ‘core’ functions are more clearly defined in section 2.3 to assign them primacy.

The review demonstrated the QPS is an organisation obligated to engage in activities well beyond traditional law enforcement. Under the Administrative Arrangements Order (No. 3) 2024, the Commissioner of Police is responsible not only for police services but also for disaster management, protective services for government infrastructure security, the Queensland Government Air Service, Marine Rescue Queensland, and the State Emergency Service. This expanded mandate means that any change to the legislative definition of QPS core functions could inadvertently impact the broader suite of services delivered under the Commissioner’s authority. As such, amending section 2.3 to focus solely on traditional policing could have significant unintended consequences for other essential government services.

The review team engaged the Policy and Performance Division to explore the feasibility and implications of legislative change, particularly regarding the potential to adapt section 2.3 to better deal with the agency’s competing demands. Legal and policy advice confirmed that the current wording of section 2.3 provides essential flexibility and institutional protection, not only for core policing functions but also for the wider range of responsibilities the QPS undertakes. Notably, any legislative change would not only impact the QPS but could also affect the Queensland Government’s broader ability to respond to major events, such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

While there is the potential to amend the legislation there are significant risks if the agency pursues change unilaterally. Legal advice has cautioned against simplistic insertions, such as references to the ‘protection of life and property’ which may inadvertently expand QPS obligations and lead to legal ambiguities, particularly given that these concepts are already canvassed in other legislative provisions. Effective legislative reform would require a robust policy foundation, thorough legal drafting, and a sound evidentiary basis.

The review also highlighted the breadth of non-core functions currently performed by QPS. These include activities that fall outside conventional law enforcement but have, over time, been taken up by the Service, often at the convenience of other departments or in response to community demands. Certain activities, including mental health patient transfers and duties related to corrective services, do not have a clearly defined legislative or business rationale. This catch-all nature of QPS service delivery often results in resourcing challenges and limits the Service’s ability to manage its primary demand effectively.

There is a pressing need to examine the rationale for QPS involvement in these non-core areas. This includes identifying the legal, policy, or historical reasons for QPS participation in such functions; evaluating the financial and human resource costs involved; and determining whether these functions should continue to be performed by the Service. If a decision is made to maintain involvement in some functions, the QPS could explore a fee-for-service model or seek to deliver the services on a full cost attribution basis, consistent with public sector financial management principles. A hybrid funding approach may also be viable, subject to accurate demand and cost modelling across expanded or collaborative roles undertaken by the QPS.

In concluding this section, the review recommends the QPS, working with relevant stakeholders, pursue limited legislative amendments to section 2.3 of the PSAA to more clearly differentiate between the core and ancillary responsibilities of the Service. In tandem, QPS should undertake a comprehensive review of non-portfolio and non-core services with a view to developing a strategy for divestment or demand-reduction where appropriate. Where significant resourcing imposts are identified, QPS should also explore

the development of a fee-for-service regulatory framework to enable cost recovery for services delivered on behalf of other agencies, with a view to preserving frontline service delivery capacity for primary services.

Additionally, the review recommends a detailed examination of all non-portfolio legislation that imposes mandatory obligations on QPS. This should assess whether prescriptive language, such as ‘must,’ could be replaced with more discretionary terms such as ‘may,’ to align with the Commissioner’s authority under section 4.8 of the PSAA. This would support prioritised service delivery based on operational need and community safety imperatives.

Finally, the development of a QPS Service Charter is recommended. An exemplar service charter is included at appendix C. The charter should clearly articulate the scope of services provided across QPS portfolios including Police Services, Marine Rescue, State Emergency Services, and Protective Services. This will ensure both internal members and the public have a transparent understanding of responsibilities, service standards, and what to expect in terms of QPS service delivery.

## **Demand and mission creep**

The previous section established that (a) police mission creep is a global issue, and (b) the concept of ‘core’ policing exists and remains closely aligned to what can be described as traditional policing functions.

To determine the extent of mission creep it is necessary for the QPS to develop a method to differentiate between functions and activities that align with ‘core policing roles’ and those that are ‘non-core roles’. Such a model could be used as an evidence-based decision-making tool to determine those activities that should continue, those that should be ceased, and those where there is a shared responsibility. It would also serve as a filter through which future policy proposals related to extended service delivery would need to pass. The express purpose of introducing this type of decision-making tool is to address demand, ease pressure on the frontline, provide optimal policing services to the community, and prevent future mission creep.

## **ANZPAA conceptual model**

The Australian and New Zealand Policing Advisory Agency (ANZPAA) conducted considerable research on the police role culminating in the development of a conceptual model, depicted in figure 1. The model, taken from ANZPAA’s ‘Role of Police’ (2022) report, can be utilised to categorise current state functions and activities. Applying this model, functions and activities can be considered as:

- Core role – matters that are solely or predominantly for police response, and police are the most appropriate lead agency.
- Collaborative role – matters in which police have a role to play but are not always the most appropriate lead agency. Support and collaboration from another ‘lead’ agency is required to achieve the best outcomes.
- Expanded role – activities that could be performed by others and are beyond the ideal functions of police.

# The Police Role

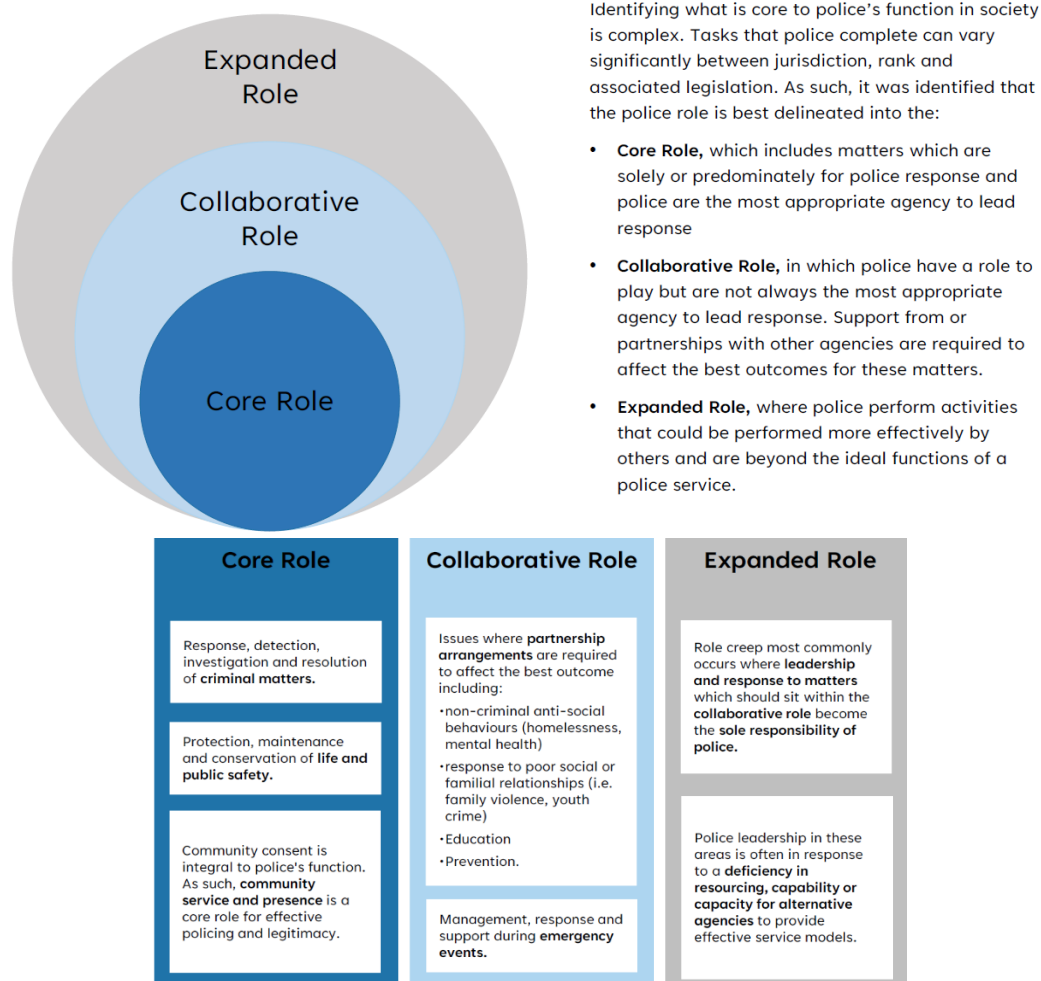


Figure 1: ANZPAA conceptual framework – 2022

Whilst useful as a foundational tool, it does not determine the extent of police involvement in identified collaborative and expanded roles, nor does it provide insight regarding application. It is recommended that the QPS embed the ANZPAA model as one element of a broader and comprehensive demand management framework to provide the necessary structure, guidance and rigour to relevant processes.

From a perspective of mission creep, a QPS Demand Management framework would provide a consistent basis to:

- Explore and identify core versus non-core policing activities and functions.
- Inform the divestment/cessation of activities to ease frontline pressure.
- Determine the extent of QPS involvement relative to 'collaborative' and 'expanded' roles, and where necessary the process for transitioning the activity to an owning agency.
- Inform strategic and operational level conversations with stakeholders.
- Manage/prevent future mission creep.

It is important to note that the initial operational response to police calls for service will always be underpinned by a public safety risk assessment via the existing SOLVE and priority policing models.

## Understanding frontline demand

The graphic below (QPS Research and Analytics) represents the daily policing demands confronting our frontline members. Whilst this data was reflective of the 2020 financial year, all categories are still relevant with demand having increased over the past 5 years. This is a compelling insight regarding the daily pressures placed on QPS frontline officers.

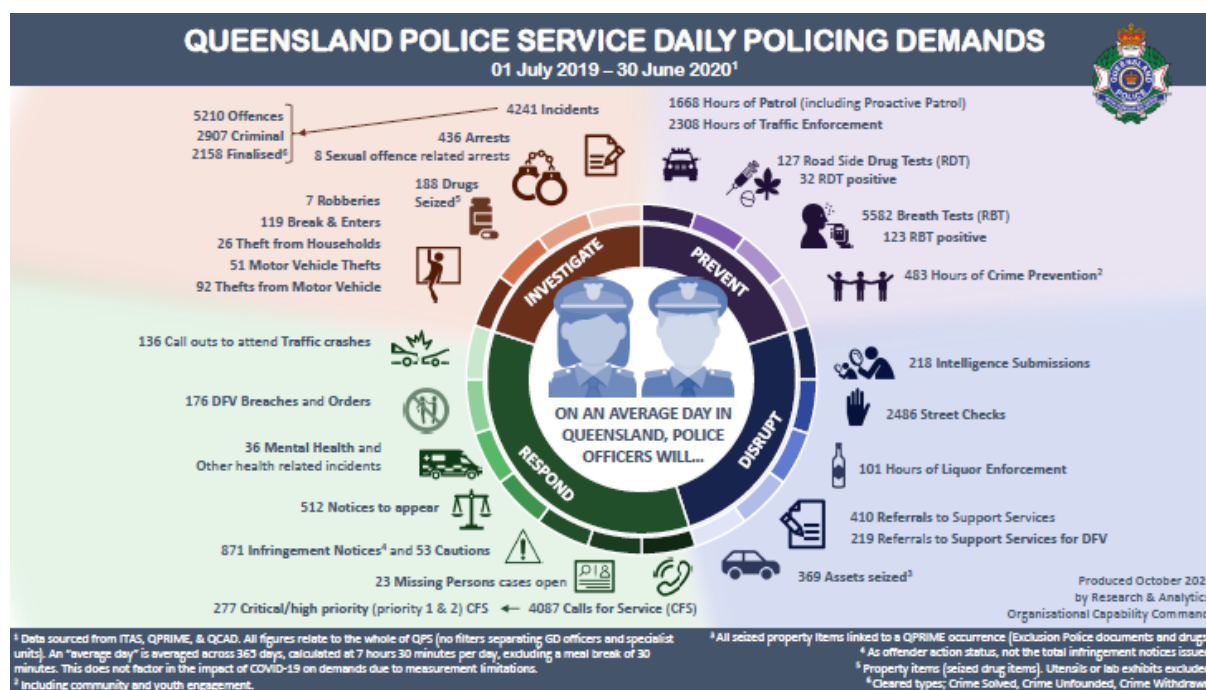


Figure 2: Daily policing demands – Research and Analytics October 2020

Due to changes within the organisation and its operational environment, the QPS has taken on additional social and administrative responsibilities that extend beyond traditional law enforcement in recent years. For example, externally imposed legislative mandates have led to complex and resource intensive responses to domestic and family violence (DFV). Heightened job demands associated with DFV have increased stress and burnout among officers which has been exacerbated by a perceived decline in community respect for members. A 2024 Communications, Culture and Engagement (CCE) report is insightful regarding the negative impact of demand on workforce wellbeing:

*'The sense of pride in being an officer or working for QPS has diminished in recent years. Many officers feel embarrassed due to the prolonged response times the public experiences, stemming from officer shortages, increased DFV callouts, and other administrative burdens.'*

*'Most members, both staff and police, feel a strong sense of purpose in the work they do for the community. However, there is widespread frustration and despair over the inability to 'serve their purpose' and support the community effectively, attributed to DFV legislation, staff shortages, and additional responsibilities perceived to belong to other agencies.'*

*'Officers who joined to 'catch crooks' are struggling with feeling like 'social workers,' especially when dealing with DFV and youth crime callouts, where they have limited control over the outcomes.'*

A mapping exercise undertaken to better understand QPS resource allocation (see appendix D), identified that of a total workforce of 19,184.75 actual FTE, only 32.6% (6,265.11 FTE) provided a visible policing response. Further, it identified that approximately 53.76% of the total operational workforce provided a visible policing response. Approximately 16.99% of the total operational workforce were operational but not public facing and 2.21% community engagement (not taskable but visible to the public).

The frontline mapping exercise provides critical insight into QPS operational readiness and underscores the need for demand-informed workforce planning. While surge capacity exists across various workforce categories, strategic decisions must carefully balance operational necessity with organisational flexibility. The findings reinforce the importance of establishing a dedicated Service Delivery Office to centralise (and operationalise the outcomes of) demand forecasting across Queensland. This office would play a pivotal role in continuously monitoring, modelling, and optimising workforce deployment, not only to align with dynamic community demand, but also to ensure a consistent and balanced distribution of role types across the state. For example, middle office functions should be proportionally represented across districts to maintain equitable support for frontline operations.

This approach aligns with the perspective advanced by Laufs et al. (2021), who argue that police demand should be understood as a complex adaptive system, one that requires dynamic modelling and strategic resource allocation to respond effectively to evolving public safety challenges.

Demand drivers

Understanding the drivers contributing to demand and mission creep is important and can inform opportunities to ease pressure on the frontline. The diagram below was prepared by ANZPAA (Role of Police report, 2022), drawing on current research relevant to policing in Australia and New Zealand, and represents numerous internal and external demand drivers contributing to role creep:

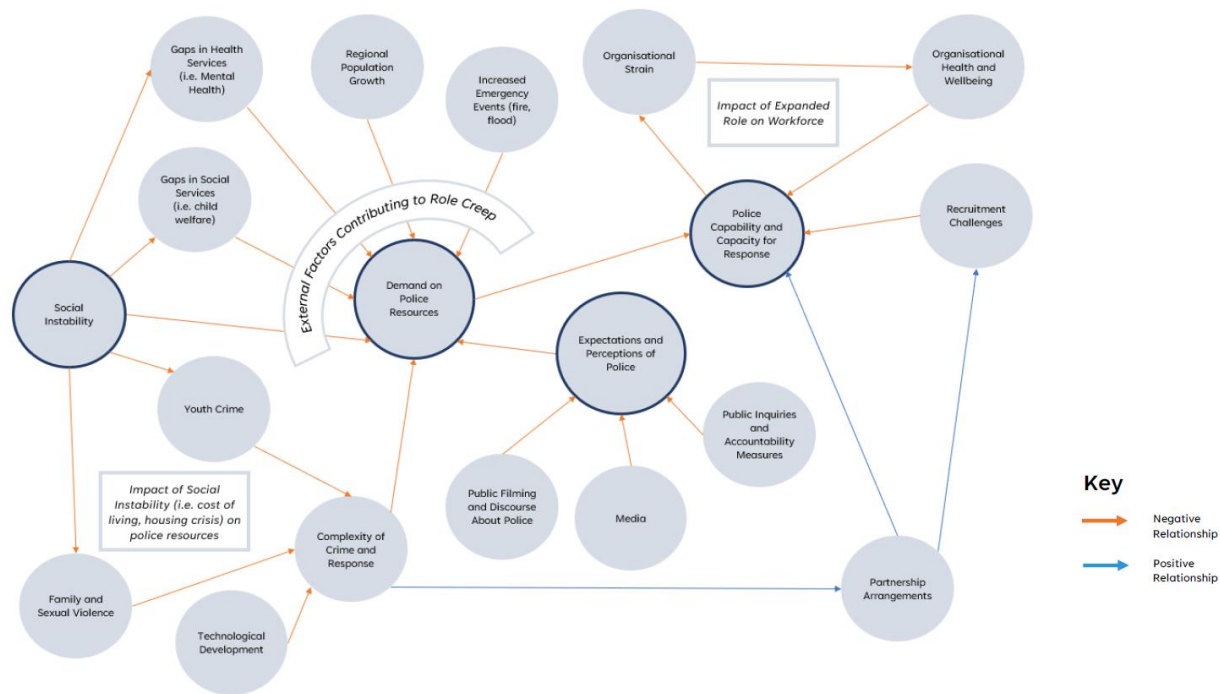


Figure 3: ANZPAA, Role of Police Report 2022



The infographic depicts the positive relationship of partnership arrangements, and identifies the following negative drivers of demand:

- Internal –
  - Police capability and capacity
    - Recruitment and retention
    - Health and wellbeing
    - Organisational strain
    - Partnership arrangements
- External –
  - Expectations and perceptions of police
    - Public enquiries
    - Media
  - Social instability
    - Youth crime
    - Complexity of crime and response required
    - Technological development
    - Domestic and family violence
    - Gaps in social services
    - Gaps in health services
    - Population growth
    - Increased emergency/disaster events

## Demand types

Linked to demand drivers Laufs et al. (2021), identify various demand types influencing police organisations as depicted in the following infographic:

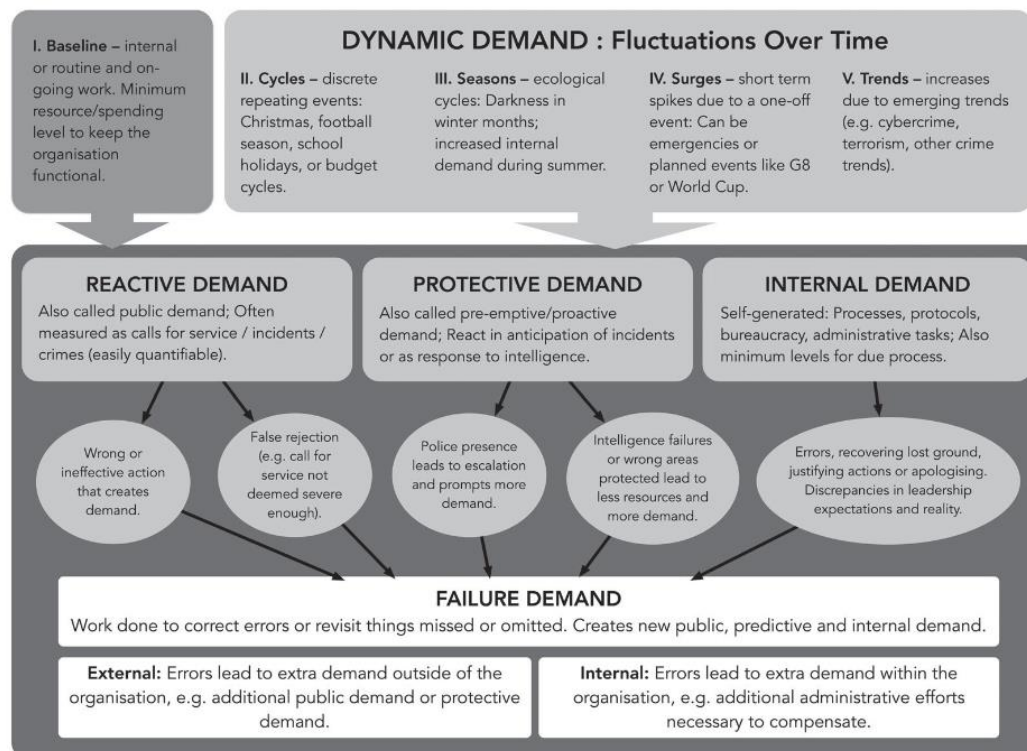


Figure 4: Visualisation of police demand and its drivers – Policing and Society 2020



Two demand types are noteworthy in support of opportunities to ease demand as mentioned in the previous section - baseline demand and internal demand:

Baseline demand – reflects the minimum resourcing and financial commitment needed to maintain operations. It is suggested that understanding baseline demand at any given time is critical to determining the functions and activities undertaken by the QPS and avoiding mission creep.

Internal demand – self-generated demand created by processes, protocols, administrative tasks, bureaucracy, and compliance activities. The importance of this is acknowledging that in addition to the exponential increase in reactive demand and mission creep, the QPS is self-generating an incredible amount of internal demand that is adding significant and unnecessary pressure for the frontline. In contrast to external demand, QPS has complete control of these drivers and can readily change or remove this demand, for example, over-regulation and compliance driven by a risk averse culture.

## Impact of a risk adverse culture

The QPS has developed a culture of risk aversion that is pervasive and is leading to adverse consequences across the agency. It is most acutely felt at the frontline, where officer decision-making and operational effectiveness are directly impacted. It is characterised by excessive caution, reluctance to innovate, and fear of negative consequences, often driven by organisational structures (regulations) and accountability pressures.

Several systemic and cultural factors underpin this behaviour. Historical reviews, such as the Fitzgerald Inquiry, have nurtured a culture where, rightly, integrity and accountability were prioritised. However, the increased bureaucracy that accompanied that shift also inadvertently fostered a cautious culture due to fear of misconduct allegations (Coaldrake, 2022). Environments with heavy compliance or regulatory requirements tend to emphasise strict rule following over innovation (Wright, 2017), while fear of disciplinary action and blame further discourages proactive decision making (Heaton & Tong, 2022). Feedback from the 100-day review engagement sessions, particularly from Ethical Standards Command, District Officers, ELT, and frontline members via the IAP, highlighted issues related to risk aversion, integrity, accountability, and misconduct. There is a tendency to avoid risk excessively, as evidenced by the sentiment from the frontline and the immediate escalation of complaints, including the submission of formal complaints without sufficient assessment or inquiry. In fact, there is strong evidence that indicates many complaints relate to performance issues rather than discipline. While steps are being taken to improve integrity, accountability, and separating discipline from performance management, further action is needed.

The Coaldrake Review (2022) emphasised that transparency and accountability are foundational to public trust and effective governance. It warned against the overuse of confidentiality provisions, which can obscure decision-making and erode confidence in leadership. In the QPS context, there is a need for senior leaders to model transparent decision-making practices across their cohort and peer networks. Decisions that affect operational policy, misconduct outcomes, or cultural reform must be communicated clearly and consistently to all levels of the organisation to avoid perceptions of secrecy or inconsistency. Equally, decision-making must balance the complex and high-stakes nature of the policing environment against various statutory workplace obligations, while overtly supporting the workforce and fostering frontline autonomy.

Efforts to enhance integrity include increased investment in corruption prevention and clearer differentiation between deliberate misconduct and honest mistakes. Accountability needs to be reinforced through discipline reform projects and peer-based regulation to address unacceptable behaviours.

Ethical Standards Command is progressing changes to the discipline framework however broader cultural work is needed to create a more balanced approach to risk, upholding integrity, ensuring accountability and ultimately, managing misconduct effectively. The review team recommends implementing a performance measure to ensure continued progress in this area.

Although the QPS has developed a comprehensive risk appetite statement, endorsed by the Board of Management and aligned with strategic objectives, it is not widely known, communicated, or embedded. This disconnect undermines its intended purpose to clarify acceptable levels of risk, guide decision-making, and support innovation. As a result, uncertainty regarding risk tolerance continues to contribute to defensive policing and reduced operational agility (Coaldrake, 2022; Essex PFCC, 2023). There is also opportunity to better align the QPS risk appetite to the frontline policing environment.

Barriers to evidence-based policing (EBP), such as limited time, resource constraints, and insufficient leadership support, further entrench risk aversion by discouraging the use of research-informed decision-making in daily practice (AIC, 2019). The IAP noted that while evidence-based policing is being undertaken at all levels of the organisation, there is a lack of willingness to act on the information available. This disconnect hinders the organisation's ability to respond effectively to complex and dynamic environments.

Risk aversion (at all levels) restricts decision-making and frontline autonomy, often leading to overly cautious actions that may impede effective crime prevention and community engagement. Officers may avoid decisions involving uncertainty, potentially missing opportunities for innovation or timely intervention (Wright, 2017). This conservative approach can also lead to operational inefficiencies and diminished public trust if services appear reactive rather than proactive.

Addressing risk aversion effectively requires both cultural and structural reform. Leadership plays a pivotal role in modelling balanced risk-taking and articulating a clear, organisation-wide risk appetite (Essex PFCC, 2023). The QPS Risk Appetite Statement provides for a forward-leaning posture in areas of innovation and strategic planning, actively encouraging service delivery improvements and agile change management. At the same time, it maintains a deliberately conservative stance on risks that could compromise safety, integrity, financial accountability, and public trust. This is reflected in its very low tolerance for risks related to workplace health and safety, misconduct, fraud, and reputational harm. Transparency and ethical governance are central to the QPS risk posture, with a strong emphasis on avoiding misuse of information and reinforcing public confidence through open and accountable decision-making. There is an opportunity to review the current QPS risk appetite and increase the awareness and application of this statement across all levels of the organisation to drive a change in culture.

Promoting a culture that learns from mistakes, rather than assigning blame, empowers officers to take informed risks without fear of unfair sanctions (Heaton & Tong, 2022). Embedding evidence-based policing principles through leadership engagement, targeted training, and policy integration enhances decision-making and reduces reliance on risk averse heuristics (AIC, 2019). Regular monitoring and clear communication of acceptable risk thresholds, supported by the risk appetite statement, are essential to enabling this cultural shift (Coaldrake, 2022; Wright, 2017).

## Managing future demand

Demand is a recurrent theme throughout this paper as a driver of the issues canvassed by the review objectives. Notably, the challenges associated with measuring and dealing with demand have been highlighted in numerous reviews over the past 15 years and whilst several initiatives and engagements with external expertise have sought to either explore or address demand (directly or indirectly), with the exception of some rudimentary tools, the Service is no better placed to understand the implications associated with demand. It is evident there are two sides to the demand equation.

On one side are the various demand types and drivers and on the other side is the organisational capacity to meet (or manage) demand. When demand exceeds an organisations capacity and is left unchecked, negative consequences follow.

In 2008, the Service Delivery and Performance Commission (Qld Government) observed that the Service lacked the ability to systematically measure and analyse demand, assess the impact of policy changes, and identify opportunities for improvement. The report recommended developing a methodology and specialist capacity to measure and manage demand. It also recommended the development of a framework to categorise service responses and implement a more mobile and flexible operational policing model, noting that the QPS had become highly reactive with little capacity for problem-oriented policing.

The 2019 Strategic Review (GSA) noted a 48% growth in calls for service between 2014/15 and 2018/2019 with an average of 42% of calls for service having no resource deployed. It called for the establishment of mechanisms to ensure that resources are ‘... allocated equitably across the Service based upon need’ and suggested a more sophisticated approach to resource distribution – both financial and human. Though the ensuing Service Delivery Program sought to systematise service delivery and improve load balancing across districts, concerns were raised regarding the scale of change required and the change approach itself which led to its discontinuation.

In 2023, the Queensland Audit Office published a paper exploring the issue of increasing demands being placed upon the QPS. Amongst the observations made, the Queensland Audit Office noted the Service lacks predictive modelling and a holistic view of service needs, and without reform, the QPS would continue to remain reactive and unable to meet future challenges effectively. It is notable that since those findings were published, the Service’s capacity to engage in prevention, a Peelian obligation, has fallen away markedly with officers having little discretionary time beyond dealing with calls for service and the requisite downstream activity associated with those jobs.

Importantly, the QPS is not able to determine the marginal utility of recruiting one additional officer relative to overall demand and there is an emphasis on allocation models rather than growth approaches that are meaningfully tied to business objectives. Whilst government may regularly provide growth to address demand, the organisation does not have a sophisticated means of determining how many officers are required, let alone forecast how many will be needed. It does not have the ability to contingency model for changes in policy or business environment that may impact the need for officers, and by extension, capital and operational assets.

Demand is a significant input in undertaking strategic planning and in the absence of being able to fully understand its various dimensions, poor investment choices in both people and capital assets will result. Demand is multifaceted and whilst analysis of calls for service represent part of the picture, the impost of secondary and tertiary activities associated with calls for service is not fully understood. The Service needs the ability to understand the full effort associated with various forms of demand similar to that undertaken by the DFV Commission of Inquiry Reform Project team which modelled DFV workflows and activity lifecycles and linked that to the investments required to meet demand.

Acknowledging the findings of the various reviews mentioned earlier and the discussion above, the review recommends the Service invest in a capability that can deliver the following with respect to demand management:

- Development of demand measurement, analytic and forecasting tools.
- Coordination of demand management activities, including business process reform to address internal demand.

- Assuming responsibility for the application of the demand management framework articulated by this Review, including accountability for outcomes.
- Assuming Service wide responsibility for the QPS rostering capability.
- Supporting strategic planning, workforce planning and investment decisions with demand related information.
- Exploration of means of better optimising and/or systematising service delivery.

## Surge capacity to meet demand

Engagement with commissioned officers and district leaders across the QPS highlighted several recurring operational challenges. First, in the southeastern areas of the state, including Brisbane, North Coast, (parts of) Southern and South Eastern Regions, there is a lack of agility in deploying sworn officers across policing boundaries to manage peaks in service demand. The current model does not enable rapid or seamless resource sharing between adjacent districts and regions. This inability to surge resources effectively and balance demand during high-demand periods places stress on frontline services. District duty officers, communications centres and district tasking and coordination centres are overwhelmed with demand and unable to adequately identify areas of high priority and resource appropriately. Secondly, areas like DFV code 3 and 4 response jobs, welfare checks and search and rescue incidents, not being prioritised or able to be divested to other agencies where appropriate. Finally, the establishment of strategic command and coordination structures is slow, particularly during major incidents or complex operations. Feedback from stakeholders has called for a 24/7, year-round command capability that can coordinate statewide resources and streamline decision-making to support frontline.

The Queensland Audit Office noted that QPS rostering does not align with peak demand periods, particularly between 5:00 pm and 11:00 pm on weekends which was exacerbated by a lack of senior leadership during these times of demand. Furthermore, regional districts faced limited relief capacity and few avenues to escalate issues without direct involvement from senior commissioned officers.

While the introduction of regional duty officer positions was intended to ease some of these pressures, the broader leadership and coordination demands between policing boundaries remain unaddressed. The establishment of a scalable, centralised command structure would resolve several systemic gaps.

The implementation of the ICCS Plus (Australia New Zealand Counter-Terrorism Committee's Incident Command and Control Structure) framework, endorsed by ANZPAA, provides a clear model for reform. It defines two complementary levels of police command: the Police Commander (strategic) and the Police Forward Commander (tactical). The strategic commander is responsible for setting intent, allocating resources, and maintaining cross-jurisdictional and policing boundaries, situational awareness, i.e. across the state, and the forward commander(tactical) manages incident execution on the ground.

This structure has specific relevance for both regional areas and high-density urban zones like Brisbane and the Gold Coast. In these contexts, centralised command can improve coordination, reduce duplication, and enable the sharing of resources across traditional policing boundaries. It provides a scalable response to high demand periods and enables a shift toward a true 'borderless policing' system and culture.

It is proposed that a new model be trialled - the Queensland Police Operations Command Centre (Q-Com). It is further recommended an initial pilot be conducted in the Brisbane and South Eastern Regions, (including Moreton and Ipswich Districts) during peak periods from Friday evening to Monday afternoon. The Q-Com will provide centralised oversight, coordinate resource deployment without district boundaries, and triage incoming incidents. It will also support diversion of non-core policing demand

through integrated multi-agency engagement. The Q-Com should provide real-time situational awareness and coordination, underpinned by formal command protocols and interoperable systems.

Responsibility for planning, logistics, intelligence, and public information should be allocated across Q-Com (ICCS Plus functional roles), reducing the load on field commanders and address the fluctuating demand of policing calls for service.

Further detail on the operational model and structure is outlined in the Concept of Operations – Q-Com Trial: Brisbane and South-Eastern Regions in appendix E.

Multiple reviews support this type of reform. The Queensland Audit Office (2023–24) recommends strategic workforce planning and data-informed deployment. The QPS Violent Confrontations Review highlights the need for command training and inter-agency coordination. Taskforce Bletchley calls for consistent command practice and oversight, especially in remote areas. The Queensland Human Rights Commission (2021) emphasises the challenges of isolation, policy inconsistency, and the need for stronger leadership standards in regional contexts.

The current operational model imposes unsustainable demands on inspectors, inhibits agile resource coordination, and limits the QPS ability to respond to dynamic incidents. The establishment of an Operations Command Centre (Q-Com) provides an opportunity to test a more modern and scalable command approach that can deliver both frontline relief and strategic oversight. This reform aligns with contemporary policing needs, promotes efficient service delivery, and ensures officer wellbeing.

## Examination of functions

In the process of examining functions linked to the Administrative Arrangements Order, the review team explored areas perceived as outside core police in greater detail to identify potential functional reform opportunities. These focus areas were identified during consultation undertaken by the review team and the subsequent feedback that identified numerous recurring themes.

### Protective Services Group (PSG)

PSG provides security services to state government departments across Queensland including remote and discrete communities, under a cost recovery business model. Service arrangements are reflected in Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) between PSG and relevant state government departments including Department of Justice, Education Queensland, Department of Housing and Public Works, the Queensland Police Service and the Department of Families, Seniors, Disability Services and Child Safety.

PSG also provides ad hoc and special services to government departments during periods of increased demand. For example, increased mobile patrols for schools during school holidays or security presence at election booths, or security services during capital works or (flood/natural disaster) repair. Services include:

- Static and mobile patrols in state government buildings and precincts including Queensland; Cultural Centres, schools, court houses and busways in the greater Brisbane area.
- Alarm monitoring (via 24/7 communications room) and alarm response.
- Issuing state government ID.
- Vulnerability assessments.
- Project management services for security system installation and upgrades.

Services are provided under a blended model of protective services officers (PSO) and private security contractors. PSO are sworn members of the QPS and while performing duty in a state government building

and/or precincts, are empowered under the provisions of the *Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000* to demand name and address and proof thereof, search, seize prescribed things, and detain.

In 2023, PSG entered an MOU with Department of Transport and Main Roads (DTMR). Subsequently PSO commenced patrolling bus platforms to improve driver and community safety. PSO undertake DTMR approved authorised officer training to enable them to exercise powers under the *Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Act 1994*.

PSO currently wear load bearing vests and carry handcuffs and batons. QLite devices are being rolled out to PSO who use QPS systems including LCAD and QPRIME.

### Opportunity - Auxiliary Workforce:

PSG equivalents in other jurisdictions have a broader range of legislative powers and accoutrements to support community safety and policing operations. The South Australia Police model is considered a more advanced model that QPS should consider (refer to appendix F). In line with other jurisdictions PSO could be developed as an auxiliary workforce to perform the following duties:

- Prisoner escorts.
- Hospital guarding.
- Court orderly.
- Community policing and crime prevention conducting high visibility foot patrols at shopping centres or high-volume public spaces.
- Staff mobile police vans.
- Respond to GPS tracking alarms (low batteries or faults).
- Protect child protection officers during home visits.
- Service of documents.
- Crime scene preservation.
- Supplement and support major events.
- Increased patrols of public transport.

The expanded utilisation of PSO would reduce pressure on frontline police and increase discretionary time available to conduct proactive policing activities. It would also enable frontline police to be redirected to more complex calls for service and improve organisational capacity (particularly in the lead up to the 2032 Olympics) and efficiency. Consequently, community perceptions of safety and community satisfaction with the QPS could also be expected to improve.

The review noted a number of barriers and identified potential solutions, including:

1. FTE cap – PSG operates 50% temporary contracts resulting in high attrition as members seek job security through full time employment. *Option* – increase permanent workforce.
2. PSG employs the exact number of officers required to deliver services and there is a minimum 20-week lead time before additional officers are recruited, trained and deployed to deliver services. *Option* – with appropriate funding arrangements, employ a more flexible approach to recruitment.
3. Legislation restricts the use of powers by PSO to state government buildings and precincts. *Option* – consider repositioning the role legislatively and appointing officers under s.5.16 of the *PSAA - Appointment of Special Constables*.
4. Recruitment challenges due to reliance on police recruiting to fill vacancies i.e. police recruits are the priority. *Option* – redesign the recruitment process to enable a single application under a multiple pathway model.



5. Officer safety due to lack of accoutrements. *Option* – PSG are currently reviewing accoutrements to improve officer safety i.e. ILBVs, capsicum spray and taser similar to other jurisdictions.

Of note, PSG recruitment is already proving to be a recruitment channel for the sworn ranks with 112 PSO transitioning to sworn membership since 2019:

Movement between the categories of Protective Services Officer, Recruit & Police Officer - 28/04/2025												
<b>Notes:</b>												
- Substantive placements with an end date >= 01/01/2019 were included in the analysis												
- The summary below has been set to default to current Active employees only but the slicer can be adjusted to included terminated employees												
- For PSO to Police Officer, the change date in the summary below is the date commenced as a Recruit. Where the Recruit Training Program has not been completed the category is reflected as PSO to Recruit (i.e they are either a current Recruit or terminated as a Recruit).												
CHANGE CAT	EMP COUNT	CHANGE CAT	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	Total		
POLICE to PSO to POLICE	1	POLICE to PSO	1	1	1	2	5	3		13		
POLICE to PSO	10	PSO to POLICE	4	10	24	28	27	19		112		
PSO to POLICE	109	PSO to RECRUIT		1	1		2	5	6	15		
PSO to POLICE to PSO	2	RECRUIT to PSO		3	2	1	1	7	3	17		
PSO to RECRUIT	10	<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>157</b>		
PSO to RECRUIT to PSO	5											
RECRUIT to PSO	11											
<b>Total</b>	<b>148</b>											

Table 1: Movement between the categories (as at 28 April 2025)

## QPS Aviation Capability Group

The QPS Aviation Capability Group was established in 2021 to consolidate all QPS aviation capabilities and assets, including Queensland Government Air (QGAir), Queensland Police Service Air Operations (PoAir) and the Remote Piloted Aircraft Systems Unit (RPAS Unit), under a unified reporting structure.

The Administrative Arrangements Amendment Order (No.3) 2024 designate the Minister for Police and Emergency Services as responsible for Queensland Government Air Services. There is a lack of coordination among Queensland Government departments regarding aircraft procurement and contracting; for instance, in 2023, Queensland Health renewed a \$288 million partnership with Babcock Australasia, resulting in two new aeromedical and search-and-rescue helicopters delivered in 2025 that are difficult and costly for these aircraft to be utilised for police operations or training. Other examples include Care Flight Limited and the Queensland Fire Department. These cases highlight the absence of a unified Queensland Government aviation strategy.

QGAir delivers government aviation services to Queensland by providing essential, lifesaving and emergency aviation support to its partner agencies including aeromedical retrievals, passenger transport, search and rescue, cargo transport and law enforcement tasking.

QGAir has a fleet of six fixed wing and five rotary wing aircraft, and operates seven bases in Brisbane, Townsville, Cairns, Mount Isa and Horn Island. Its workforce of highly trained personnel includes pilots, air crew officers, rescue crew officers, engineers, safety specialists and aviation operations specialists.

QGAir features four business areas: Fixed Wing, Rotary Wing, Safety and Quality, and Business Capability:

Police Air Operations: consists of PoAir (rotary) and and RPAS Unit. PoAir provides an airborne law enforcement capability and service via a fleet of six Bell 429 twin-engine helicopters—the largest Bell law enforcement fleet in Australia as of 2025. These helicopters are strategically deployed across Queensland, with operational bases at Archerfield Airport in Brisbane’s southwest, Carrara on the Gold Coast, and Townsville (added in 2024), with further expansions planned for Cairns and the Sunshine Coast/Wide Bay regions (2025).

The RPAS Unit sits under the Officer in Charge PolAir. The RPAS Chief Remote Pilot has carriage of all RPAS related matters. RPAS represents a significant enhancement to numerous police tasks as it is capable of flying into places that piloted aircraft or ground officers cannot go. The QPS RPAS Unit and its functions are operated under a Remotely Piloted Aircraft Operators Certificate (ReOC) in accordance with Commonwealth legislation, standards and conditions determined by the Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA). The QPS Chief Remote Pilot is responsible for the management of QPS CASA approved pilots.

The Aviation Capability Group, led by a Chief Superintendent, oversees both QGAir and PolAir. QGAir includes both rotary (rescue helicopters) and fixed-wing aircraft, operating under the regulatory oversight of Civil Aviation Safety Authority's (CASA) national framework. This model requires significant governance, risk management, and compliance particularly given the specialised nature of some of the platforms and technologies used.

QPS PolAir operations involve day-to-day tasking and tactical deployment, while the regulatory and administrative requirements under CASA are outsourced to a third-party operator via contract. This distinction means PolAir operates with less direct regulatory burden for QPS but is also more reliant on external providers.

A critical element of QPS capability is the ability to rapidly deploy specialist units such as the Special Emergency Response Team (SERT). Under national counter-terrorism capability requirements, SERT must maintain fast-rope deployment capabilities from rotary aircraft.

The current QGAir rescue helicopter fleet can be reconfigured to support this capability within approximately one hour, and this is funded within the existing model. Transitioning to an outsourced model, using commercial providers such as LifeFlight or Babcock Australasia, would result in significantly increased costs, estimated between \$12,000 and \$16,000 per hour, compared to QPS's current managed cost of approximately \$10,500 per hour, and the possibility of not being able to deploy in tactical high-risk operations. Of note, training for these types of operations is undertaken at no cost to the QPS. If moving to a contract model, training, demonstrations, and all taskings will come at a material cost.

However, the review recognises this places the QPS in the position of managing air services and operations for other agencies. This is particularly the case for retrieval services for Queensland Health. Although the current model provides some benefits to the organisation, it also comes with added responsibility and risk to the QPS.

Fixed wing aircraft provide essential support for a range of QPS activities, including prisoner transport, surveillance, dignitary flights, search and rescue, and disaster response across remote and regional Queensland. These aircraft are also used under a fee recovery arrangement with Queensland Corrections and Youth Justice. Importantly, QPS does not currently pay for seat-based prisoner transport, and any divestment of fixed-wing capability would require a new funding approach to maintain service continuity.

Of particular concern is the QPS surveillance platform, which carries sensitive regulated equipment. If this aircraft is removed from the QPS Air Operator's Certificate, the Service would face heightened regulatory barriers in acquiring or deploying law enforcement-specific technology, including that subject to international restrictions.

Losing either fixed-wing or rotary capability would effectively shift QPS into the role as a customer of another provider. This would reduce operational flexibility, elevate service costs, and increase response times for specialist operations. It would also erode strategic integration between air support and units such as SERT, Covert Surveillance Operations Group (CSOG), and other teams operating under Operations Support Command. Currently with air operations managed by a Chief Superintendent within QPS, tasking



priorities and government-level deconfliction can be centrally coordinated, providing a clear operational advantage during critical incidents or conflicting demands.

The existing structure of the Aviation Capability Group delivers economies of scale across rotary, fixed-wing, and remote aerial operations. CASA compliance requires a robust governance approach, staffing, and infrastructure that does not scale down easily with reductions in capability. The review recognises the complex interactions and relationships within the aviation sector, as well as the significant costs associated with owning and running this capability – not only on behalf of the QPS, but on behalf of other government agencies.

Several strategic options should be considered. Managing complex capabilities may impose costs and risks on our organisation, and divesting police aviation services to other government departments could reduce flexibility. However, due to the complexity of this capability the Review recommends further investigation is required. The strategic options are:

1. Clarify the scope of Queensland Government Air Services to advise the Commissioner on efficient service provision under sections 2.3 and 4.8 of the PSAA.
2. Review aviation functions to optimise alignment with QPS operational and strategic priorities, potentially incorporating contracts from other government departments into policing operations.

## Weapons licensing

Weapons Licensing plays a crucial role in community safety across Queensland, enabling individuals with legitimate needs to lawfully acquire, possess, use, and dispose of firearms and weapons. Its core mandate is to regulate these activities in the public interest, ensuring compliance with the *Weapons Act 1990*. However, despite more than 30 internal and external reviews of the capability since 1998, weapons licensing activities continue to impose a significant operational burden on QPS.

The review team identified Weapons Licensing Group as a critical area in need of reform due to its complex interplay with frontline policing, public safety, and enterprise risk. Consultation revealed that frontline officers are disproportionately encumbered by administrative tasks, particularly those related to firearms storage and compliance audits, diverting them from core policing duties and contributing to systemic inefficiencies.

These findings echo the Queensland Audit Office's 2020–21 report, which identified persistent weaknesses in ICT infrastructure, a lack of risk-based tools, and limited capacity to proactively detect high-risk individuals or patterns of firearm misuse. Many of these deficiencies remain unresolved.

The growing regulatory complexity has not been matched by adequate staffing. There is a clear opportunity to restructure the group by introducing upskilled civilian or special constable roles and ICT solutions to support licensing assessments and conduct inspections at dealers, ranges, and shooting galleries. This would alleviate the burden on sworn officers and enhance operational efficiency.

Currently, the Weapons Licensing Group relies on a hybrid of online and paper-based systems. Manual data entry, primarily performed by AO3 administrative staff with limited role flexibility, is extremely labour intensive.

The limitations of the Weapons Licensing Management System have led to severe backlogs, sector and stakeholder concerns, and numerous public complaints. These issues have implications for the administration and management of the Queensland Police Register, which is linked to the mandated National Firearms Database.

The current audit process, driven by QPRIME's randomiser function, lacks contextual sensitivity. This results in redundant audits of the same premises, reducing efficiency and frustrating officers. A shift to intelligence-led, risk-based compliance strategies would enhance effectiveness and reduce strain on frontline resources.

The review found there is an opportunity for the organisation to leverage of the information and expertise within the Weapons Licensing Branch to help inform operational activities in the future. These examples underscore structural and governance deficiencies that must be addressed through a whole-of-service strategy integrating compliance, intelligence, enforcement, and licensing functions.

Queensland's legislative framework under the *Weapons Act 1990* constrains reform by mandating that authorised officers, typically sworn police, make all licensing and registration decisions within a very wide decision matrix. This limits opportunities for administrative separation or outsourcing and for inconsistent outcomes. A proposed model involves dividing the *Weapons Act* to create a dedicated Firearms Act for licensing and administration, while retaining enforcement provisions in a revised Weapons Act. This would enable structural reform while preserving police oversight of enforcement and public safety.

Titles Queensland, a QIC-owned private entity, has expressed interest in administering the firearms registry, drawing on its experience with land and water registries. Whilst promising, this approach warrants further investigation due to legal and security considerations, including access to police information, national crime and intelligence data and compliance with the National Firearms Agreement.

The review also identified concerns with firearm storage at police stations, which poses safety and administrative risks. The QPS could explore options with respect to transition storage responsibilities to local dealers and investigate transitioning licensing activities with Titles Queensland. Ultimately, comprehensive legislative reform and the implementation of a modern, unified weapons strategy should be pursued to ensure Queensland's firearms regulatory framework is fit for purpose and aligned with national best practice.

To support this approach, the QPRIME random audit function should be discontinued in favour of intelligence-led strategies. An opportunity presents where a dedicated weapons intelligence officer could be established within Weapons Licensing to better enhance and enable intelligence capabilities with respect to community safety and firearms crime. Legislative amendments could be considered to enable licensing reform, including stakeholder consultation on the creation of a new Firearms Act. In summary, the review identified the following opportunities that merit further exploration:

- Cease QPRIME random audit function (non-strategic audit) and implement intelligence-based audit models.
- Establish an intelligence officer within Weapons Licensing.
- Reform governance and staffing models, including use of 'Special Constables' (State officers) as civilian assessors and auditors across the state.
- Transition firearm storage responsibilities from police stations to licensed dealers. (in areas where there is capacity).
- Undertake legislative reform by scoping pathway for a new Firearms Act, separating licensing and enforcement functions, thereby enabling outsourcing of registry activities.
- Scope outsourcing of licensing transactions to Titles Queensland.

The review recommends a full reform program be undertaken that combines administrative, technical and legislative reform. Doing so will position Queensland to lead the nation in firearm regulation, increase officer and public safety and build integrity and trust. It further presents the opportunity to reduce demand on frontline officers and data entry at Weapons Licensing.

## Crime prevention

The QPS has long played a visible and active role in crime prevention through community engagement, education, and strategic partnerships. However, considering the findings of the Queensland Audit Office Report 15 (2024), evolving crime prevention theory, and key findings from national evaluations and frameworks, there is a clear and underlying need to modernise the QPS approach to crime prevention. The review team has identified a need for reform, aligned with the principles of the 100-Day Commissioner's Review and the 'Frontline First' mindset, to ensure QPS prevention efforts are contemporary, coordinated, impactful and fiscally sound.

It is also critical to recognise that the responsibility for crime prevention extends beyond the QPS. Multiple government agencies and ministers share a collective obligation to enhance community safety. Ministerial Charter Letters reinforce this shared commitment, outlining specific priorities and a fundamental scope to restore and maintain public safety and contribute to crime prevention across Queensland.

Contemporary research consistently finds that while policing plays a critical role in addressing crime, primary and secondary prevention strategies are more effectively delivered by non-policing agencies. Crime prevention, especially at the primary and secondary levels, involves addressing root causes of criminal behaviour through social policy, education, housing, family support, and economic development. These domains lie outside the traditional expertise, and functions and responsibilities of police (Allard et al., 2012; Homel et al., 1999). Police efforts are best suited to tertiary crime prevention, targeting repeat offenders and high-risk locations through intelligence-led and problem-oriented policing (Weatherburn, 2004).

The Queensland Audit Office Report 15 (2024) highlights a lack of evidence regarding the effectiveness of police delivered crime prevention programs. It notes that current structures lack defined outcomes and performance measures. This is demonstrated in the findings of a 64% increase in the average daily number of serious repeat offenders, from 278 in 2018–19 to 457 in 2022–23. This is consistent with national and international findings that police-based prevention programs have variable impacts unless they are tightly focused, evidence-based, and integrated with broader social interventions (Homel et al., 1999; AIC, 2020).

The National Crime Prevention Framework (2012) clearly delineates the responsibilities of various sectors. It articulates that police are essential partners in prevention but should not be the primary delivery agents for early intervention or social policy responses. It also emphasises the importance of structured and strategic partnerships, coordinated through mechanisms such as case and place-based responses, rather than centralised program ownership by policing agencies. These findings support a frontline policing ethos, where sworn officers return to proactive and visible strategies that focus on harm minimisation, disruption of criminal activity, and increased public reassurance in communities experiencing elevated risk.

Similarly, Geason and Wilson (1990) argue that effective prevention must involve multi-sectoral governance, with police playing a contributory role and not a central role in coordinated strategies. This supports the view that frontline police resources should be optimised for operational delivery, rather than diverted into programs that duplicate or overlap with social services.

Noting these insights, QPS should transition from maintaining centrally coordinated crime prevention workgroups to focusing on intelligence-informed, case and place-based, and offender-focused prevention

strategies. This includes continuing to support interagency partnerships, and local problem-solving initiatives that are district based, in addition to community engagement where appropriate. It does not include leading broad based social prevention and development programs designed to inspire, and support disengaged or vulnerable youth to realise their full potential and become productive members of the community. Realigning resources toward frontline activities will allow sworn police to better address community concerns through proactive policing, high-visibility patrols, and evidence-led interventions.

A reform implementation plan is recommended. This would begin with decommissioning the current centrally coordinated crime prevention workgroups, including the Crime Prevention Programs Unit and regional equivalents. Staff from these areas should be transitioned into operationally focused roles that support problem-oriented policing, hot-spot analysis, and localised harm minimisation strategies.

A structured transition should be established, to allow the QPS to liaise with relevant government agencies with a view to transferring residual program ownership to the appropriate lead agency and ensuring that community expectations are met. Communication with local governments and community stakeholders should be prioritised to manage any concerns regarding service continuity.

Throughout the reform period, QPS should enhance its capabilities in crime prevention through targeted training, improved analytical support, and increased integration of community intelligence into operational planning. Metrics for evaluating the success of tertiary crime prevention strategies should be embedded into QPS performance frameworks, aligning with the broader public safety outcomes defined by government such as Commissioner's Performance Review and or Business Unit Reviews.

In summary, based on evidence from Queensland Audit Office (2024), national frameworks, and academic evaluations, QPS should divest centrally coordinated crime prevention functions not directly aligned with law enforcement or tertiary crime prevention. There is an opportunity to refocus efforts on frontline, proactive policing strategies that are consistent with the National Crime Prevention Framework (2012) and contemporary literature, ensuring that sworn officers are engaged in high-impact, locally relevant activities that contribute to local public safety and crime reduction priorities.

## **Examination of non-core policing activities**

Throughout the process of exploring activities perceived as outside of core policing, the review team was asked to consider the following activities in greater detail for the purpose of identifying reform opportunities. A list of police activities considered as 'non-core policing' by the frontline were collated and considered through the lens of the ANZPAA conceptual model (i.e. core role, collaborative role, expanded role).

It is noted the premise that non-core policing activities can be readily ceased and/or divested must be approached with a degree of caution. Even a seemingly straightforward activity can be quite complex in terms of stakeholder involvement and require a nuanced understanding of cost, legislation, community expectations, government expectations, and sector and industry sentiment. Any candidate activity must undergo a thorough analysis employing a thoughtful approach that encompasses extensive stakeholder engagement. Subsequently, any change to current service delivery activities should be viewed as a medium to long term process and managed appropriately via the proposed Service Delivery Office. The following non-core activities have been identified as having the greatest impact on frontline demand.

### **Third party receipting**

A QPS internal audit finalised in June 2024 (Job 2024-06) and feedback from the ELT and regional police highlight long-standing and unresolved issues associated with the QPS role in delivering third party

receipting (TPR) services on behalf of other government agencies. The most recent audit follows an earlier review commenced in 2018, which resulted in 19 recommendations aimed at mitigating risks and improving service delivery. Despite QPS acceptance of those recommendations the 2023 follow-up report found ten recommendations remained unaddressed signalling persistent gaps in governance, resource allocation, and strategic oversight.

TPR refers to the administrative services QPS provides on behalf of other agencies, most notably the Department of Transport and Main Roads (DTMR). These tasks include vehicle registration, driver licensing, document verification, and other transactional support for agencies such as the Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages, the Department of Families, Seniors, Disability Services and Child Safety, and the Department of Justice. While the underlying intent of TPR may be community support, the absence of formalised agreements and strategic coordination results in operational inefficiencies and risk exposure across the QPS.

Despite the expiration of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with DTMR in 2013, QPS continues to perform TPR functions without a valid agreement or clarity around scope, responsibilities, or resourcing. The audit report detailed engagement with over 100 rural and remote stations listed as providing TPR services under the expired MoU but noted that QPS has no comprehensive or current record of all stations involved in such service delivery. With over 330 police stations in Queensland, it is likely that many more are informally delivering these services without adequate oversight.

Responsibility for managing TPR within QPS remains undefined. Service delivery is inconsistent across the state and often driven by local discretion. Some officers, particularly in single-officer stations, are dedicating significant portions of their time, up to 40% in some cases, to administrative functions that fall outside the scope of core policing duties. This results in direct impacts to community safety operations, as well as staff fatigue, diminished morale, and safety risks. The internal audit report estimated the annual cost to QPS of TPR activities as \$3.2 million, excluding indirect costs such as overtime, infrastructure requirements, and administrative support.

Aurukun Police Station provides a stark example of this operational burden. Covering an area of over 7,500 square kilometres, the station operates on a 24/7 roster, responds to incidents across the region, supports local courts and other government activities, and manages Queensland Government Agent Program (QGAP) functions. According to the QGAP website the station offers services three days per week, while the QPS online crime map (see below) shows 1,540 reported offences between 30 May 2024 and 30 May 2025 (excluding community policing demands).

This dual role as both law enforcement hub and community service centre stretches the station's capacity to unsustainable levels, as evidenced by CAD data indicating 32% non-attendance at jobs.

The audit further observed service duplication in communities where QGAP offices are already operational. QGAP centres offer a broad array of government services, including those from DTMR, the Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages, and the Office of Fair Trading. In such locations, QPS continuation of TPR activities results in inefficient use of government resources. Conversely, in communities lacking QGAP access, QPS remains the de facto provider despite the absence of infrastructure or mandate to do so.

In addition, DTMR operates mobile customer service centres, and an Indigenous Driver Licensing Unit based in Cairns, offering a scalable model for regional outreach. It is suggested that DTMR could potentially expand these mobile services across regional Queensland, to alleviate the service burden on police, mitigate conflict of interest and better meet community needs.

These findings underscore the urgent need for a strategic realignment of the QPS role in delivering community-based law enforcement activities and third-party services. Survey feedback from frontline officers consistently reveals frustration at the growing range of non-policing tasks they are expected to perform. Officers report experiencing role conflict and burnout, with administrative expectations clashing with their core responsibilities in crime prevention, community engagement, and public safety.

This situation is not unique to Queensland. The Australian Institute of Criminology's Community 'Policing in Australia' (Research and Public Policy Series No. 111) and other publications as referenced below, highlight a national trend of police absorbing responsibilities traditionally handled by social services, health agencies, and local governments. This scope creep, particularly pronounced in rural and remote jurisdictions, undermines the effectiveness of community policing and contributes to fragmented service delivery and accountability. Community policing is most effective when properly resourced and supported through inter-agency collaboration, not when it substitutes for under-resourced service delivery by other agencies.

To support a modern, integrated approach to service delivery the QPS should pursue a phased divestment of third-party services as these are non-core functions. This will require coordinated engagement with DTMR, the Department of Justice, Department of Families, Seniors, Disability Services and Child Safety, and other relevant agencies. A strategic framework must be developed to determine which services QPS should continue delivering, and under what circumstances. Formalised service-level agreements, updated MOUs, financial controls, training protocols, and public communications will be essential to ensure an orderly and transparent transition.

## Domestic and family violence

DFV calls for service represents the greatest single demand activity for the QPS. For the 2024 calendar year 959,353 computer aided dispatch (CAD) hours were attributed to DFV calls for service representing 34% of all CAD hours (n=2,842,532) and equating to 600 FTE. The average time spent per job was 6.5 hours. In high volume police districts such as Logan approximately 70% of all CFS are DFV related.

When applying the ANZPAA model, DFV is clearly a 'collaborative role' and represents a prime example where a 'collaborative role' has morphed into an 'expanded role'. When considered in the context of the previous assertion that the public are supportive of police refocusing on 'core policing' activities but maintaining a commitment to respond in the first instance regarding public safety and transferring support functions to expert agencies regarding social behaviours, there is an opportunity for QPS to transition some DFV responsibilities back to the Department of Families, Seniors, Disability Services and Child Safety (and appropriately funded NGO).

There has been an exponential increase in DFV demand over the past 10 years as demonstrated in the chart below, from a low of 5,807 CFS in April 2015 to a high of 18,010 in December 2024. Predictive analysis indicates this trend is likely to continue.

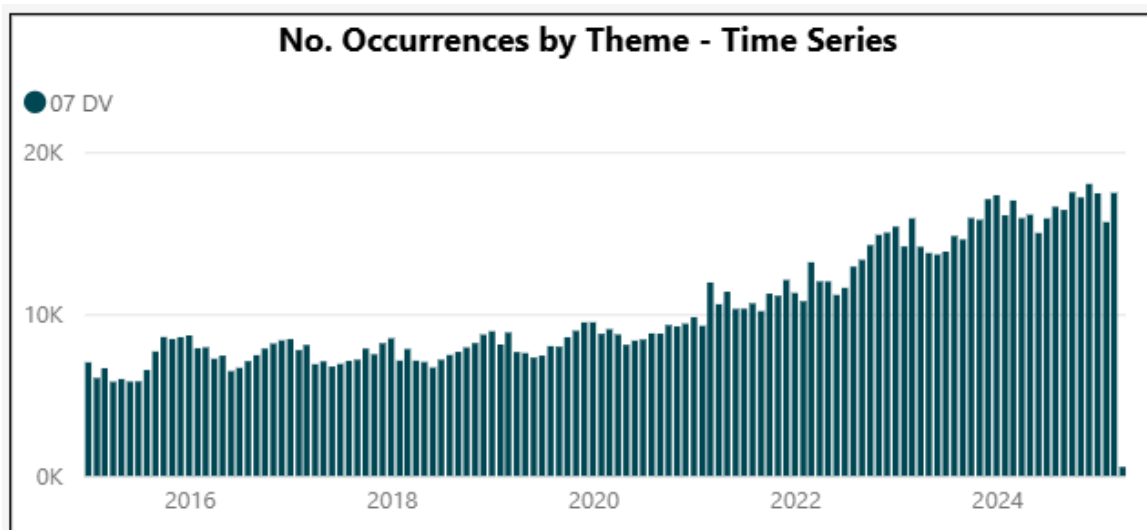


Figure 5: Graph of number of occurrences by theme over time

Consequently, there is a direct correlation between the annual increases in DFV demand and a reduced capacity to provide other policing services, as evidenced by the following data analytics comparison. For 2019-20 calls for service represented 40%, other investigations 17%, and enforcement 12%. For 2023-24 Calls for Service represented 64%, other investigations 6%, and enforcement 5%.

When mapped against the DFV annual increase for the same period, DFV demand increased from 8,415 occurrences as of 1 July 2020 to 15,882 occurrences as of 1 July 2024.

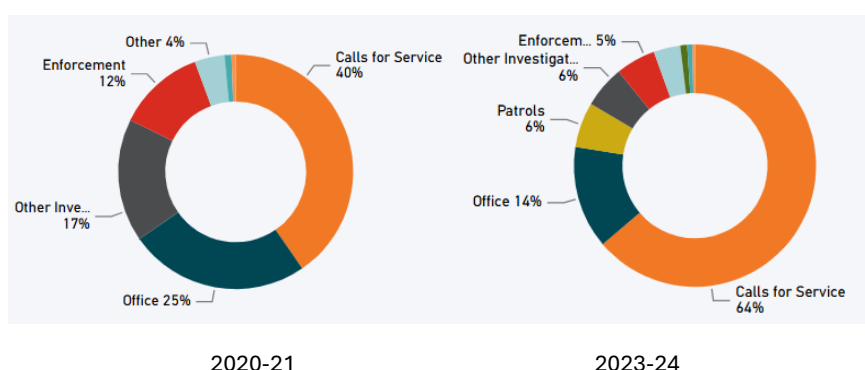


Figure 6: Use of police time on 1 July 2020 and 1 July 2024

## Policy and police process considerations

It is acknowledged that the QPS, in concert with the Minister for Police and Emergency Services, has engaged in significant work to address DFV demand on the frontline. This includes amendments to the DFV legislation which is well progressed.

This review acknowledges the work being undertaken by the Assistant Commissioner, Domestic and Family Violence and Vulnerable Persons Command regarding the initial coding of domestic violence tasks (312), Policelink and Police Communications processes, and the associated policies that are adding to frontline pressure.

Again, the progress of that work will not be referenced in this report however the review supports any efforts to create efficiencies and better support the frontline, whilst preserving community safety.

When examining Operational Procedures Manual (OPMs) Chapter 9 in conjunction with the DFV legislation it is apparent the QPS has accepted a high degree of responsibility for the management of DFV and victim outcomes. This has facilitated the expansion of a 'collaborative role' to a now 'expanded role', whereby QPS are held accountable and perceived as the lead agency. Historically, the QPS responded in the first instance based on a public safety risk assessment and took appropriate action when a police power was required, whilst case management and other support interventions were provided by other agencies and NGO. The perceived primacy of the QPS in dealing with the socially complex issue of DFV has compounded internal demand through more specialised training, administrative burden, compliance mechanisms and specialist functions. All the while, the treatment of underlying causes – something definitively out of the control of the QPS – remains a vexing issue for government and other agencies.

Epstein and Bornstein (2013) emphasise the limitations of a justice system-centric approach to addressing DFV, advocating for more holistic and socially informed strategies that address the underlying causes and varied experiences of victims. The reality being that innate traits, cognition and reasoning, and social conditioning do not change simply because the police or courts have intervened. Eckhardt et al. (2013) examined the efficacy of intervention programs targeting domestic violence perpetrators. The authors highlight that programs of this nature often yield limited success in altering entrenched behavioural patterns, particularly when underlying cognitive and emotional factors are not adequately addressed. They argue that without comprehensive strategies that go beyond legal mandates, the likelihood of meaningful change remains low.

The Vera Institute of Justice Report (2020) supports the notion that redirecting certain social service responsibilities from police to specialised agencies can lead to improved accountability and more effective service provision. It emphasises a reengineering of emergency response systems, so police are not the first responders to complex social issues. Social workers and other associated professionals who are adequately trained in issues such as substance abuse, domestic violence, and mental health should respond to these incidents, not police.

Additional noteworthy reform opportunities that were identified during the review include:

- DFV document service – this has been raised by the frontline as a significant burden, and a role that is considered non-core policing. However, DFV document service by the QPS is legislated in the *Domestic and Family Violence Protection Act 2012* under s.34 (Service of application (Protection orders)), s.88 (Service of application (Variations)), s.184 (Service of order on respondent), s.184A (Substituted service), and s.185 (Court to give domestic violence order to other person). Aside from the fact the QPS is being leveraged to perform ancillary functions for other agencies, the requirement of 'personal service' is very challenging for officers as respondents are typically transient, with considerable time and effort consumed in attempts to locate them. The review proposes a legislation amendment that (a) allows 'service by another means', thereby removing the burden of 'personal service', and (b) allows service by a contracted service provider to remove the burden from QPS altogether.
- Perpetrator Visibility Program (PVP) – this involves the sharing of aggrieved and respondent information across partner agencies. This provides QPS officers greater visibility of DFV history, while facilitating a more holistic investigation and better outcomes.
- Internal demand – Chapter 9 of the OPM, 'Domestic Violence' provides significant instruction to frontline police regarding the investigation of domestic and family violence but also imposes significant obligations. For example, a district led review of the recently adopted Person Centred Review (PCR) questioned the efficacy of this activity given existing review mechanisms. The workload impact is considered significant, and in districts with high DFV demand, concerns were



raised about whether resources are best allocated to PCRs or frontline policing, including whether frontline leadership time could be reprioritised to better support, guide, and supervise staff.

- Rapid Video Response model – A Rapid Video Response (such as that undertaken in the UK) enables officers to engage with domestic and family violence victims virtually in critical moments, providing a fast response and immediate support to victims of crime with wraparound support services. It is noted the QPS previously considered a 6-month trial of the RVR model, however, the trial did not progress due to other priorities. With family, domestic, and sexual violence representing major health and welfare issues in Australia (where 1 in 6 women experience physical or sexual violence), it would seem prudent for the QPS to reconsider a trial in collaboration with the Department of Families, Seniors, Disability Services and Child Safety as the lead agency.

Further reform in the DFV space should continue to be victim-centric and evidence based with emphasise a multidisciplinary approach, ensuring that while the police address the legal and safety aspects, social services provide the necessary support and rehabilitation, reflecting a balanced strategy in combating domestic violence.

## Custody management and prisoner escorts

QPS is the only Australian jurisdiction that still conducts all prisoner transports of Corrective Services prisoners. This review recommends that Queensland Corrective Services (QCS) and Department of Youth Justice and Victim Support (DYJVS) (Youth Justice escorts) and prisoner management is fully divested.

QPS watchhouses are increasingly functioning as proxy correctional and youth detention facilities due to systemic legislative ambiguity, mission creep, infrastructure limitations across QCS and Youth Justice and the convenience of operating as a 24/7 response agency. This has created an unacceptable and growing demand upon QPS resources, diverting police from frontline responsibilities and exposing detainees, particularly children and vulnerable adults, to prolonged periods of custody in environments that are not appropriately designed for long term custodial management.

Numerous reviews have occurred over the past three decades, with all advocating for the transfer of responsibility for the transportation of prisoners. A lack of funding has proven to be the obstacle in realising the transfer of capability ownership. In the past Queensland Treasury suggested that any transfer of responsibility should be accompanied by an appropriate amount of the QPS recurrent budget. However, the QPS is not funded for the activity. As of 31 December 2024, the only funding QPS receives is a recurrent payment of \$600,000 from QCS for the provision of meals. No provisions were made for the funding to be indexed or for other costs such as medications, medical treatment and laundry services.

In August 2024, the QPS Commissioner announced a QPS Watchhouse Review which was subsequently undertaken in early 2025. The review team consulted with the QPS Watchhouse Review team and discussed numerous intersecting issues. It is acknowledged the Watchhouse Review team is reporting to the Commissioner directly on the outcomes of that review, and recommendations arising from that review will not be reiterated in this paper.

The QPS Watchhouse Review detailed the impact of QCS and Youth Justice custody activities on frontline police. The Watchhouse Review team in collaboration with the Digital Strategy Division (DSD) developed the Watchhouse Management System (WMS) application to address the lack of accurate data sources for custody management and watchhouse activities. The application enables districts and the State Custody Unit to input data directly from QLITE devices, capturing detailed information such as the officers involved in prisoner transport or hospital duty, the type of prisoner (e.g. QPS or QCS/Youth Justice remanded or sentenced), the reason for the movement, and the start and finish times and locations. Additional data includes the number and rank of staff, distance travelled, and the vehicle used. The granularity of this data

enables greater accuracy in determining the nature and extent of QPS involvement in prisoner transport, including for other criminal justice agencies. Other data points of interest, that pertain to an impost upon QPS include prisoner meals and health expenses. In May 2025, the WMS app was rolled out across 16 watchhouse locations statewide (Beenleigh, Brisbane City, Bundaberg, Cairns, Caloundra, Dalby, Ipswich, Mackay, Maroochydore, Mount Isa, Pine Rivers, Rockhampton, Roma, Southport, Toowoomba, and Townsville).

Table 2 highlights the significant resource demands and associated costs borne by the QPS in performing custody-related functions during May 2025 for the 16 watchhouses included. These demands span a range of activities including processing QCS prisoner's admission, court orderly responsibilities, Electronic Monitoring Device (EMD), mental health and hospital guard tasks, medical assessments, and prisoner transport, by prisoner type.

Prisoner Type	Watch-house Duties	Court Orderly		EMD	MH & Hospital Guards		Watch-house Medical Assessments		Transport		Total Hrs (May 25)	Shifts (May 25)	Percentage
	Rostered Hrs	Rostered Hrs	OT Hrs	Rostered Hrs	Rostered Hrs	OT Hrs	Rostered Hrs	OT Hrs	Rostered Hrs	OT Hrs			
QCS	2852	2754	190	25	357	594	473	35	1348	918	9545	1193	71.5%
QPS	786	1710	136	14	168	279	73	5	93	63	3327	416	24.9%
YJ	52	147	9	8	11	18	7	1	131	89	472	59	3.6%
Total	3689	4611	335	47	536	891	553	41	1572	1071	13344	1668	

*\*Demand presented is not exhaustive and is based on data recorded in the watchhouse Management System (WMS) for the 16 watchhouses. Additional demand such as those related to core watchhouse functions prisoner searches, service of meals, and CCTV monitoring is not included, as these tasks occur daily and are not captured. Please refer to Appendix G for further details.*

*Table 2: Resource demand 16 watchhouses May 2025\*, by prisoner type and selected function*

QCS prisoners account for the largest share of resource use, representing 71.5% of total hours and shifts captured by the WMS app. The data demonstrates this group requires the most intensive support, particularly in processing admissions, transport, and medical-related duties, many of which involved overtime. QPS prisoners made up 24.9% of the total resource allocation, with most time spent on court orderly and specified watchhouse duties. Although less demanding than QCS prisoners, this group still required a substantial commitment of frontline resources. DYJVS prisoners, while comprising only 3.6% of the total hours captured by the WMS app, still necessitated dedicated support across all categories, especially in transport and medical assessments.

Table 3 provides a 12-month forecast (estimate) of the expected resource burden, extrapolated from actual figures recorded in the WMS for May 2025 for 16 watchhouses. The projection estimates a total of 157,116 hours and 19,640 shifts will be used in 12 months to support custody-related activities across the 16 watchhouse locations for all prisoner types. This equates to approximately 102 full-time equivalent (FTE) officers. QCS prisoners are forecast to consume over 112,000 hours of QPS time over 12 months, which represents nearly 72% of the workload across these activities, highlighting the sustained operational impact on QPS. QPS prisoners (pre-court) are forecast to account for around 40,000 hours over 12 months (24.9%), while DYJVS prisoners, though fewer in number, are forecast to represent over 5,500 hours (3.6%) of required QPS effort. Note the lower-than-expected numbers of youth in watchhouses during May 2025, is likely due to the operationalisation of the Wacol Youth Remand Centre. These overall figures, however, underscore the cumulative strain that custody management duties being performed for other criminal justice agencies places on QPS workforce, QPS facilities, and broader policing capacity—due to diverting resources from frontline duties including responding to calls for service and reducing victims of crime.

Prisoner Type	Watch-house Duties	Court Orderly		EMD	MH & Hospital Guards		Watch-house Medical Assessments		Transport		Total Hrs (12 Months)	Total Shifts (12 Months)	Estimated FTE	Percentage
	Rostered Hrs	Rostered Hrs	OT Hrs	Rostered Hrs	Rostered Hrs	OT Hrs	Rostered Hrs	OT Hrs	Rostered Hrs	OT Hrs				
QCS	33575	32425	2233	298	4203	6990	5570	413	15869	10809	112385	14048	73	71.5%
QPS	9252	20140	1603	168	1974	3283	854	63	1093	744	39174	4897	25	24.9%
YJ	608	1726	103	91	127	212	84	6	1547	1054	5558	695	4	3.6%
Total	43435	54291	3938	557	6305	10485	6508	483	18508	12607	157116	19640	102	

*\*Demand presented is not exhaustive and is based on data recorded in the watchhouse Management System (WMS) for the 16 watchhouses. Additional demand such as those related to core watchhouse functions prisoner searches, service of meals, and CCTV monitoring is not included, as these tasks occur daily and are not captured. Please refer to Appendix G for further details.*

**Table 3: Forecast resource demand across 16 watchhouses for 12-month period\*, by prisoner type and selected function**

Drawing upon table 4 and 5 data, costs for May 2025 are calculated and presented in table 4. Officer cost is calculated using the respective pay point. Table 3 confirms QCS prisoners accounted for most of the time logged in the app. (approximately 75.3% of the total) and therefore most of the cost. With the most significant time linked to transport, meals, processing QCS prisoner's admission and facilitating official visitors in the watchhouse. In contrast, QPS and DYJVS prisoners represented 20.1% and 4.6% of time captured, with transport and court orderly duties emerging as the primary cost drivers for these groups. The definitions of activities captured in each of these categories is included in the notes section.

Prisoner Type	Meals	Watch-house Duties	Court Orderly	EMD	MH & Hospital Guards	Watch-house Medical Assessments	Transport	Facilities & Admin Costs	Total	Percentage
QCS	\$462,168	\$331,108	\$268,623	\$2,440	\$160,574	\$157,979	\$568,824	\$17,880	\$1,969,596	75.3%
QPS	\$100,178	\$91,237	\$165,229	\$1,379	\$75,421	\$24,219	\$67,133	\$3,160	\$527,956	20.1%
YJ	\$17,556	\$5,997	\$14,327	\$742	\$4,866	\$2,370	\$75,362	\$60	\$121,280	4.6%
Total	\$579,902	\$428,342	\$448,179	\$4,561	\$240,861	\$184,568	\$711,319	\$21,100	\$2,618,832	

*\*The costs presented are not exhaustive and are based on data recorded in the watchhouse Management System (WMS) for the 16 watchhouses. Additional expenses such as those related to watchhouse nursing and medication have been included in this table. Please refer to Appendix G for further details.*

**Table 4: Costs incurred across 16 watchhouses, May 2025\*, by prisoner type and selected function**

Table 5 provides a 12-month forecast (estimate) based on the actual figures from May across 16 watchhouse locations, as detailed in Table 4. This estimate does not factor in seasonal variations or increased demand during holiday periods. For a more accurate state-wide forecast on cost, additional data from the remaining watchhouse facilities would need to be captured, and for a greater duration (minimum six months).

Prisoner Type	Meals	Watch-house Duties	Court Orderly	EMD	MH & Hospital Guards	Watch-house Medical Assessments	Transport	Facilities & Admin Costs	Estimated Total	Percentage
QCS	\$5,441,655	\$3,898,531	\$3,162,820	\$28,724	\$1,890,630	\$1,860,080	\$6,697,440	\$210,523	\$23,190,402	75%
QPS	\$1,179,520	\$1,074,239	\$1,945,433	\$16,235	\$888,023	\$285,160	\$790,434	\$37,206	\$6,216,251	20%
YJ	\$206,708	\$70,607	\$168,688	\$8,742	\$57,292	\$27,906	\$887,328	\$706	\$1,427,978	5%
Total	\$6,827,883	\$5,043,377	\$5,276,941	\$53,702	\$2,835,945	\$2,173,145	\$8,375,202	\$248,435	\$30,834,631	

*\*The costs presented represent a conservative 12-month forecast and are not exhaustive. They are based on data recorded in the watchhouse Management System (WMS) for 16 watchhouse locations. Additional expenses such as those related to watchhouse nursing and medication have been included in this table. Please refer to Appendix G for further details.*

**Table 5: Forecast costs 16 watchhouses, 12 months\*, by prisoner type, and selected function**

The data for the month of May 2025 highlights the custodial demands placed on the QPS are complex, involving both significant time impost and financial implications. While care and custody for QCS and DYJVS prisoners is occurring, material resources are being diverted from the frontline, and this places additional strain on other policing responses and our facilities. These data sets underline the importance of the QPS returning to the delivery of its core functions and returning resources to frontline policing, noting prisoners are better served being held in fit for purpose, longer term facilities.

### Legislation

There is no legislative obligation for QPS to transport or manage QCS or Youth Justice prisoners. Conversely, the *Corrective Services Act* (s.272 Engaging Service provider) provides that the Chief Executive can authorise an entity (an engaged service provider) to perform an authorised function.

There is, however, an obligation for the Commissioner of Police to provide police officers to assist with court security. The *Corrective Services Act* (s.308 Powers of proper officer of a court) provides the proper officer of the court may ask the Chief Executive to provide corrective services officers and the Commissioner to provide police officers. The Chief Executive and the Commissioner must comply with the request. Typically, the courts request the services of a police officer as evidenced by the case study below, often when it is not necessary or when Corrective Services officers are better positioned to perform the function i.e. managing a Corrective Services prisoner, fresh sentence etc. It is suggested the impost of this on frontline police can be overcome by expanding the role and function of PSG, and/or a legislative amendment to remove the 'must' obligation.

Additionally, there is an opportunity for the Service to address this issue via direct engagement Department of Justice, or via an active forum such as the Specialist Courts and Programs Steering Committee.

#### Case Study – Cairns Watchhouse

The Cairns Watchhouse provides police and auxiliary watchhouse officers (AWOs) to perform court orderly duties in the Magistrates, District and Supreme courts. There are eight Magistrates Courts (including one Childrens Court), one Supreme Court justice, three District Court judges and a visiting judge at times throughout the year.

At times, police are requested by the court in the four higher courts (QCS prisoners on remand) in addition to Magistrates courts for in-custody hearings. A further challenge is created by visiting judges who often require a police officer in their court all day (not just for sentencing) as they are provided with officers in their courts when sitting in Brisbane.

Calculating the number of QCS prisoners that police are guarding is difficult. It is not just remand prisoners but also persons who have appeared then been given a short remand by the magistrate. Due to being on court ordered remand they are QCS prisoners but typically are not accepted by QCS. Subsequently the watchhouse provides the accommodation and court management services.

During the period March to May 2025, 65 QCS prisoners were transferred to the watchhouse for in custody court appearances. In 2023, a total of 197 QCS prisoners were transferred to the Cairns Watchhouse and guarded by police/AWOs in court, with most appearing over multiple days in the higher courts. For example, a recent murder trial ran for five weeks, with QPS providing multiple court orderlies in both the court room and gallery due to the Judge's concerns there may be public unrest.

Section 269 of the *Corrective Services Act* provides that the Chief Executive may ask the Commissioner to provide police officers to help in the performance of the chief executive's functions, and the Commissioner must comply. There is some suggestion this section is being used to utilise the QPS workforce. However,

the previous section 268 (now repealed) dealt with the declaration of emergencies in prisons and legislative history indicates the original intent of s.269 was aligned with s.268.

The routine invocation of s.269 effectively shifts long term custodial duties to QPS, exacerbating police demand and distorting the custodial responsibilities of QCS.

A recurring theme regarding the management of QCS prisoners is the delay in QCS accepting fresh sentences. The current legislative framework particularly the *Corrective Services Act*, the *Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000*, and the *Youth Justice Act 1992*, permits the retention of sentenced prisoners and children in police custody under broad or vague provisions. These laws have evolved in practice to support a system that disproportionately relies on police infrastructure to manage initial custodial services, plus overflow from correctional and youth detention systems.

For example, section 6(2)(b) of the *Corrective Services Act* provides that if a period of detention is more than 21 days, the person may be detained in a watchhouse until the person can be conveniently taken to a Corrective Services facility. A situation has now evolved where Corrective Services will delay the acceptance of sentenced prisoners particularly outside business hours, on weekends, or during public holidays placing an undue impost upon the QPS, undermining operational efficiency and eroding the legislative intent of time-limited police custody (Queensland Human Rights Commission [QHRC], 2024).

Of note the construction of that section was also mirrored in the now repealed *Corrective Services Act 2000* (repealed). The explanatory notes that accompanied the Corrective Services Bill 2000 stipulated that the convenience resides with the officer in charge of the watchhouse.

The overall intent of this section was to allow a prisoner to be held in a watchhouse for up to 21 days to limit unnecessary movement of prisoners, reduce cost and resource implications on the QPS, and enable prisoners to remain in their communities.

The delay in transfers creates major operational challenges for the QPS, requiring officers, especially in regional and remote areas, to supervise detainees overnight sometimes at health facilities, and during peak court periods, often without adequate custodial infrastructure. The costs are significant to the QPS, with fewer officers available for general duties, community engagement, and crime prevention. Recurrent and systemic use of police facilities to house non-police prisoners is also increasing legal and reputational risks, particularly where detention conditions breach the *Human Rights Act 2019* and international definitions of solitary confinement (Australian Human Rights Commission [AHRC], 2021).

Youth custody issues compound these pressures. Section 56 of the *Youth Justice Act* allows temporary placement of children in police watchhouses. In practice, systemic capacity constraints across Youth Justice result in children being detained for extended periods, often in solitary-like conditions, without educational, psychological or legal support. Section 56A requires Youth Justice to notify QPS when a child can be received, but no mechanism exists for real-time updates or oversight.

Reform must begin with legislative realignment. The *Corrective Services Act* should be amended to mandate that all sentenced prisoners, regardless of sentence length, be accepted by QCS at the earliest practicable time including on weekends and public holidays. Similarly, the *Police Powers and Responsibilities Act* should explicitly define watchhouses as short-term holding facilities, with a maximum adult detention limit of 72 hours and attempt to define maximum hours for youth detention in line with recent recommendations such as daylight-only detainment for youth. Exceptions should be tightly regulated, with mandatory reporting of any extended detentions to a State Custody Unit, which has oversight and is reportable to the Commissioner of Police or delegate.

The operational scope of QPS custody responsibilities should be redefined through updates to the Service Manual Definitions and relevant policy instruments. This must include clear delineation between QPS prisoners e.g. those on fresh arrest or for court production, and detainees who are the responsibility of other agencies, including QCS, Youth Justice, Immigration and federal law enforcement. The Commissioner of Police could be empowered to appoint Protective Services and auxiliary personnel as special constables to perform non-core custodial functions, returning sworn officers to frontline policing. This would include transportations and custodial services in courts, including court officers. The definition of special constable (state) meets this requirement under the *Corrective Services Act*.

To reduce ambiguity and improve accountability, a real-time custody management platform should be established across QPS, QCS and Youth Justice. This platform should track detainee status, time thresholds, risk assessment, property holdings and interagency transfer readiness. Statutory obligations should require QCS and Youth Justice to monitor, report, and act on custody timeframes.

Limited court availability over weekends and holidays exacerbates custodial bottlenecks. A seven-day bail hearing model would enable timely case processing and reduce the duration of police-held custody, especially for vulnerable populations and those eligible for conditional release. This could be achieved with the use of technology installed in watchhouses across Queensland.

Human rights compliance must be strengthened. Any instance of solitary-like detention, defined as 22 or more hours without meaningful interaction/exercise (AHRC, 2021), must trigger automatic reporting to the State Custody Unit. Risk assessments should be embedded in all segregation and placement decisions, and be subject to documented justification, review and escalation protocols.

Finally, workforce reform is essential. QPS should progressively transition to a hybrid custodial model involving watchhouse officers, Protective Services Group personnel and client service staff in defined auxiliary roles. These roles should be supported by targeted training, instruments of delegations for functions and powers within certain defined work areas, and operational policy, to ensure continuity of custodial operations without compromising frontline police capacity.

## Mental health

During the 2024 financial year the QPS responded to an estimated 51,000 mental health calls for service. The average time spent on a mental health call was 4.6 officer hours, equating to an investment of 146 FTE.

Oversight of the QPS response to mental health is managed by the QPS State Mental Health Team (SMHT) within the Domestic, Family Violence and Vulnerable Persons Command. It is staffed by an inspector, a senior sergeant program coordinator and five unsworn policy and project officers.

The QPS SMHT considers the Service to be well placed to respond, in a collaborative capacity, to mental distress and crisis in the community. The response model is supported with clear policies and legislation that include a requirement to involve police only when serious risks to safety can be demonstrated, and all mental health service attempts to resolve issues and concerns have been exhausted and documented.

Mental Health Liaison Service (MHLS) clinicians embedded within the Brisbane Police Communication Centre (BPCC) provide a clinical lens for ongoing and current mental health incidents to frontline officers, and MOU underpin information sharing and collaboration between the QPS and Queensland Health.

When these systems and programs are supported and resourced the agencies involved can provide appropriate and timely resolution to mental health crisis occurrences. That said, there is opportunity for the QPS to strengthen both its approach to mental health incidents, and its relationships with external



partners such as Queensland Health Mental Health Service and Queensland Ambulance Service. Such an adjustment may immediately ease frontline demand. Opportunities that warrant further consideration include:

- QPS should, for the most part (while always being prepared to assist), only attend/respond to a mental health incident where a person with a high acuity illness is in crisis or a person's behaviour presents an elevated risk of serious harm to themselves and/or others. All other mental health type CFS should be treated as a health response in the first instance; and
- Inappropriate and/or overuse of the police service as a security response for the Queensland Ambulance Service (QAS) or health service staff on the suspicion of risk to their safety, or as a precaution, should be for the most part avoided by QPS. Such requests should be vigorously reviewed when received.

In modernising the response to mental health calls, resourcing of Vulnerable Persons Units should be assessed to ensure they are appropriate. Regardless of the outcome of such an assessment, each district should be supported by the allocation of a permanent Mental Health Intervention Coordinator position, at the rank of sergeant. Consideration also needs to be given to the merits of a co-responder model, working with partner agencies to ensure shared understanding of the terminology and definitions (including serious harm, immediate/imminent, mental health crisis and mental health trauma). Additionally, utilising the Tri-Agency Steering Committee to review existing agreements and arrangements, review the Police Communications Centre SOLVE triage model and its application to mental health calls, and develop specific, tailored, agreed methods of communication with mental health clinical assistance.

#### *Right Care Right Person (RCRP) model*

For the 2024 calendar year there were 38,753 'QAS assist' jobs recorded on CAD (197,640 hours) equating to 123 FTE, representing a significant investment in support to QAS. This review acknowledges the professional and mutually beneficial nature of the relationship with QAS, however, there are opportunities to reduce QAS demand upon the QPS. Frontline feedback indicates ambulance officers conduct risk assessments based solely on outdated QAS intelligence holdings, resulting in them staging and waiting for QPS arrival prior to moving forward and conducting a real time on ground assessment. This is understandable considering the role of an ambulance officer and the limited capability to manage violent situations.

Information received via ANZPAA indicates Western Australia Police recently identified a similar issue and an immediate 40% reduction in calls for service was realised by assisting the Ambulance Service in cleansing their outdated intelligence data. It is recommended the QPS adopt a similar cost-effective strategy.

The United Kingdom has experienced significant increases in mental health CFS resulting in the implementation of the Right Care Right Person (RCRP) model. The ANZPAA Emerging Issues Brief (20 June 2023 edition) cite officers in the London Metropolitan Police (Met) spend almost 1 million hours a year waiting in hospitals for mental health patients to be assessed. In response, the Met adopted the RCRP model which was developed and implemented by the Humberside Police. The Humberside Police were concerned about the high volume of CFS, not providing the most appropriate support, and placing the public and their officers at risk. Subsequently a framework addressing governance, systems, relationships, culture, and evaluation was developed as an enabler of the model. Humberside Police reported positive outcomes with a significant reduction in CFS and officer hours. However, several challenges were also identified including criticism from mental health groups.

Whilst the ANZPAA Emerging Issues brief highlights the promising nature of the RCRP model it noted some of the shortcomings, and particularly the reliance on the capacity of another agency for the success of the program. The ANZPAA report provides the following additional considerations:

- Multi-disciplinary teams appear to be the most effective response to date.
- While police are highly trained and skilled across a range of areas, they are not trained mental health practitioners able to deliver the level of care required to someone suffering an acute mental health crisis.
- Adopting alternative models of practice can not only help to optimise care for people in crisis but also drive down demand for police responses and allow redeployment to other areas of concern.
- As role creep is driven by a range of social factors including the resourcing of health and social services, any changes to supporting people in a mental health crisis need to be thought through carefully and collectively.
- ANZPAA's Police Service Delivery Report 1 identified that most long-term interventions require strong commitments to partnerships from police, government, health and social services in order to be successful.

In 2023, the New Zealand Police commenced a pilot of the RCRP. The intent of this approach was to ensure people who need assistance, receive the care they deserve from the right professionals when they need it via a health-led response, enabling police more time to deploy to the work the only police can do, and the community expects them to do. It is expected that police will continue to respond to health sector requests for assistance involving an immediate risk to life and safety.

Whilst initial engagement and results were promising, phase 2 of the pilot was delayed for the second time in April 2025, in consultation with unions and health workers, due to confusion about inconsistencies of the rollout across different health districts (RNZ, 2025).

The comparative analysis conducted by the SMHT, the overview provided by ANZPAA, and the challenges faced by New Zealand Police all support an uplift to the current QPS mental health arrangements rather than the implementation of a model such as the RCRP.

## Special services

QPS officers currently perform various 'special services' whilst on overtime, including wide load escorts, road works, major events, and speed camera. In the context of this review special services are considered an 'expanded role' that can be performed by another agency and/or entity, and in most cases (if not all) via a contracted service provider. Whilst it is appreciated these duties are performed on overtime and therefore do not directly impact frontline demand and resourcing, the reality is that they have a significant indirect impact. Various roster projects have identified that officers performing special services sometimes display patterns of sick leave immediately following special duties. This is a concern from a fatigue management perspective and gives rise to queries around the efficacy of the Fatigue Management Policy. There are also implications in terms of operational capacity and the associated impact on fellow officers.

The following section explores 'wide load escorts' in greater detail to emphasise, by way of a case study, the 'non-core' nature of special services. The overall intent of this example is to showcase the unsustainability of the current approach to the management of special services.



### Wide load escorts

Categorised as an 'expanded role' with the lead agency identified as the Department of Transport and Main Roads (DTMR).

Limitations: There is no legislated obligation on QPS to perform this function. The Chief Executive (DTMR) has the option to appoint numerous other entities as authorised officers or accredited persons under section 20 (Appointment of authorised officers) and section 21 (Appointment of accredited persons) of the *Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Act 1995*.

In the 2022/23 financial year, wide load escort vehicles travelled 4.45M kilometres (km). 2.8M km were travelled by the 61 wide load escort vehicles and 1.6M km by 617 district vehicles with \$16.53M invoiced in special services. For the 2023/24 financial year, wide load escort vehicles travelled 4.859M kilometres - 3.316M km by the 61 wide load escort vehicles and 1.544M km by 682 district vehicles with \$19.1M invoiced in special services. This indicates an incremental increase in demand and resource/cost imposition to the QPS.

QPS escort demand is predicted to increase over the next five years due to growth in renewable energy, state road infrastructure, and mining and resources projects. This is further evidenced by the annual increase in QPS escort caseload approvals from 3,125 in 2021/22 to 4,536 cases in 2023/24. Similarly, there has been a commensurate increase in the number of deployed officers from 6,921 officers in 2021/22 to 8,613 officers in 2023/24. Projections of industry led projects (out to 2030) suggests an exponential increase in QPS demand.

The ability to meet future demand within existing arrangements is not possible. This has seen industry make numerous ministerial complaints which relate to difficulties in having over size over mass (OSOM) loads moved in a timely manner, with industry seeking to remove QPS from all functions relating to OSOM movements.

QPS has approximately 2,000 officers trained in the management of wide loads, with recurrent upskill training requirements also an obligation.

The QPS has been working with DTMR for several years to rationalise the requirement for police to escort OSOM wide loads where safe to do so. The movement of all excess dimension loads on the Queensland Road Network is governed by DTMR via the '*Department of Transport and Main Roads (TMR) Access Condition Guide*'. The DTMR guide sets the requirement for police to escort OSOM loads based on dimension and the State Road Network Classification and as lead agency, have ultimate responsibility for the safe movement of OSOM loads on the road network.

DTMR, QPS and industry are currently engaged in critical workshop activities to progress the rationalisation of these requirements, to ensure that where it is safe to do so, the requirement to escort OSOM loads is eased. This in turn will ease the impact upon industry and the Queensland economy, whilst maintaining the safety of all road users.

Undertaking a risk-based assessment re-aligning escort criteria within safe dimensions, such as, by increasing size criteria from 4.5m in width to 5.0m would see an immediate reduction (estimated at 25%+) to QPS demand, and consequently, an immediate resolution to industry backlog/waiting times.

The involvement of QPS in wide load escorts should be supported by a comprehensive fee for service arrangement that covers all QPS costs (unlike the current arrangement of officer hours only charged at Senior Constable 2.6) and be subject to a risk assessment based on agreed criteria regardless of load

dimensions, with QPS having the right to conduct an assessment and the option to decline service provision.

## Other nominated activities undertaken by the frontline

In addition to the programs discussed in the previous section, an analysis of frontline activities using the proposed demand assessment framework has identified the following activities as ‘expanded roles’ for review.

While it is noted that decisions to change or cease current service delivery activities need to be accompanied by an appropriately structured process that encompasses extensive stakeholder engagement, it is recommended these activities form part of a future program of work and explored further by the proposed Service Delivery Office:

Special Services – wide load escorts	Special Services – road works	Special Services – major events
Special Services – speed camera	Homeless support	Local govt – keep the peace assist
Local govt – destruction of animals	Security at schools	Warrants of Possession/notice of eviction
Service of District and Supreme Court documents	Service of Interstate court documents	Victim support – post court proceedings
Affidavit preparation – private DFV applications	Full brief of evidence preparation for contested private DFV applications	Prosecution services for contested private DFV applications
Electronic monitoring device management	Curfew/parole checks for QCS prisoners	Community welfare checks
Embedded QPS - Gold Coast Centre of Sexual Violence	Specialist DFV support – beyond QPS involvement in police application	Case management of at-risk youths
Juvenile curfew checks	Blue card vetting	Youth programs in schools
Fingerprinting for security licence applications	Fingerprinting for tattoo licence applications	Custody management of QCS and YJ prisoners (detailed above)

*Table 6: Activities to form part of a future program of work and explored further by the proposed Service Delivery Office*

An analysis of frontline activities using the proposed demand assessment framework has identified the following activities as ‘collaborative roles’ and therefore candidates for negotiations with partner agencies to affirm the extent of QPS involvement. However, based on the previous assertion that any change to current service delivery activities should be viewed as medium to long term via an appropriately structured process that encompasses extensive stakeholder engagement, it is recommended these activities form part of a future program of work, and explored further by the proposed Service Delivery Office:

Licenced premises - compliance	Mental Health – CFS, transport and EEA's (refer recs above)	After hours child safety support
CFS at residential care facilities	Missing persons in residential care facilities	Emergency accommodation for DFV victims

*Table 7: Activities that are candidates for negotiations with partner agencies regarding the future extent of QPS involvement*

## Other jurisdictions

At the commencement of this review, an ANZPAA request was submitted seeking insights from other police organisations that may have conducted similar reviews to address demand and realign frontline police functions/activities with 'core policing' functions. The submission sought strategic documents/papers with a specific interest regarding mission creep in the context of 'core policing' verse 'non-core policing' functions.

Following the ANZPAA submission the review team met with the CEO of ANZPAA, Dr Tracey Green, who provided insight regarding a 2022 research paper titled 'ANZPAA Role of Police Report', plus interstate points of contact. Subsequent inquiries revealed that several jurisdictions are exploring the issues of demand, mission creep, and capacity management with New South Wales Police (NSW Police) appearing to be most advanced.

NSW Police are possibly 12 or more months ahead of the QPS on their reform journey, which provided an opportunity for QPS to leverage their foundational research. NSW Police have established a Transformation Office and are progressing a service delivery program across two areas: the Demand Management Project; and Project Telos which is focused on core role and function of police including partnerships required across government, industry and community sectors.

## Frontline first mindset

Maintaining alignment between strategic imperatives and operational deliverables whilst keeping leadership connected to the workforce is challenging. Police organisations operate in complex, high-stakes environments where frontline officers are the primary interface between the state and the public. Despite this, many police organisations maintain top-down decision-making structures, limiting the integration of lived frontline insights into strategic policy, planning, and reform. This structural disconnect contributes to:

- Policy–practice misalignment.
- Ineffective implementation of reforms.
- Officer disengagement; and
- Erosion of public trust.

Embedding a frontline first decision-making mindset ensures strategic decisions reflect operational realities, enhance public trust, improve policy implementation, and drive engagement and innovation among officers. A *frontline first mindset* places operational officers, those who engage with communities, respond to incidents, and enforce laws, at the centre of policy, resource, and strategic decisions.

This contrasts with traditional top-down models common in policing, which often marginalise lived frontline experience in favour of bureaucratic abstraction (Bayley & Shearing, 2001).

A frontline first mindset in the QPS should:

- Prioritise the views, feedback, and experience of operational police in decision-making.
- Embed structured mechanisms for consultation, co-design, and feedback.
- Build trust through transparency, responsiveness, and recognition of on-the-ground expertise.

As Chan (1997) and Cockcroft (2013) assert, frontline officers often develop operational workarounds to poorly designed top-down directives. Their tacit knowledge is essential to designing realistic and effective policy.

### *Benefits*

There are numerous benefits to adopting a frontline first decision making mindset. Organisational psychology research has shown engaged employees contribute more discretionary effort, display greater integrity under pressure, and adapt more effectively to change (Kahn, 1990; Saks, 2006). These findings are echoed in public sector research highlighting that frontline co-production improves service outcomes (Bovaird & Loeffler, 2012):

- *Improved policy and procedure design* - frontline officers understand the nuances of discretion, risk, and public interaction. When engaged, they contribute to more realistic and enforceable policy frameworks (Chan, 1997).
- *Operational efficiency* - aligns policy with on-the-ground realities, reducing friction and inefficiencies.
- *Increased officer engagement and retention* - organisations that promote voice and psychological empowerment have lower turnover and higher resilience, especially in demanding professions like policing (Saks, 2006; Kahn, 1990). Officers who feel heard are more likely to display discretionary effort, commit to reforms, and uphold ethical practices under stress (Tummers et al., 2012).
- *Enhanced organisational learning and agility* - frontline insight offers real-time intelligence about emerging community risks, gang activity, social tensions, or procedural bottlenecks—crucial for anticipatory governance in public safety. Police organisations that incorporate this intelligence adapt faster to external shocks, such as youth crime spikes or domestic violence trends (Senge, 1990).
- *Public trust and procedural justice* - incorporating frontline knowledge into public-facing policy improves procedural justice, as officers with policy influence are more confident in public interactions, enhancing legitimacy (Tyler, 2004).

### *Strategies*

Embedding a frontline first decision-making mindset in modern police organisations is not merely a symbolic gesture - it is considered a strategic imperative. Leveraging the expertise, experience, and commitment of frontline officers leads to smarter policy, higher morale, and greater public legitimacy. Organisational psychology and public safety research both advocate for a shift from siloed, hierarchical planning toward collaborative, empowered frontline engagement. Driven by strong leadership and internal culture, (Edmondson & Lei, 2014; Bovaird & Loeffler, 2012) emphasise the importance of structured frontline consultation. This can include the following:

- *Frontline advisory panels* - district-based rotating panels involving general duties officers and mid-level managers – non-commissioned officers (NCOs).
- *Policy shadowing* - executives spend time with operational teams to understand the implications of new policies.
- *Reverse secondments* - operational officers placed temporarily in corporate roles.

Similarly, Kahn (1990), Schafer (2008), and Saks (2006) advocate for effective frontline engagement strategies such as:

- *Leadership visibility* - commissioners and senior executives attend district briefings, ride-alongs, and station visits.
- *Bidirectional feedback channels* - use internal tools (e.g. Yammer, Pulse Surveys) to collect input and share decisions transparently.
- *Recognition systems* - publicly acknowledge innovations from frontline members (e.g. safety ideas, community initiatives).

### Organisational drivers

There is an opportunity to develop and adopt a frontline first framework (refer below) as a tiered model to drive a frontline-first decision-making culture across the QPS. The success of the framework is contingent on the following principles:

1. *Alignment across levels* – Success depends on all leadership levels fulfilling their distinct but interconnected roles.
2. *Embedded, not ad hoc* – Consultation and feedback should be systematised, not episodic.
3. *Mutual accountability* – Each level must be both responsive to those below and responsible to those above.
4. *Psychosocial safety first* – NCO play a critical enabling role by modelling trust and candour in supervisory environments.

### Frontline First Framework:

Leadership Level	Core Function	Strategic Role	Enabling Behaviours
<b>1. Senior Executive</b> (Commissioner, Deputy Commissioner)	Set strategic tone and mandate organisational change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Signal the priority of frontline input as a cultural and structural imperative</li> <li>➤ Secure resourcing and embed engagement into governance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Mandate policy co-design and consultation with frontline</li> <li>✓ Champion frontline-informed KPIs and strategy</li> <li>✓ Personally engage with operational teams (e.g. forums)</li> <li>✓ Communicate a compelling organisational vision valuing lived experience</li> </ul>
<b>2. Executive</b> (Assistant Commissioners, Executive Directors)	Translate strategic priorities into operational mechanisms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Institutionalise engagement structures and performance oversight</li> <li>➤ Sponsor frontline participation in corporate systems</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Establish district-level advisory panels and consultation processes</li> <li>✓ Support secondments from operational teams into planning units</li> <li>✓ Incorporate frontline sentiment into regular performance reporting</li> </ul>

Leadership Level	Core Function	Strategic Role	Enabling Behaviours
			✓ Encourage upward reporting of risks and innovation
<b>3. Commissioned Officers</b> (Inspectors, Superintendents, Chief Superintendents)	Bridge strategy and practice; enable safe participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Facilitate two-way information flow</li> <li>▶ Validate and escalate frontline insights</li> <li>▶ Align reform implementation with operational reality</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Conduct structured debriefs and after-action reviews</li> <li>✓ Acknowledge and implement officer-driven improvements</li> <li>✓ Lead feedback loops from frontline to executive</li> <li>✓ Sponsor co-design pilots or station-based innovations</li> </ul>
<b>4. NCO / Frontline Supervisors</b> (Senior Sergeants, Sergeants, Senior Constables)	Create psychosocial safety and frontline voice channels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Empower junior officers to contribute</li> <li>▶ Act as the trusted conduit for local insights</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Encourage speaking up and remove stigma for critique</li> <li>✓ Identify and share operational inefficiencies or workarounds</li> <li>✓ Mentor officers in systems thinking and engagement</li> <li>✓ Submit local innovations or concerns via formal channels</li> </ul>
<b>5. Frontline Task Leaders / Informal Leaders</b> (Constables, Shift Leaders, Influencers)	Influence peer norms and grassroots change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Model constructive engagement</li> <li>▶ Share frontline insights into reform processes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Provide practical, experience-based feedback</li> <li>✓ Actively participate in co-design workshops or innovation trials</li> <li>✓ Influence peer morale and openness to change</li> <li>✓ Communicate procedural barriers and community feedback informally and formally</li> </ul>

*Table 8: Frontline First Framework*

### *Interstate experience*

The ANZPAA request referenced earlier also sought insights from other police organisations that have conducted similar reviews with a focus on leadership as an enabler to drive a frontline first decision making mindset. The submission sought documents/papers with a specific focus on programs/strategies addressing the following questions:

- How can frontline be consulted in decision making in a meaningful manner?*
- How does the organisation engage with the frontline e.g. focus groups?*
- Decision making models including the relationship between the strategic, operational and tactical environments.*

A review of the feedback suggests the QPS is more progressive than other jurisdictions in its approach to implement a truly frontline first mindset within the organisation. In 2022, Western Australia Police embarked on a frontline first journey with a focus on building the leadership capabilities of their frontline

police officers through the development and delivery of three individual leadership programs. All three programs are designed to improve and fine tune the leadership capabilities of the respective target audiences and introduces the capabilities required of the next leadership level. The program content delivers topics including leadership styles, problem solving/decision making, self-awareness as a leader, emotional intelligence and communication styles. All programs have been structured to align with WA Police Force Strategic Framework, with a focus on policing fundamentals.

The Australian Federal Police (AFP) has a collaborative partnership with the Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) who are currently working to develop an AFP Culture Framework. This framework will set the tone for how the workforce interacts, makes decisions, and aligns with the AFP vision and goals. As an enabler to the culture aspiration, a review and refinement of AFP values is underway to ensure they are fit for purpose now, and into the future.

NSW Police are in the process of developing a demand management capability. Their proposed demand management framework includes a frontline first element in the form of an ICT platform as a mechanism to engage with the frontline. The final product and functionality are yet to be determined.



## Resource and Wellbeing Prioritisation

At the heart of the QPS are its members. Supporting our people and making them feel supported is not only one of the Commissioner's key focus areas but is critical in the delivery of highly effective policing services to the community. Maintaining and enhancing the wellbeing of our members ultimately results in enhanced community safety through improved organisational culture, productivity, member engagement, and commitment.

All members of our organisation are responsible for the health, safety, and wellbeing of the workforce – whether through policy or legislative imperatives, or through a collective sense of duty to each other. Members are also equally responsible for their own health, safety, and wellbeing. Within the QPS there are several corporate divisions who, on behalf of the organisation, are tasked with supporting members of the workforce in terms of their safety, wellbeing, health, industrial and employee rights, and entitlements:

- 1) Health and Wellbeing Division
- 2) Safety Strategy Division
- 3) Human Resources Division

Consultation and engagement not only involved members of these three divisions, but also a significant cross section of the organisation. The terms of reference for the review called for the development of measures to address “resourcing, fatigue management...”:

*Prioritise officer wellbeing through locally led and centrally supported injury management and mental health support services and welfare management programs including for separated officers.*

The review found evidence during consultation that members feel there are strong links between ineffective resourcing, fatigue management, rostering practices, indifferent leadership, and member wellbeing. An efficient and effective approach to resourcing of frontline policing is a significant enabler for member wellbeing. However, poor resourcing practices can negatively impact workloads of individuals, result in over-exposure to traumatic events or complex operational environments, impede service delivery to the community, and diminish member health and wellbeing.

After considering the information collected from members, leadership, and the specialists in the three relevant divisions, the review team focused on ways of enhancing member wellbeing. The review team's recommendations seek to address physical, mental, emotional, and social health, through approaches that are locally led, but supported by specialists in the key people focussed divisions. The review team considered the concept of ‘wellbeing’ to include all aspects of a healthy and safe workplace including the obligations of employers and employees with respect to workplace health and safety. A breadth of evidence was considered, which reinforced and expanded upon the findings of recent Working for Queensland (WFQ) (2024) survey results, in relation to aspects of the wellbeing of our members.

The findings of this review draw upon comprehensive consultation with members across all ranks, internal audits, literature reviews, and benchmarking against other jurisdictions. This integrated analysis provides a foundation and opportunity for transformational reform across the QPS, enabling our members to be fully supported as they perform the important work they do in keeping our community safe.



## Previous reviews

The QPS has been the subject of multiple internal and external audits, reviews, and recommendations focusing on issues related to wellbeing and resourcing. Additionally, the QPS has conducted several internal reviews and developed strategies to address systemic challenges in injury management and promote wellbeing and safety across our workforce.

The outcomes of these reviews helped to inform the development of this section and its recommendations. In addition to relevant internal documents (including various internal reports, policies and strategies), the following documents were also considered:

- ‘Review of QPS Injury Management QPS#9266 INJURY MANAGEMENT REVIEW REPORT’ (November 2020) by Aspect Group & Griffith University (Review of QPS Injury Management) (Aspect Review).
- ‘Queensland Police Service Organisational Review of the Safety, Wellbeing and Central Panels Division’ (September 2022) by P2E.
- ‘Managing the mental health of Queensland Police employees: Report 2017-18’ (October 2017) by the Queensland Audit Office.
- ‘Deploying police resources: Report 4: 2023-24’ (November 2023) by Queensland Audit Office.
- ‘Fatigue Risk Management Review’ (May 2024) by QPS Internal Audit.
- ‘A Call for Change: Commission of Inquiry into Queensland Police Service responses to domestic and family violence Report’ (November 2022) (COIDFV).
- ‘White Paper: Psychosocial Hazards, Risk Management and Compliance for Police Agencies’ by Selwood and Drew, Griffith University (2022) (White Paper on Psychosocial Hazards).
- ‘Roster Advisory Project: Frontline District Demand – Interim Report (Phase 1)’ by Orkest Consulting (2024).

The team reviewed the implementation status of the recommendations associated with these reports, finding many were yet to be implemented as fulsomely as the originating reports intended. In some instances, recommendations were deemed to have been delivered, but the anticipated benefits not realised due to the gap between the intent of the recommendations and implementation activities. Several recommendations of this review are intended to bridge those gaps.

It has been established the QPS faces systemic challenges in how it plans, allocates, and manages its frontline workforce, as revealed through multiple reviews and audits. The Queensland Audit Office report (2023) found the QPS lacks a strategic, evidence-based workforce planning framework and does not effectively use the large volumes of data it collects to inform deployment or performance monitoring. This results in inefficient resourcing, missed response time targets, and inequities in service delivery. There is also a reliance on outdated staffing patterns and insufficient integration of community needs and crime trends into deployment decisions.

The QPS ITAS (Intelligent Tasking Analysis System) Governance Review highlighted deficiencies in rostering governance, a lack of consistency, oversight, and compliance across districts. Despite the mandated use of ITAS, many stations continue to use legacy methods or workarounds that do not reflect operational demand. Training gaps, cultural resistance to change, and poor data reconciliation contribute to leave leakage and workforce inefficiencies. Without a centralised rostering function and enforced compliance, the system remains fragmented and misaligned with operational needs.

The Frontline District Demand Interim Report by Orkest Consulting (2024) focused on North Brisbane and the Gold Coast Districts revealed a stark misalignment between current rostering practices and operational demand. Peak demand times, particularly during evenings and weekends, were often under-resourced, while less demanding periods were overstaffed. Only about 55% of approved officer positions were actively available due to absences, and critical non-incident-related duties like court time and guard work were poorly accounted for, leading to excessive reliance on overtime. The report recommended a shift to demand-driven rostering, improved data collection, standardisation of workforce tracking, and the integration of fatigue management models to ensure efficient and sustainable staffing across the QPS.

Similarly, the Gold Coast District Policing Future Report identified resource deployment, especially rostering, had not kept pace with changing community needs and urban growth. It called for a centralised and structured approach to rostering that is responsive to real-time data and predictive trends. A significant recommendation involved developing district-level analytical capabilities and advancing intelligence-led workforce planning. Leadership accountability, training, and a cultural shift towards data-informed decision-making were deemed essential for establishing a future-ready policing model.

Deficiencies included the lack of formal mechanisms for temporary relief from high-stress roles, insufficient trauma-informed leadership practices, inadequate integration of workforce data for strategic planning, and fragmented rostering that did not account for recovery or psychological risk. Additionally, there was no clear operational governance or a shared standard for implementing Recommendation 38 of the Independent Commission of Inquiry into QPS responses to DFV (COIDFV), which aimed to safeguard members from the cumulative effects of traumatic exposure.

Key issues identified by the QPS Internal Audit Office included such issues as a lack of an integrated Fatigue Risk Management Program (FRMP), unclear roles and responsibilities for managing fatigue, especially for key stakeholders, insufficient risk processes, and no clear procedures for self-reporting fatigue. The report also found there was limited use of data and ICT systems to monitor and manage fatigue risks effectively, along with no structured process for continuous improvement of fatigue-related governance. Consequently, there was no regular reporting on fatigue risks or visibility in enterprise risk registers across the organisation.

The Aspect Review placed significant focus on transforming the former Safety, Wellbeing, and Central Panels (SW&CP) Division. The division was found to suffer from fragmented operations, unclear governance frameworks, and inefficiencies in injury management systems. Recommendations from the review emphasised the necessity of embedding a wellbeing culture, enhancing governance structures, and establishing regional wellbeing hubs to provide coordinated and localised support. These measures aimed to deliver sustainable improvements in member support while fostering a cohesive approach to safety and wellbeing.

The QPS 2024 *'Towards the Future – Being Innovative'* report analysed organisation-wide systemic issues, highlighting the increasing operational demand faced by frontline members, workforce fatigue, and outdated digital infrastructure. It culminated in an internal report that presented recommendations for modernising human resources practices, improving workforce retention, and advancing digital integration, all of which are pivotal in aligning safety and wellbeing initiatives with operational effectiveness.

The review found there are opportunities for the QPS to embrace and grow a more efficient safety culture in workplace health and safety systems across the organisation. Consultation with Safety and Strategy Division also revealed there are opportunities for the organisation to enhance leadership training, embed safety practices, and create a structured model to prioritise safety investments, which are essential for reducing harm and strengthening the safety culture within QPS.

The way in which the QPS approaches injury management emerged as a priority issue in the Aspect Review, which revealed inconsistent processes and a lack of trust in the system. Recommendations included a hybrid injury management model that integrated local and centralised elements, supported by improved technology, clearer role definitions, and professional development for injury management roles.

The review emphasised the importance of proactive communication, streamlined case management, and evidence-based triage to optimise treatment, rehabilitation, and return-to-work processes. Leadership capabilities were identified as a critical area for improvement, along with a focus on training regarding the soft skills needed to better support injured members.

In addressing psychosocial hazards and risks, the QPS has adopted a structured, evidence-based approach compliant with new national standards. The QPS Psychosocial Risk Management Report identified key risks such as trauma exposure, role overload, bullying, and organisational injustice, which significantly impact mental health. Aligning with ISO 45003, the QPS has developed a psychosocial health and safety management system to ensure compliance and foster a safer work environment. The report advocates for leadership commitment, improved data systems, and tailored training as essential components in mitigating psychological injuries. Similarly, the White Paper on Psychosocial Hazards underscores the need for police agencies to treat psychological risks with the same rigor as physical hazards. Research revealed that organisational and operational stressors are stronger predictors of mental health issues than trauma exposure alone, urging the adoption of prevention strategies that target modifiable workplace stressors.

The review found there are also opportunities to better support regional Health and Safety Representatives through elevating their important role in regions and commands to help improve training frameworks. The Queensland Audit Office's report on managing the mental health of QPS employees also stressed the need for a formal, integrated mental health strategy that builds trust and coordinates services across the employee lifecycle. Recommendations prioritised training, post-service support (for separated members), and enhanced data analysis to address psychological injuries, which account for a significant portion of WorkCover claims.

Further, an internal options paper relating to COIDFV Recommendation 38 underscored the mental health impacts of DFV cases on frontline officers, with burnout and secondary traumatic stress being a prevalent issue. It proposed proactive interventions like structured respite days, alternative work placements, and trauma-informed training to mitigate these effects.

## Resource prioritisation

The QPS has developed five roster principles that align with the QPS Strategic Plan. These principles are contained in section 2.2 of the Management Services Manual:

1. *We will keep the community safe* – rosters will be developed to provide for the delivery of timely and professional responses to calls for service, so as to maintain and strengthen community confidence through a community-centred approach to policing, service delivery and crime prevention.
2. *We will focus and position our resources in the right place at the right time* – rosters will be determined by robust evidence-based analysis of service delivery requirements/demand. This will ensure sufficient and appropriately skilled personnel are available to manage anticipated demand for each shift. Demand will be regularly examined, reviewed and documented at the work unit, district and region/command level and be available for review when required. Rosters need to be responsive to changes in demand. The development of rosters will incorporate consideration of

workforce structure and capability, service delivery requirement, prevention and disruption strategies and the relationship of crime across boundaries at divisional, patrol group, district and regional/command levels by all managers.

3. *We will be efficient* – we will design our rosters so that planned leave absences are scheduled, unplanned absences are managed, disruptions are minimised, and we have sufficient resources to meet service delivery requirements/demand. We will adhere to a 12-month planning cycle.
4. *We will be safe* – rosters will be industrially compliant; meet our legislative requirements; our policy obligations; promote workplace health and safety; and reflect fatigue management guidelines. Rostering practices should be reasonable, fair (and equitable where applicable).
5. *We will be accountable* – governance and accountability frameworks will be used to provide oversight of roster planning, creation, approval, monitoring and reporting. We will provide the systems, training and guidance to assist OIC, District management and the Executive Leadership Team to meet these principles.

Rostering to demand is a part of our organisational performance management framework. However, there is limited capability, systems, and policy support to do this well. Moving from the existing detailed rostering principles to the proposed streamlined principles will not improve rostering unless it is accompanied by access to expertise, guidance materials and clear operational policies and guidelines.

Consultation conducted by the review team indicated rostering issues and systems are some of the most concerning areas for frontline police. Multiple submissions highlighted systemic fatigue, poor shift planning, and operational inefficiencies with rostering processes across the state. Officers expressed frustration with the structure and implementation of recent rostering trials, especially in high-demand areas like the Gold Coast. Concerns included extended night shifts (e.g. seven consecutive nights), lack of local supervisor familiarity with staff, and excessive travel between divisions. Feedback strongly linked poor rostering to increased sick leave, low morale, and higher attrition.

These issues are compounded by the absence of formalised training for roster planners, limited analytics integration, and insufficient oversight across rostering. Several districts still base staffing on historical norms, resulting in systemic misalignment between officer availability and peak community demand.

Internal reviews and interjurisdictional comparisons confirm the QPS lags in adopting enterprise rostering models and demand-led workforce planning. Other police and emergency services have begun transitioning to integrated systems that support flexible, real-time deployment. The QPS, by contrast, lacks a central rostering capability, enforceable governance mechanisms, or a fully integrated fatigue informed approach. Various reviews of the Operational Shift Allowance (OSA) also highlighted the lack of rostering of operational members over peak periods (e.g. late shifts, weekends and public holidays).

## Other jurisdictions

Extensive consultation was conducted with a range of Australian policing and emergency service jurisdictions to understand external agency approaches to rostering and fatigue management.

Most agencies utilise differing shift lengths from 8 to 12 hours tailored to their operational contexts, cultural norms, and available resources. A common trend is the growing move towards centralised or enterprise rostering systems (although many still rely on basic tools such as Excel), with varying levels of sophistication and integration with payroll and demand forecasting systems.

Notably, Western Australia Police and Victoria Police are investing heavily in enterprise rostering solutions aimed at linking time sheets, demand analytics, and payroll to improve operational efficiency and staff wellbeing.

Several challenges are highlighted across jurisdictions. These include poor alignment with actual service demand, fatigue associated with longer shifts, inequities stemming from inconsistent application of flexible working arrangements (FWAs), and a lack of dedicated or trained rostering staff, especially across unsworn personnel. Some agencies, such as the Australian Federal Police and Queensland Ambulance Service, have begun implementing more demand-based and flexible roster designs with staggered starts and centralised tools to address these issues.

However, legacy practices, cultural resistance to change, and operational complexity often hinder progress. Overall, while there is a collective effort to modernise and centralise rostering processes, the pace and effectiveness of implementation vary widely, with some services significantly more advanced in demand-driven, wellbeing-focused scheduling than others. Rostering models provided by other jurisdictions show that most struggle with implementing demand-driven rostering, relying instead on traditional or mixed-shift models that often fail to align workforce deployment with peak operational needs as outlined below:

Organisation	Shift Model	Strengths	Challenges
New South Wales Police	12-hour shifts	Mature centralised rostering with 300+ clerks, long-standing cultural adoption (20+ years).	Significant fatigue concerns, not designed to match demand, difficult to implement flexibility.
South Australia Police	Mixed-shift model (8, 9, 10-hour shifts)	Split workforce structure, extra teams for weekends.	Limited to metropolitan areas, perceived inequity between units, not aligned to demand.
Western Australia Police	Primarily 10-hour shifts	Employee wellbeing central, Road Policing aligned to peak visibility times.	Not demand driven, no dedicated unsworn roster staff, inconsistent roster complexity.
Victoria Police	8-hour shifts	Demand-focused roster planning, 21-day advance posting, large-scale enterprise system.	No formal rostering policy, integration gaps with payroll, and short ad hoc cycles.
The Australian Federal Police	Demand-based, centrally managed	Staggered starts, use of 'E-shift' system, mix of shift lengths, demand reviewed biannually.	Historical inequity requires ongoing monitoring and adjustment.
Queensland Ambulance Service	2-2-2 roster pattern		Design not demand-focused, transition still in early stages.
Tasmania Police	Genesys workforce management system	High alignment with demand, part-time workforce reduces overtime, few FWA issues	Small scale, no consolidated allowances.
Queensland Health's 13HEALTH	Rolling 8-hour shifts	Strong demand alignment, formal request processes, low FWA volume.	Scale and reliance on part-time staff.

*Table 9: Comparison of key features of rostering models across police and health entities*

## Issues and gaps

While the QPS has improved its understanding of demand, there remains a gap in its ability to readily measure and understand demand in real-time. This directly impacts the QPS capability to roster to demand.

The rostering principles are not consistently understood or applied across the organisation, with significant variation in practice and a reliance on ad hoc approaches. There is no formal, centralised training unit, framework or dedicated support structure in place to equip OIC or roster clerks with the necessary skills, guidance, or governance to deliver consistent, demand aligned rostering outcomes.

The roster principles are strategically sound and aligned with QPS values, but for statewide implementation of true demand-based rostering, they need greater operational specificity. By embedding principles around demand forecasting, flexibility, skill alignment, and wellbeing, the framework becomes both prescriptive and actionable, suitable for guiding a major organisational change across the State.

The current rostering practices within the QPS are significantly misaligned with operational demand, contributing to service delivery challenges and diminished response capability. Officer availability often fails to match peak periods of community need, particularly during evenings, weekends, and periods of heightened activity resulting in reduced frontline presence, delayed response times, and increased pressure on limited resources. This ongoing misalignment undermines both the effectiveness and efficiency of policing services and limits the ability to respond proactively to emerging issues.

A key contributor to this issue is the lack of a consistent, organisation-wide rostering framework. Across the state, rostering practices vary significantly between regions, districts, and commands, with no unified structure to ensure that rosters are aligned to demand or strategic priorities. In many instances, rosters are developed based on local convenience, historical norms, or individual preferences rather than operational needs. This inconsistency results in uneven service coverage and limits the capacity to manage workforce deployment in a data-driven and equitable manner.

Crucially, there is currently no clear direction or enforcement mechanism to ensure compliance with rostering principles that prioritise operational demand and service outcomes. Without mandated adherence to a defined set of rostering principles and without leadership accountability in applying them, many areas continue to operate in silos, perpetuating inefficiencies and missed opportunities for improvement.

There is a clear need for the establishment of a central rostering support function with authority to implement statewide standards, monitor compliance, and provide expert assistance to local teams. This should be supported by accredited training for roster planners, improved use of data analytics, and the development of flexible, demand-based roster models that balance operational requirements with workforce wellbeing. Embedding these reforms into a structured, centrally governed framework would enable QPS to improve service delivery, support frontline capacity, and build a more agile, sustainable, and consistent approach to workforce management. The current ad hoc variations with rostering across the service currently do not assist with the delivery of COIDFV recommendation 38.

The Gold Coast District has recently commenced the Recharge Program, which is a proactive welfare and development initiative designed to support the wellbeing of frontline police officers by offering temporary relief from operational duties. Through structured placements in alternative roles, officers are given the opportunity to rest, engage in professional development, and access welfare support services if appropriate. The program is divided into three key phases:



- *Acknowledgment* - where staff self-identify or are referred based on wellbeing issues.
- *Development* - involving secondment to skills-based roles.
- *Reintegration* - which includes welfare support and planning for the member's return to duties.

While the program reflects a strong commitment to staff mental health and resilience, several issues have been identified. These include potential operational strain from staff absences, inconsistent access or perceptions of fairness in selection, reluctance from staff to participate due to stigma, and limited real-time feedback mechanisms during placement.

To address these issues, consideration should be given to integrating a Recharge Program into a demand-based roster system, which uses predictive analytics to identify optimal times for staff participation without compromising frontline service delivery. This would allow for strategic planning, automatic shift adjustments, and visibility of recharge placements to aid supervisors in operational planning.

The ideal future state would see the transition to a demand-based rostering model that uses real time and predictive data to match resources to operational need. This approach would replace rigid shift structures with agile, intelligence led rostering that places officers where and when they are most needed. This would improve frontline service delivery, reduce fatigue, and support officer wellbeing. A statewide fatigue risk management framework should underpin it (with clear and enforceable policies on shift length, overtime, part-time work, and sick leave). Supervisor training and improved compliance monitoring are essential to ensure consistent application and accountability.

A major barrier to improving rostering practices is the absence of a centralised and reliable dataset that can inform demand-based rostering. While various dashboards may highlight when and where demand occurs, there is no integrated system that translates this into practical, actionable resourcing decisions. At the same time, inconsistent application of industrial provisions, unclear fatigue management policies, and cumbersome flexible work agreement processes make it difficult for supervisors to maintain equitable, sustainable rosters. Some officers reportedly exploit current gaps by maximising rest days, overtime, and sick leave in ways that reduce availability and place additional strain on others.

These issues are closely tied to increasing attrition, with officers frequently transferring out of high-pressure districts or exiting the Service altogether citing reasons including unmanageable workloads, a lack of development opportunities, and limited flexibility in how rosters are managed. In districts such as Logan, negative internal narratives and burnout have further discouraged new staff from transferring in. Compounding this is a lack of central workforce analytics, with no consistent mechanism to track why officers are leaving or identify emerging workforce risks, leaving districts to rely on their own informal monitoring processes.

Until QPS adopts and enforces a state-wide rostering approach underpinned by strategic oversight and compliance requirements, it will remain challenged in its ability to deliver a responsive, consistent, and future-ready policing model.

## **Fatigue management**

Fatigue is recognised by the QPS as a significant workplace hazard requiring case by case management due to the dynamic and unpredictable nature of policing. Fatigue affects health, safety, performance, decision-making, and can arise from both work and personal factors (e.g. overtime, outside employment, financial pressure). The review has found fatigue is reported as being widespread, as seen in workforce survey results, submissions, and engagement sessions, which reveal high levels of emotional and physical exhaustion, and burnout.

The QPS Fatigue Management Policy includes safe work systems, health monitoring, fatigue training, and 10-hour mandatory rest breaks (with exceptions in operationally justified cases). A Rostering Review Committee was formed in 2023 to improve alignment between resourcing and operational demand and explore better fatigue management practices. Fatigue is referenced in the QPS 'Our People Matter' strategy, though central promotion and training are limited.

The current QPS Fatigue Management Policy, while recognising fatigue as a workplace hazard, remains general in nature and lacks the detail necessary to effectively manage fatigue-related risks in a dynamic policing environment. This limits its practical application and consistency across the Service. Currently, there is no centralised reliable system for the identification and management of fatigue within the workplace. Instead, multiple disparate ICT solutions are employed to record various operational elements, including standard shifts, continuation of duty and special services overtime, on-call arrangements, and secondary employment. This decentralisation presents challenges in achieving a comprehensive and integrated approach to fatigue risk management.

Worrying examples of the consequence of the lack of an appropriate ICT solution were observed. For example, some individuals reported extreme levels of overtime (1,000+ hours annually). High amounts of unclaimed or forfeited leave, numerous cases of excessive consecutive shifts and non-compliance with roster rules were identified as issues. Additionally, overlaps between outside employment and high rates of overtime were matters for concern.

While fatigue management guidelines were introduced in 2018, they remain broad and insufficiently prescriptive. This lack of clarity creates the potential for inconsistent application across regions and units, and may lead to misuse or non-compliance, ultimately compromising officer wellbeing and operational effectiveness. Without a dedicated, enforceable fatigue management framework, officers may be exposed to unsafe work hours and insufficient rest, impacting decision-making, safety, and operational performance.

The formation of the Psychological Health and Wellbeing Committee was seen as a positive step towards providing expert guidance on fatigue and broader mental health, and recognition of fatigue as a priority, with strategic intent to improve systems and practices. The QPS is aware fatigue is a critical issue for our workforce. The Service has taken some initial steps to better address the management of fatigue. However, the current approach is fragmented and reactive. There is a clear need for a structured, integrated, and technology-supported Fatigue Risk Management approach to systematically manage the risks and support workforce wellbeing.

Consultation across all ranks confirmed fatigue is inadequately monitored and often unreported, with local workarounds and a lack of real-time oversight contributing to officer burnout. Internal audits further highlighted widespread non-compliance with rest periods and overtime limits and identified the absence of a unified Fatigue Risk Management Framework (FRMF) as a major gap in our governance framework. Jurisdictional comparisons showed other police services are moving toward data-driven, proactive approaches with clearer thresholds, digital systems, and embedded leadership accountability.

Consistent concerns raised during consultation related to the absence of a centralised system for identifying and managing fatigue and concerns the broad scope of existing guidelines and policy is being exploited by some members. In response, individual units have adopted ad hoc approaches to manage fatigue more effectively; however, these approaches vary in effectiveness and lack consistency across the organisation.



The Officer in Charge (OIC) cohort, who are largely responsible for identifying and managing member fatigue, advised fatigue management is inconsistently defined. While the formal human resources and employee relations view is trackable via ITAS, night work fatigue (sleep, shift frequency, rest adequacy) along with special services applied for and approved by different units is less visible and not well managed or regulated.

Monitoring across the organisation is fragmented. An OIC can only manage what they observe, which excludes duties performed in other work groups or overtime assigned without their knowledge. There is a perception among the workforce that if members comply with fatigue management guidelines, they still have unlimited access to overtime - without consideration for burnout or increased sick leave. OICs sometimes feel hesitant to limit overtime due to concerns about perceptions of being punitive. Currently, there is no centralised, automated system to track additional hours worked including overtime and special services. Officers occasionally work unapproved overtime, with OICs becoming aware only after overtime payment claims are submitted.

The OIC cohort provided suggestions to the review team regarding improved systems to identify and management fatigue. Recommendations included creation of a unified, automated system that captures all planned duties (including overtime) before the work is undertaken, and furthermore, declines additional hours that are not compliant with fatigue management provisions. Providing the necessary systems to empower the OIC to make decisions based on officer wellbeing, whilst also considering compliance, shifts the focus of the organisation towards managing acceptable workloads for members. This is achieved through oversight of core and additional work, setting maximum allowable limits, enhancing record-keeping and reconciliation processes, and simplifying information management systems to reduce complexity.

## Other jurisdictions

The AFP's Injury Prevention Team is leading a strategic program to strengthen its management of psychosocial hazards, including fatigue, and improve compliance with WHS legislation. Key initiatives include enhancement of WHS training, refining the approach to managing job demands, and developing command-specific psychosocial risk assessment plans. An internal audit of fatigue management was also conducted, identifying improvements required in governance, training, and resources. These enhancements will be implemented throughout 2025 to reduce fatigue-related risks within the organisation.

The SAPOL Fatigue Management policy, part of the broader Health, Safety, Wellbeing and Injury Management policy, aims to raise awareness of fatigue-related risks. It advises employees to balance work and personal life, urges managers to actively manage fatigue, provides up-to-date information via the intranet, and assigns responsibilities for effective fatigue management.

Tasmania Police (TASPOL) is transitioning from an ad hoc approach to a formal, evidence-based fatigue management framework focused on risk reduction, legislative compliance, and staff wellbeing. Since 2019, TASPOL have made significant progress in fatigue management, evolving from informal practices to a draft guideline forming part of a broader fatigue management framework. This shift was prompted by a coronial inquest linking fatigue-related issues to one of four police suicides, reviews of prolonged bushfire response activities, and learnings from pilot programs in various regions.

TASPOL's fatigue management framework ensures legal compliance, reduces fatigue-related risks, and provides practical guidance. Key elements include definitions aligned with legislation and WorkSafe Australia, recognising work and personal fatigue sources, clearer roles for involved stakeholders, training and risk assessments as per ANZPAA guidelines, ongoing monitoring through rostering reviews and

implementation of trials for extended shifts. In moving to a formalised framework, TASPOL encountered challenges including lack of tools for supervisors, limited funding, and various industrial issues, which the organisation is in the process of addressing.

The Western Australia Police Force has adopted a comprehensive framework to address fatigue management, particularly among its frontline personnel. This initiative incorporates several key strategies aimed at enhancing staff wellbeing and operational efficiency. Tailored programs have been developed to provide evidence-based fatigue management solutions catering specifically to frontline responders, leaders, and their families. Additionally, the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) offers 24/7 external support to staff and their families, addressing fatigue-related concerns. To further alleviate cumulative fatigue, a Regional On-Call Program slated for 2024 will designate specific officers to handle after-hours incidents, allowing others to rest. Rostering practices have also been restructured, introducing a gradual shift system that eliminates short changeovers and reduces overall fatigue. Moreover, the Psychosocial Risk Management Project, undertaken in collaboration with APS, aims to establish a robust framework for managing psychosocial hazards, including fatigue. The initiative is complemented by fatigue-specific resources such as a sleep health webpage, educational videos, self-assessment tools, consultations with specialists, and expert roster reviews.

## Issues and gaps

The review team has identified a significant gap in the QPS approach to managing fatigue, which directly impacts member wellbeing and operational effectiveness. This gap stems from both the broadness of the existing Fatigue Management Policy and the absence of a centralised system for capturing and managing fatigue-related data across the organisation.

Currently, there is no unified platform or consistent process for monitoring actual hours worked by members. In many instances, excessive working hours are only identified retrospectively by OICs when approving pay claims through Aurion at the end of each fortnight. This reactive model fails to support early intervention or real time fatigue risk management.

A significant challenge identified in addressing fatigue management within the organisation lies in the absence of a centralised mechanism to monitor critical fatigue-related variables. For instance, while HR Connect facilitates the initial approval process for secondary employment, there is no system in place for ongoing monitoring or detailed documentation of actual hours worked in a secondary role. Similarly, on-call arrangements are recorded in ITAS, yet there is no formal policy that mandates its consistent use or defines limits to mitigate fatigue risks. Special services applications are managed and processed through multiple unlinked platforms such as Power App and SharePoint, lacking a standardised policy for pre-approval and tracking.

Additionally, ITAS records continuation of duty and standard hours, including consecutive night shifts, but does not establish thresholds or limits to flag potential fatigue concerns. This fragmented approach to data collection is compounded by the lack of enforceable policy parameters, such as maximum allowable or ideal shift hours, minimum rest periods between shifts, and clear escalation procedures for addressing non-compliance. The absence of prescriptive guidelines and unified systems significantly undermines the organisation's ability to proactively manage fatigue-related risks.

While the current policy outlines general principles and expectations, it does not establish binding standards or accountability measures. The resulting policy environment renders OICs effectively powerless to intervene proactively, even when member fatigue is evident or escalating.

To address this systemic shortfall, the Safety Strategy Division recommended the engagement of a recognised Fatigue Management expert to consult on the development of a comprehensive and prescriptive framework. In support of this recommendation, the review team identified such experts have been used in Queensland previously (WorkCover Qld 2019). This could be one way in which professional advice can help inform and develop appropriate fatigue management programs, shiftwork policies, and delivering expert guidance in fatigue-related matters.

The development of a fatigue framework with the guidance of recognised experts would enable QPS to establish enforceable fatigue controls, integrate centralised systems for data capture and monitoring, and empower leadership with actionable insights and authority. This approach would foster a culture of proactive, evidence-based risk management, providing a solid foundation for enhancing operational efficiency and member wellbeing while mitigating fatigue-related risks effectively.

The Internal Audit into Fatigue Management (2024) identified several significant concerns regarding the current policy's effectiveness, clarity, and enforcement. Specifically, the audit found deficiencies in the identification, oversight, and potential exploitation of fatigue management guidelines.

Of particular concern was an analysis of the top 13 QPS members who recorded substantial additional working hours through overtime and special duties during the 2022/2023 financial year. These additional hours ranged from 829.5 hours to 1235 hours per member, equivalent to approximately 5.4 to 8.1 full 28-day roster cycles worked on top of their standard shifts.

While records indicate overtime hours were performed and approved, it remains unclear whether compliance with the fatigue management policy was adequately assessed or documented. This ambiguity underscores the overly broad and permissive nature of the current policy, which can facilitate excessive work practices without sufficient safeguards.

In addition, there are currently 389 QPS members with declared secondary employment. However, the organisation lacks visibility over the hours worked in these external roles, and there is no structured reporting mechanism in place to inform OICs. This absence of data significantly limits an OIC's ability to monitor, identify, and manage potential fatigue related risks, thereby compromising the assurance that all members are fit and proper to effectively perform their core duties.

The following case study within the QPS illustrates the tangible impact of unmitigated fatigue, even when the existing policy is adhered to.

#### *Case study – unmitigated fatigue*

Over a 29-month period, a member working in the unit responsible for managing the Camera Detected Offence Program (CDOP) logged a total of 5,846 hours, including 1,605 overtime hours. This workload equated to an additional 213 days worked, effectively completing 39 months of work within a 29-month period. The member's hours often exceeded standard rostered hours. Eleven of these months surpassed 200 hours and 6 of these months exceeded 250 hours. Despite these hours, the member was not captured within the top 100 QPS members identified for the highest volumes of overtime, according to the Internal Audit Report on fatigue management.

The member's prolonged workload, while compliant with QPS Fatigue Management Policy and Guidelines, ultimately led to severe burnout. After 29 months in the role, the member accessed Workcover and resigned, citing burnout as the cause. This incident revealed a critical gap in the effectiveness of existing policies; while compliance was technically achieved, the cumulative impact of sustained overtime over an extended period was inadequately mitigated.

It is important to note the OIC had mitigation processes in place, yet this issue still occurred, demonstrating the limitations of existing policies and processes in addressing systemic fatigue risks. These implemented processes included integrating CDOP-related duties into rostered hours to ensure compliance with fatigue management guidelines, equitable workload distribution, adherence to budgetary constraints and operational parameters, and compliance with Enterprise Bargaining (EB) agreements. Although concerns were raised during the member's tenure, the OIC's ability to intervene was constrained by the member's technical compliance with existing policies. This limitation highlighted a systemic issue; broad policies alone may not sufficiently protect member welfare.

This case study provides key insights into the challenges faced by the QPS. It stresses the need for a proactive and holistic approach to officer wellbeing that extends beyond simple compliance, taking into account cumulative workloads as well as overall health and safety considerations.

To effectively address systemic fatigue risks, the QPS must establish a comprehensive Fatigue Risk Management Framework supported by a prescriptive Fatigue Management Policy and a robust ICT platform. These measures are critical to equipping OICs with the appropriate tools, actionable insights, and authority to proactively manage risks and safeguard member wellbeing.

A structured framework will provide enforceable standards, ensuring fatigue-related issues are addressed consistently and effectively across the organisation. Coupled with the integration of an advanced ICT system, this approach would enable real-time data capture, monitoring, and predictive analytics to inform decision-making and support leadership in implementing targeted interventions. By empowering OICs with the necessary resources and systemic support, the QPS can foster an organisational culture that prioritises member health and operational efficiency. The adoption of these measures is essential for transitioning from reactive compliance to proactive, evidence-based fatigue management.

Transitioning to demand-based rostering supported by fatigue informed policies, equitable conditions, and improved data systems will enable QPS to better deploy its workforce, reduce attrition, and deliver sustainable policing outcomes across Queensland.

## Wellbeing prioritisation

Ensuring the health, safety, and wellbeing of members is a collective responsibility that spans all roles and business areas. From individual members to leadership teams and capability owners, (including human resources and workplace health and safety professionals), everyone contributes to upholding legislative requirements and fostering a supportive environment. The Safety Strategy Division plays a central role in developing strategies, policies, and processes that prioritise wellbeing, health, and safety. Policies must be both effective and grounded in the realities of frontline policing, addressing risks through prevention and early intervention while taking a holistic approach which encompasses the entire career journey from recruitment to retirement.

To embed wellbeing effectively, the organisation should strike a balance between locally driven solutions and consistent central guidance across all operational areas. Procedures should be detailed and specific while allowing flexibility to meet the diverse needs of various roles. Practical measures include integrating wellbeing education into recruitment processes, where new members learn about personal responsibility, access to employee assistance services, and the support provided by supervisors and academy staff. Throughout their career, members should receive ongoing training and development to enhance their ability to identify and address wellbeing concerns as individuals, colleagues, supervisors, or leaders.

Establishing a robust, integrated organisational structure that aligns proactive prevention efforts with reactive support mechanisms is also critical.

Leadership plays a vital role in fostering a healthy workplace environment. Supervisors, managers, and leaders must be equipped to address behaviours that disrupt workplace harmony and contribute to unhealthy dynamics. Targeted development programs are essential to cultivate their ability to respond purposefully and effectively.

Current barriers such as siloed operations around the injury management process, misunderstandings about confidentiality principles, and case management practices that are disconnected from the operational environment need to be resolved. Streamlining these processes will enable earlier and more effective support for members. By adopting these measures, the organisation can create a cohesive and integrated approach to wellbeing, ensuring member safety and satisfaction throughout their professional journey.

Feedback demonstrated the QPS is facing significant challenges in the areas of wellbeing, mental health, and injury management. The dissatisfaction with health, safety and wellbeing systems was highlighted through the widespread and consistent feedback from all levels of the organisation consulted. Officers reported a deep lack of confidence in current wellbeing systems, which were viewed as being tokenistic, fragmented, and disconnected from the realities of the operational environment. Fatigue, burnout, and psychological stress were reported as prevalent, with members expressing frustration over superficial wellbeing initiatives that failed to address the root causes of their distress. Leadership was seen as out of touch, and wellbeing efforts were criticised for lacking credibility, visibility, and sincerity.

Throughout the consultation phase, members consistently emphasised how they felt compelled to implement their own bespoke wellbeing programs due to the inadequacy of existing initiatives provided by the Health and Wellbeing Division. Units such as Scenes of Crime, Railway Squad, and Special Emergency Response Team were noted to be among those most in need of assistance. These units, facing intense operational demands, independently designed and implemented their own wellbeing strategies with little to no support from the Health and Wellbeing Division. Individual accounts shared with the review team highlighted the benefits of these self-initiated programs, underscoring the gap left by official programs.

A notable example is the work undertaken by the Far Northern Regional Health & Wellbeing Hub, spearheaded by a senior sergeant and supported by a multidisciplinary team. It included a comprehensive strategy to advance the physical, mental, nutritional, and emotional wellbeing of members within the region. Key components included interventions tailored for distinct officer cohorts, such as those transitioning back to work from sick leave or nearing retirement, alongside leadership practices that embed health-oriented principles. The initiative also aims to conduct psychosocial hazard audits and implement targeted programs, such as the Health Start 3-Day Self-Care Course, to proactively address the wellbeing of the members.

The anticipated outcomes of the work in Far Northern Region includes a measurable reduction in absenteeism, psychological injuries, and operational disruptions, coupled with an increase in job satisfaction, employee retention, and overall workforce resilience. The initiative is designed to extend its reach to remote communities, providing proactive support while aligning with district priorities. With an estimated annual delivery budget of \$100,000, this model demonstrates scalability for enhancing police wellbeing across the state, presenting a forward-thinking approach to empowering personnel and fostering a resilient operational environment.

Another notable example examined by the review team was the *Integrated Wellbeing SER* program in South Eastern Region (QPS 2023). A review was held by the region into all aspects of health, safety and wellbeing to assess the gaps in the system which were impacting members. The review found siloed approaches to health, safety and wellbeing, with little connection or integration. The review included an analysis of the approach of other jurisdictions towards wellbeing. The result was a comprehensive report which made a recommendation supporting a new integrated approach to member wellbeing. The review resulted in the establishment of new positions in the region of sworn and unsworn “Wellbeing Coordinators” whose role included connecting and integrating the various functions of health safety and wellbeing at a local level. In this way a person centric approach was taken towards all aspects of wellbeing with structured governance and accountability mechanisms in place. It is noted this approach was in partnership with Health and Wellbeing Division.

A central concern identified during consultation and feedback was the absence of proactive or preventative mental health programs. Officers noted that wellbeing support is largely reactive, with delayed or non-existent responses to critical incidents. Human Services Officers (HSO), a key part of the QPS wellbeing function, were heavily criticised (across the state) for lacking operational insight, empathy, and trauma-informed care. The effectiveness of HSO was very topical among members, with widespread frustration over their perceived ineffectiveness, lack of accessibility, and the difficulty in locating them when assistance was needed. Issues consistently raised during consultation included limited accessibility, inconsistent follow-up, and perceived lack of credibility. These issues have eroded trust in the HSO role with frontline members, with many officers preferring to seek out Chaplains or Peer Support Officers. That said, there were also positive experiences, with some HSO acknowledged to be highly dedicated professionals, passionate and committed to their work.

The review noted feedback from across the workforce advocating that services which support their physical and nutritional health be explored by the organisation. There was support for access to preventative services to better support members and help prevent injuries. There was also support for services such as the Health Start teams, run by the Health and Wellbeing Division. The Health Start teams were acknowledged for their proactive strength and conditioning programs. This program presents an opportunity for wider application across the organisation.

Concerns were also raised with the review team about the current injury management system, which was viewed as unresponsive, overly bureaucratic, and sometimes delaying the recovery of injured members. Some district officers noted improvements in the injury management process since the introduction of several recommendations of the Aspect Review. The injury management system was described by members as unfit for purpose, process-driven, impersonal, and unresponsive to the complex and varied needs of injured officers, particularly those suffering psychological harm. Officers highlighted poor communication, lack of continuity in case management, unrealistic return-to-work expectations, and a disconnect between injury management staff and frontline operations.

Fatigue-related injuries were routinely overlooked, and integration with broader wellbeing efforts was minimal. Overall, the system was seen as adversarial and compliance-focused rather than recovery-oriented, contributing to low morale and attrition. Several members who had lived experienced in the injury management process raised concerns with the review about their individual ordeals. These included, impersonal communication with injury management advisor/specialist by text, no face-to-face contact (injury management advisor/specialist in another part of the state), lack of engagement or contact with members and examples of ‘multiple handling’ of their personal information.

Feedback from the workforce indicated the injury management system is not as effective as it could be if it were more focussed on a locally led, person centric approach. As one commissioned officer told the review the system is “*not fit for purpose*” and is “*unresponsive, under-resourced and process driven instead of outcome driven*”.

Information received from the Health and Wellbeing Division indicates there have been improvements in the system since the implementation of the Aspect Review recommendations. This included improvements in the average days for the first return to workday for injured members, as well as a reduction in average Work Cover claim costs. However, there appeared to have been an increase in primary mental injury claims. The review team also acknowledge the high caseloads of some injury management workers, and the complexity of dealing with members who suffer from psychological injuries. The review team noted the dedication of many injury management workers in trying to affect a person-centred approach to injury management.

Despite this there was a strong desire from the membership for structural and cultural change in the injury management system. Members, including senior managers (Assistant Commissioner and District Officer focus groups) wanted a locally embedded wellbeing strategy, with post-incident psychological support, integrated injury and wellbeing case management, and better data systems to support early intervention in a person centric approach to wellbeing. Members also voiced their desire for more to be done in the prevention space. Dedicated District Wellbeing Coordinators, hybrid support teams (sworn and unsworn), and enhanced support for peer roles were also proposed during feedback.

Ultimately, the QPS needs to shift from fragmented centralised models, to holistic, proactive, and locally led approaches that treat wellbeing as a core operational enabler.

## Other jurisdictions

Policing is a demanding profession that often exposes personnel to unique stressors, challenging environments, and high-risk situations. Recognising the importance of maintaining the health and resilience of their workforce, police forces across various jurisdictions have implemented comprehensive wellbeing programs. These initiatives aim to mitigate physical and psychological risks while fostering a supportive and engaged organisational culture.

Throughout Australasia, all policing jurisdictions, wellbeing strategies are tailored and structured to the specific needs of their personnel. Many of these programs emphasise evidence-based prevention, mental health support, early intervention frameworks, and resilience-building measures. Whether through specialised training sessions, innovative health hubs, or detailed action plans, policing organisations are prioritising the welfare of their officers and staff. At the core of these initiatives lies a commitment to ensuring the safety, vitality, and long-term capacity of those who serve their communities with dedication and courage.

NSW Police Health, Safety & Wellbeing Command serves as a cornerstone in ensuring the welfare of its members. Operating as an independent command within the organisation, it represents a proactive and comprehensive approach to member wellbeing. By embedding evidence-based prevention strategies, responsive support mechanisms, and tailored interventions, the command not only prioritises the physical and psychological health of personnel but also fosters a culture of care and resilience. This initiative underscores the organisation's commitment to safeguarding its workforce, ensuring their vitality, and empowering them to navigate the unique challenges of policing with strength and confidence.



The Northern Territory Police Force's (NT Police) Professional Standards Command plays a pivotal role in fostering a disciplined and preventative approach within the Northern Territory Police Force. Following an independent review commissioned in August 2023, NT Police undertook a critical evaluation of their policing models, resource allocation, and staff wellbeing practices, with a focus on identifying areas for improvement. One key initiative, the Early Intervention Project Team, concentrates on proactively identifying at-risk members and workplaces to enhance overall member wellbeing and prevent misconduct across the organisation.

To further strengthen these efforts, the NT Police Executive Wellbeing Committee oversees the implementation of both the Human Resources and Wellbeing Action Plan and the NTPFES Wellbeing Strategy 2023–2027. This strategic framework emphasises the importance of protecting personnel while fostering resilience and engagement within the workforce. It is designed to create a supportive environment that ensures the long-term vitality and effectiveness of the Service, highlighting the organisation's commitment to maintaining the welfare of its dedicated members.

The Western Australia Police Force has implemented a range of comprehensive support programs to address the psychological and physical demands inherent in policing. These initiatives include psychological interventions such as trauma-specific treatment, mental health support tailored for shift work, and critical incident management. Additionally, the force conducts well-being reviews and arranges psychologist visits to remote and specialist units, ensuring support reaches personnel in all locations. Pre-deployment, fitness for duty, welfare, and suicide risk assessments are systematically carried out for individuals in high-risk roles, while specialised training programs focus on stress management, psychological distress, and critical incident responses.

The Western Australia Police Force programs target recruits as well as supervisors and command-level officers, equipping them with the tools to handle vicarious trauma, compassion fatigue, and exposure to challenging materials. External services, including an online Health and Wellbeing Program provided by a Brisbane-based company, supplement these efforts. The Safety Branch also plays a pivotal role, addressing district-specific safety concerns and managing responses to WorkSafe inquiries and investigations. In parallel, the Injury Coordination & Support Services unit actively engages in injury management and employee support initiatives. Collectively, these measures aim to mitigate fatigue, foster resilience, and promote optimal wellbeing within the force.

New Zealand Police Force is implementing a phased mental health response change program over 18 months, focusing on reducing deployments to mental health-related calls for service. The program aims to address known and unknown consequences of such changes, informed by insights from similar initiatives, including the UK. The National Intelligence Centre is preparing a comprehensive report to guide the Executive in understanding these impacts.

The Australian Federal Police (AFP) developed and employed the Project SHIELD health and wellbeing strategy. Project Shield was designed to support employees, reserves, former staff, and families through education, prevention, early intervention, treatment, and transition strategies. This includes multidisciplinary SHIELD Health Hubs staffed by medical professionals and advisors across various fields. Additionally, the AFP is focusing on enhancing workplace health and safety (WHS) initiatives, particularly in managing psychosocial risks like fatigue, through governance, training, and risk assessment treatment plans. These efforts are complemented by an internal audit of fatigue management, aimed at improving frameworks and tools to mitigate fatigue-related risks in operational environments.



The review team also considered the Queensland Ambulance Service's *Priority One* program (QAS 2018). This model focuses on several strategic objectives with respect to employee wellbeing. The approach aims to reduce barriers to support; enhance wellbeing education and training; a commitment to best practice; leadership development; and special focus areas such as suicide prevention and critical incident management. Of interest to this review, the program emphasises building resilience, a person-centred approach, as well as a true "hire to retire" philosophy. The program engages with the workforce from recruitment through their lifecycle with QAS to beyond retirement. The review team also noted the program's engagement with the families of employees at critical times.

## Issues and gaps

The QPS faces numerous challenges in its approach to health, safety, and wellbeing, with notable deficiencies highlighted across key divisions. The Safety Strategy Division, responsible for safeguarding the work health and safety of QPS employees and volunteers, suffers from a lack of operational expertise, hindering its ability to develop and deliver essential training packages required for policy rollouts.

Similarly, the Health and Wellbeing Division, whose purpose is to empower employees through person-centric services, struggles with inconsistencies in its proactive wellbeing approach. While the division offers a range of support options, the reliance on self-identification for accessing these services limits their effectiveness, particularly during critical incidents. The review discovered that, whilst the Division has several programs, initiatives, and associated processes, they do not appear to be widely known in the operational environment. For example, the Division briefed the review team on support that is provided to OICs during the initial triaging in the injury management process. An example of an email sent to OICs was supplied to the review team. The knowledge of the email process for triaging was tested with OICs, across five districts, (who were collectively responsible for over 600 staff). Out of this large group of OICs only one had previously seen this email – approximately twelve months prior). This was just one example of services or assistance provided by the Division, not widely known in districts.

Across the organisation, local wellbeing initiatives are fragmented, with bespoke programs like the *HealthStart Selfcare and Wellbeing Program* (Far Northern Region), and the *Integrated Wellbeing Program* (South Eastern Region) emerging without a consistent service-wide framework. Moreover, there is a significant lack of preventative measures, such as coordinated fatigue management frameworks or structured oversight to address fatigue risks. Despite recent improvements in staffing and processes, a lack of understanding of health and wellbeing procedures persists in regions and districts, further exacerbating the challenges. The absence of a unified and coordinated approach has led to inefficiencies, inconsistencies, higher costs, and substantial impacts on the workforce's physical and psychological health.

The review team found supervisors and OICs are often ill-equipped with the necessary skills, training and knowledge to respond to the nuanced issues involving the wellbeing of their teams. Consequently, the implementation of initiatives locally is inconsistent, and many rely on a reactive or ad hoc approach, rather than being proactively designed or strategically integrated.

The absence of structured or tailored approaches further exacerbates the problem. Injury management processes are largely uncoordinated, with no unified system to seamlessly guide personnel from injury occurrence through rehabilitation and reintegration. Programs often fail to incorporate evidence-based practices, resulting in a patchwork of initiatives that do not align with the overarching goals of better health and wellbeing. Without a fit-for-purpose ICT system, these processes lack the support needed to streamline communication and decision-making, leaving personnel stuck in inefficient loops.

It seems a siloed approach from the divisions that deal with our workforce, along with misunderstandings of the principles of confidentiality and a centralised case management approach have contributed to several missed opportunities. The review found there was little coordination or integration between the Human Resources Division, Health and Wellbeing Division and Safety Strategy Division when it came to the health, safety and wellbeing of the workforce. The IAP noted during their consultation session, these critical functions operated as ‘impenetrable silos’. Moreover, QPS wellbeing initiatives appear to be driven by short-term fixes rather than long-term strategies. There is a distinct absence of a cohesive welfare framework that spans the lifecycle of personnel—from recruitment to retirement. This gap not only diminishes the efficacy of individual programs but also prevents the establishment of a resilient organisational culture that prioritises proactive support and care.

Addressing these deficiencies requires a transformation in both governance and operational execution. By adopting a holistic, person-centred care model, clarifying divisional responsibilities, and establishing structured frameworks for injury management and wellbeing, the QPS can begin to foster resilience, improve member support, and create a safer, more supportive workplace environment. Only through comprehensive reforms can the organisation truly align wellbeing initiatives with the needs of its personnel, ensuring sustainable improvements across the board. The review identified areas requiring targeted intervention, including proactive wellbeing frameworks, injury management systems, leadership capability uplift, and workplace health and safety compliance.

The below case study highlights the systemic failures within the injury management systems of QPS, focusing on an officer with 12 years of service who faced significant psychological and physical challenges over a five-year period.

#### *Case study – injury management*

A police officer from a general duties station, who had been on long term sick leave, had been diagnosed with several associated psychological issues. Over a lengthy period, the member attempted seven Suitable Duties Plans (SDP) or Return-to-Work (RTW) plans. Five of these plans were either incomplete or unsuccessful, leading to repeated relocations across three different locations, including administrative roles, without achieving sustainable reintegration.

An Independent Medical Examination (IME) failed to provide definitive outcomes and there was limited progress in the member’s case. The member took extended leave without pay over the following two years, during which the member was externally placed, further complicating their recovery. Additional medical advice revealed uncertainty regarding their ability to return to work, compounded by conflicting reports that created confusion and stagnation. Over the course of 8.5 years, the member was absent for approximately 9,000 hours, equivalent to nearly five years out of the workplace.

The lengthy process of this case, allowed for an inconsistent approach to the case. This included frequent changes in injury management advisors, which disrupted continuity and relationship-building essential for effective support. Another complication was the changes in Assistant Commissioner in the region over that timeframe. Conflicting medical reports delayed decision-making, while unresolved disciplinary matters added further stress on the member. There was also no in-person contact by the various Injury Management Advisors (IMAs) during long periods of this process.

Resolution was eventually achieved through direct intervention by the Assistant Commissioner and District Officer (DO), who closely case-managed the situation, resulting in the member’s successful return to work.

The case underscores critical deficiencies, such as the lack of a consistent, proactive approach to supporting injured members, fragmented coordination between advisors, and the failure to resolve conflicting medical evidence in a timely manner. It also demonstrated how bespoke and local solutions are sometimes needed in complex cases, where applying a one size fits all approach can cause more harm to members than intended.

The review heard of other complex cases that took time to resolve. High-level leadership intervention proved essential, revealing the urgent need for a unified, end-to-end injury management framework. Strengthening governance and adopting a data-driven approach are crucial to prevent such systemic failures, ensuring personnel receive timely and effective support while reducing the risk of prolonged absences and unresolved cases in the future.

Wellbeing and health and safety policies need to be fit-for-purpose and grounded in an understanding of frontline policing to ensure they address the risks faced by members. Preventative and early intervention/support should be a dedicated priority, which can be achieved through a ‘from hire-to-retire’ approach.

The Service’s embedding of a focus on wellbeing will enable a balance between locally led solutions and approaches, and consistent guidance, processes and policies across the organisation. They should be specific and purposeful in detailing procedures and processes, while also retaining flexibility across roles.

## A new approach

The current approach to wellbeing and injury management within the QPS is fragmented, reactive, and lacking in system-wide cohesion. The absence of a unified, person-centred model has left many members feeling unsupported, particularly during critical health or psychological events. Regions, Districts and Commands often operate in silos, while support services are inconsistently applied and insufficiently integrated into operational environments. As illustrated by the case study, members frequently fall through the cracks of injury management systems due to lack of coordination, lack of continuity in advisors, and conflicting medical advice.

It is acknowledged the QPS currently does not have a suitable mechanism in place to properly support its people across their career. Informed by consultation, case review, and frontline feedback, the review team believes a community of practice model that delivers a locally led, centrally supported integrated and networked approach to wellbeing should be established. This model would function as an integrated wellbeing network that unifies key functions (such as Injury Management, Health and Safety, Psychological Services, Chaplaincy, and Human Resources) under a proactive, coordinated structure.

The review team believe the approach taken by South Eastern Region’s *Integrated Wellbeing* and that of Far Northern Region *Health Start Self Care & Wellbeing* program could provide a way forward for the organisation. This community of practice approach prioritises member wellbeing through an approach which empowers local leadership decision making. This approach also coordinates and integrates the skills and qualifications of the professionals involved in member wellbeing. The IAP supported this approach.

The approach proposed by the review team has considered aspects of the various models utilised in other jurisdictions and agencies such as the AFP’s ‘Project Shield’ and QAS’s ‘Priority One’. An opportunity now exists for the organisation to deliver hybrid regional models as an approach to health, safety and wellbeing, in partnership with the specialists in the proposed Workforce Management and Wellbeing Division.

A locally led, and person centric approach to wellbeing, with specialist support from the Division, will enhance employee wellbeing, whilst taking consideration of the nature of work within the local operational environment.

An integrated approach to wellbeing would ensure services are not only accessible but strategically embedded and consistently delivered for all members, offering holistic, compassionate, and accountable care. This approach shifts the QPS from a siloed, reactive model to one grounded in prevention, integration, and member-centred support. This proposal allows for a truly locally led, yet centrally supported, approach to the health, safety and wellbeing of our members.

Critical to this approach is a guiding framework which builds a regionally led and sustainable, healthy and resilient workforce with “people at the core” of our decision-making processes (AFP, 2024). In other words, a holistic approach to health safety and wellbeing that is locally led and delivered but supported by the expertise and experience of practitioners and professionals in allied health and wellbeing. In order to produce a holistic approach to member wellbeing, the QPS needs to develop strategic wellbeing priorities across the working lifetime of our members, and beyond.

After consideration of the approaches taken in other jurisdiction, the review believes these strategic priorities should at least encompass the following tenets:

- Reduce the barriers to support networks.
- Enhance strategies aimed at educating the organisation which promote wellbeing.
- Enhance leadership which is person-centric in its approach.
- Strive to achieve best practice in delivering wellbeing services to our workforce.

This framework should be built on the pillars of governance and accountability with policies that allow the QPS to respond to health and wellbeing considerations in an evolving complex operational environment. At the core of this approach is leadership which drives a workplace culture where all members of the organisation are responsible for health, safety and wellbeing.

Critical to success is the enabling of supporting services that not only improve employee wellbeing but also build resilience and drive prevention and a risk focus to safety. Importantly, it is important to build a framework where a complete and holistic approach is taken to employee health, safety and wellbeing. Integrating all parts of the system with an approach that embraces all aspects of the experience of our members in their connections with the QPS.

The conceptual diagram below represents a proposed way of working and delivering at a local (regional) level, aimed at addressing the critical wellbeing gaps identified in this review. This approach enables the connection of all components of employee wellbeing. This model represents a local community of practice approach to the wellbeing of our members.

With our members at the centre of the model, all parts of a supported, healthy, safe, and well workforce (including ethical health) are integrated to support our members. Importantly local leadership, supported by the Division, will be responsible for coordination, governance and accountability for delivery of this community of practice at a local level:



*Figure 7: Wraparound of components of proposed integrated wellbeing model*

Much like career development and training, wellbeing should be a priority across a member's journey through our organisation. This 'hire to retire' mindset focuses on wellbeing, health, and safety. In practice, this should include:

- Incorporating wellbeing into the recruit experience, (including skilling recruits on their self-responsibility, building resilience, employee assistance services, roles of supervisors coupled with academy staff providing wellbeing support).
- Ensuring members are provided training and development ensuring awareness to effectively identify and address wellbeing as an individual, colleague, supervisor and leader.
- An organisational structure that supports an enhanced and integrated wellbeing and health and safety capability.
- Collaboration and alignment of proactive preventative and reactive responses.
- Support of our members after they exit the organisation, and recognition of the impact their service to the community may have on their immediate family. This approach should include programs and resources to assist members as they transition to retirement.

The above needs to be coupled with an improved approach to how supervisors, managers and leaders are developed and skilled to respond purposely and effectively to behaviours that contribute to creating unhealthy (including disharmonious) workplaces.

## Employee housing

Failure to invest in our members by providing well-maintained housing further impacts member wellbeing, as members equate the standard of their accommodation with the degree to which the organisation is concerned with their circumstances. It leads to members, and in turn their families, feeling undervalued, disengaged and resentful. This is particularly the case in locations where the disparity between QPS and other government departments is apparent. Appendix I provides photographs supplied to the review capturing the condition of select accommodation in Far Northern Region.

As of 30 May 2025, QPS oversees a housing portfolio comprising 1,034 units of accommodation across various regions. Of these, 599 properties are owned by QPS, while 435 are leased either from private markets or the Department of Housing and Public Works. The portfolio includes diverse housing options such as houses, apartments, duplexes, and barrack rooms, with 140 units currently vacant; however, the

accuracy of vacancy data depends on timely updates provided by District Housing Management Committees.

The demand for housing consistently surpasses supply, particularly in remote areas where environmental conditions cause significant wear and tear on buildings. Many owned properties are situated on operational reserves, which complicates options for divestment and replacement. In some cases, lifecycle evaluations are required to determine whether refurbishment or complete replacement is feasible, but these assessments face constraints due to limited capital funding.

The QPS manages maintenance through a tripartite model encompassing unplanned maintenance for urgent repairs handled via QBuild under a Service Level Agreement, planned maintenance based on triennial condition assessments, and preventative maintenance for recurring service needs such as smoke alarm checks and septic system servicing. For the fiscal year 2024–2025, QPS allocated \$6.396 million toward housing maintenance, supplemented by \$740,000 reinvested from member accommodation contributions. These funds primarily aim to meet the minimum housing standards prescribed by the Residential Tenancies Authority (RTA). Despite these investments, QPS continues to face a maintenance backlog amounting to \$33.3 million.

Governance of police housing relies on structures such as the State Housing Management Committee and District Housing Management Committee at the district level. However, tenancy management is often performed by staff who lack dedicated responsibilities in this area, leading to operational inefficiencies. While maintenance responsibilities are predominantly handled by QBuild, which charges a 15% management fee, the Accommodation Contribution Reinvestment Program enables the procurement of low-risk maintenance work at the local level. Additionally, a State Government decision from 2012 restricts the organisation's ability to manage general-purpose employee housing, limiting the flexibility to grow or divest properties unless they are situated on operational reserves.

## Issues and gaps

The review identified persistent and systemic challenges in the management and delivery of police housing across the QPS. The current housing portfolio comprising over 1,000 units of accommodation faces significant shortfalls in both quantity and quality, particularly in remote and regional locations where housing is essential for operational capability and member wellbeing. Despite considerable investment, demand continues to exceed supply, exacerbated by environmental wear, a high maintenance backlog, and inconsistent local governance structures.

Many districts lack the resourcing and autonomy to address housing challenges promptly, and there is no service wide mechanism to prioritise upgrades or ensure transparent allocation based on operational need.

The effectiveness of QPS housing management faces significant challenges stemming from ageing infrastructure, limited growth planning, workforce management constraints, and fragmented governance. A substantial \$33.3 million maintenance backlog highlights the urgent need for capital investment to address the ageing portfolio, particularly in remote regions. Furthermore, current funding mechanisms impede proactive initiatives to expand or replace housing stock, compounded by restrictions on asset divestment and reinvestment, which limit agility in responding to fluctuating demand.

Housing responsibilities, often delegated to officers or administrative staff without dedicated training or resources, hinder property management tasks such as inspections, legislative compliance, and key administration. The reliance on QBuild adds cost and rigidity, with mandatory use outside of low-risk Accommodation Contribution Reinvestment Program works incurring additional fees and operational

delays. Governance structures like State Housing Management Committee and District Housing Management Committee, while present, suffer from inconsistent engagement and procedural adherence, contributing to disparities in housing outcomes across districts.

There is a notable disparity between the housing conditions reported by members and the centralised data maintained by Property and Facilities Management, highlighting critical issues such as the substantial backlog in maintenance requirements.

Training opportunities through Capital Assets and Facilities Management Group remain underutilised as uptake is voluntary, and many locations lack dedicated housing management roles. Compared to other agencies, QPS faces a competitive disadvantage. Other states offer more attractive financial relief and flexibility, making QPS less effective in attracting and retaining remote workforce talent. Additionally, the absence of pooled resources or centralised development under Government Employee Housing management restricts QPS from achieving economies of scale seen in other departments such as Education.

Despite identified demand for 101 additional housing units, future delivery remains uncertain as it relies on securing long-term funding for rent commitments. Without broader budget reform, QPS is unable to adequately scale its housing stock to meet workforce and service expansion needs.

The current housing arrangements within QPS reveal a significant disconnect between policy intentions and on-ground realities. Despite the provisions outlined in the residential housing policy, operational implementation often falls short, exposing gaps in governance, asset management, and strategic alignment. The portfolio, consisting of 1,034 units of accommodation, is maintained under a tripartite model, but a \$33.3 million maintenance backlog and the absence of a funded capital renewal strategy highlight the critical need for investment. Governance structures like the District Housing Management Committee and State Housing Management Committee suffer from inconsistent engagement and procedural adherence, while tenancy responsibilities are delegated to staff without dedicated housing roles, leading to inefficiencies and non-compliance.

Restrictions on asset divestment further exacerbate challenges in renewing and expanding the portfolio. Additionally, training opportunities remain underutilised, risking policy compliance and effective property management. Strategic misalignment with broader frameworks like Government Employee Housing limits QPS's ability to achieve efficiencies seen in other government agencies.



## Attrition

Review Priority 2 of the Commissioner's 100 Day Review relates to 'attrition rates'. The sub-focus of this priority, as outlined in the terms of reference, is as follows:

*'Investigate the drivers of increased attrition to identify what opportunities may exist to address the accelerated rates of separation from the Service to reduce the direct impact on frontline service delivery.'*

To achieve the intent of this review within specified timeframes, it was determined that 'attrition' would be examined within the construct of 'unplanned (voluntary) separations from the Service', thereby excluding the following separation types:

- age retirements
- medical retirements

Due to the data sets available, voluntary retirements and other separations (dismissal/deceased) are included in the analysis below however values are not considered significant within the holistic data pool. Projections included within data analysis below were current as of April 2025, however it is to be noted 2024/25 projections may have changed throughout the duration of the 100-Day Review.

Examination and identification of attrition drivers within both sworn and unsworn workforces was included within the scope of this review. This intentionally recognises the important role that unsworn staff play in supporting frontline policing and providing services to the community. Recommendations within Review Priority 2 are generally designed to be implemented across both sworn and unsworn personnel, despite the more thorough data analysis conducted specifically for sworn workforces.

## Attrition in the QPS

The sustained demand pressures being experienced across the entire service delivery system renders the issue of workforce retention a key consideration for the QPS Executive. Although recent efforts have been dedicated to developing a capable workforce through intensive recruitment strategies, as provided for in the QPS Strategic Plan 2024-2028, there has been minimal effort or strategic investment in the retention of the QPS workforce. A ministerial charter letter to The Honourable Dan Purdie, Minister for Police and Emergency Services, outlining a government deliverable '*reduce police officer attrition to three per cent or less*' reinforced the importance of police retention to the delivery of safer Queensland communities. Resourcing demands arising from an ageing workforce and hosting of the 2032 Brisbane Olympics will further challenge strategic workforce planning and highlight the necessity to invest in both the recruitment, and importantly, retention of the QPS workforce.

The sworn workforce is currently projected to have an unplanned separation rate of 3.2% for the 2024/25 financial year (as of 30 April 2025). In comparison to recent years, the unplanned rate was consistently below 2% for the period from 2015/16 to 2020/21, prior to increasing to 2.4% in 2021/22 and consistently > 3% from 2022/23 to 2024/25 (see figure 8 and table 10).



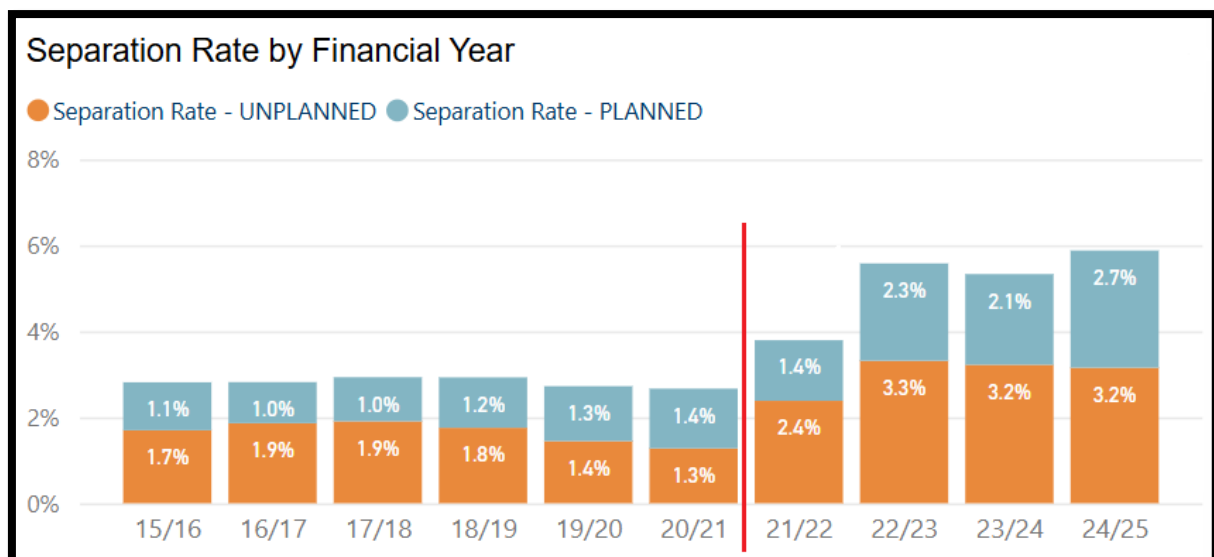


Figure 8: Police separation rate by financial year from 2015/16 to 2024/2025 (as at 30 April 2025)

Separation Reasons	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24	24/25
RESIGNATION	142	147	168	131	122	103	224	310	349	291
RETIREMENT - AGE	80	81	83	101	119	125	135	199	179	183
RETIREMENT - MEDICAL	51	32	38	38	34	45	38	79	77	98
RETIREMENT - VOL	46	51	46	69	40	41	47	64	18	13
OTHER	11	22	11	8	11	12	21	33	24	21
<b>Total</b>	<b>330</b>	<b>333</b>	<b>346</b>	<b>347</b>	<b>326</b>	<b>326</b>	<b>465</b>	<b>685</b>	<b>647</b>	<b>606</b>

Note - the "OTHER" category includes separations for the reasons of Contract Terminated/Ended, Dismissal and Deceased.

Table 10: Police separation reason by financial year from 2015/16 to 2024/2025 (as at 30 April 2025)

The planned separation rate also increased over this period, representing increases in both medical retirements and age retirements resulting from an aging workforce. Interestingly, however, unplanned and planned separations have fluctuated significantly over the past 20 years (see figure 9). The highest unplanned separation rate for sworn members was recorded in 2007/08 at 4.3%, which appears to be an anomaly given rates of 3.0% in the preceding and following year. Another anomaly was evident in 2012/13 where the rate was 3.5%, which was also preceded and followed by rates of 2.8% and 1.9% respectively. Since 2004/05, unplanned attrition has been higher than 3% on only four occasions, two of those being in recent consecutive years across 2022/23 to 2023/24. What is of particular significance to this review, however, irrespective of historic trends, is that unplanned separation rates were consistently low for approximately eight years, from 2013/14 to 2020/21, before spiking and remaining consistently high over the following four consecutive years from 2021/22 to 2024/25 projections. In order for the QPS to understand and address trending separation rates, it is important to investigate contributing factors.

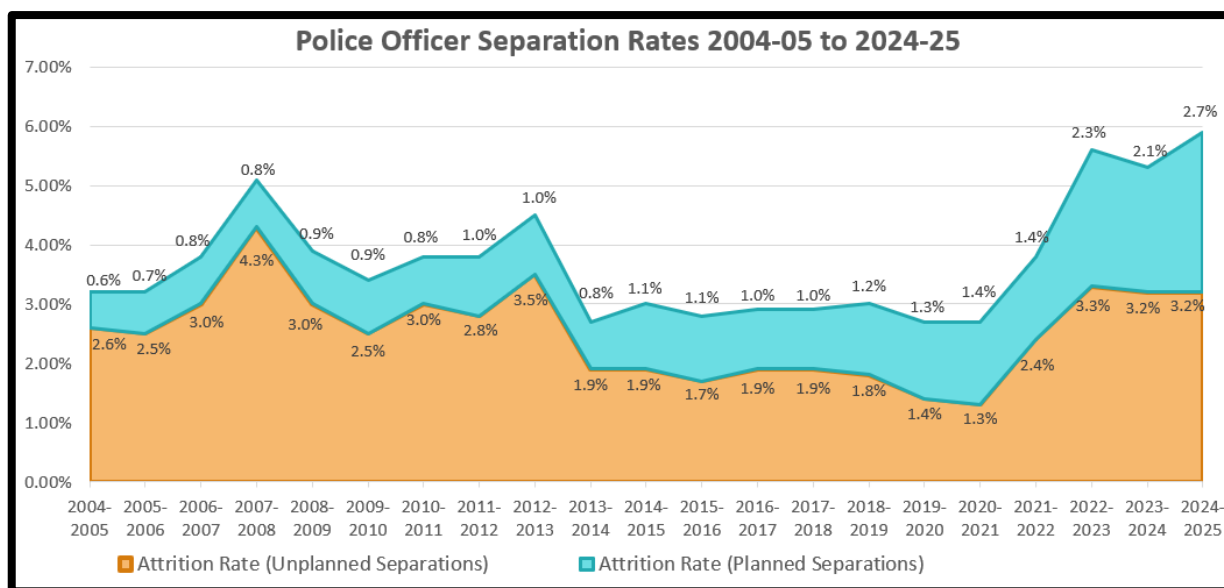


Figure 9: Police separation rates between 2004-05 and 2024-25 (as at 30 April 2025)

Attrition and employee turnover can be argued as healthy for any organisation with benefits including organisational growth and renewal. The Queensland Public Sector recording an annual separation rate of 6.24% in 2024 and 7.05% in 2023. The QPS has reported lower unplanned separation rates compared to those of the broader public service over the last five years, but comparisons with other public service agencies may not be suitable. This is attributed to the unique complexities within a policing context, where capability development and onboarding new employees to replace departing members requires extended periods of specialised training at considerable expense.

Similar trends were observed in unplanned separation rates for staff members, with sustained increases since 2020/21. Separation rates for unsworn workforces were recorded as < 10% over the years 2015/16 to 2020/21, after which the rate rose to >10% in 2021/22 to 2023/24 (see Figure 10 and Table 11). Unplanned separation rates within unsworn workforces, however, has historically always been higher in comparison with sworn workforces. The unplanned separation rate for 2024/25 is projected at 9.8%, but it is currently trending down.

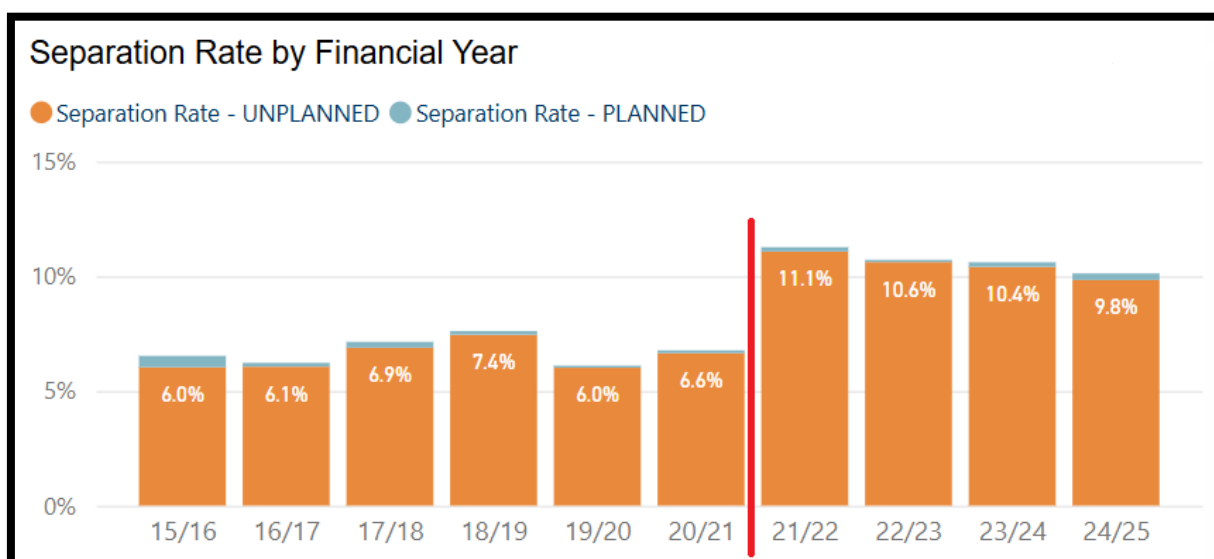


Figure 10: Unsworn member separation rates between 2004-05 and 2024-25 (as at 30 April 2025)

Separation Reasons	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24	24/25
RESIGNATION	97	121	158	153	140	148	322	344	372	335
RETIREMENT - VOL	45	57	49	76	46	67	117	65	71	64
OTHER	4	3	8	7	9	4	23	35	27	16
RETIREMENT - MEDICAL	12	5	8	5	3	4	8	4	9	12
<b>Total</b>	<b>158</b>	<b>186</b>	<b>223</b>	<b>241</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>223</b>	<b>470</b>	<b>448</b>	<b>479</b>	<b>427</b>

Note - the "OTHER" category includes separations for the reasons of Contract Terminated/Ended, Dismissal and Deceased.

*Table 11: Unsworn member separation reason by financial year from 2015/16 to 2024/25 (as at 30 April 2025)*

The significant increase in unplanned separation rates starting from the 2020/21 financial year, affecting both sworn and unsworn workforces over subsequent years, is a critical aspect of this review. It is essential to consider both internal and external factors that influenced the QPS and its workforce during this period, as outlined in the following timeline (see figure 11):

- The Constable Development Program (CDP) and the Management Development Program (MDP) were ceased in 2019 and 2020 respectively; however, the Leadership Capability Program was not launched until July 2022 due to COVID related delays. This resulted in a perceived disinvestment in leadership and capability development from 2019 to 2022.
- The COVID-19 pandemic began in early 2020, significantly altering the delivery of policing services to the community. Policing functions were perceived as authoritative due to compliance enforcement, in addition to reduced opportunities for positive community engagement. The pandemic also led to the issuance of Commissioner's directions and associated disciplinary processes (including dismissal) relating to mandatory workforce vaccinations.
- In February 2021 and August 2022, the Service Delivery Project (SDP) was implemented in the Moreton District and Logan District, which encountered significant workforce resistance.
- In 2022 following announcement of the Independent Commission of Inquiry (COI) into QPS Responses to Domestic and Family Violence (COIDFV), a series of hearings and submissions took place prior to public release of the 'A Call for Change' report which resulted in widespread adverse media attention and criticism directed towards members of the Service.
- In 2020, presumptive PTSD legislation for injured workers was introduced and resulted in increased rates of long-term absence from the workforce, particularly in frontline workstreams.
- Between 2022 and 2024, the QPS experienced several notable changes in executive leadership, including highly publicised resignation of a then Deputy Commissioner and later the Commissioner. These events and the circumstances leading up to them likely contributed to a lack of trust in leadership within the workforce and reduced confidence in senior management.
- In 2023, the QPS initiated a recruitment campaign in line with government commitments, offering substantial financial incentives to both interstate and international police officers. However, no financial retention incentives were provided to current QPS employees.

The factors mentioned above, both individually and collectively, significantly influenced the QPS service delivery system. Simultaneously, the QPS frontline had been facing unprecedented demand pressures. Given the operational nature of these impacts, a 'perfect storm' emerged over a relatively short period, primarily affecting frontline workforces. It is highly probable that this series of events contributed to increasing attrition rates over the same relevant timeframe.

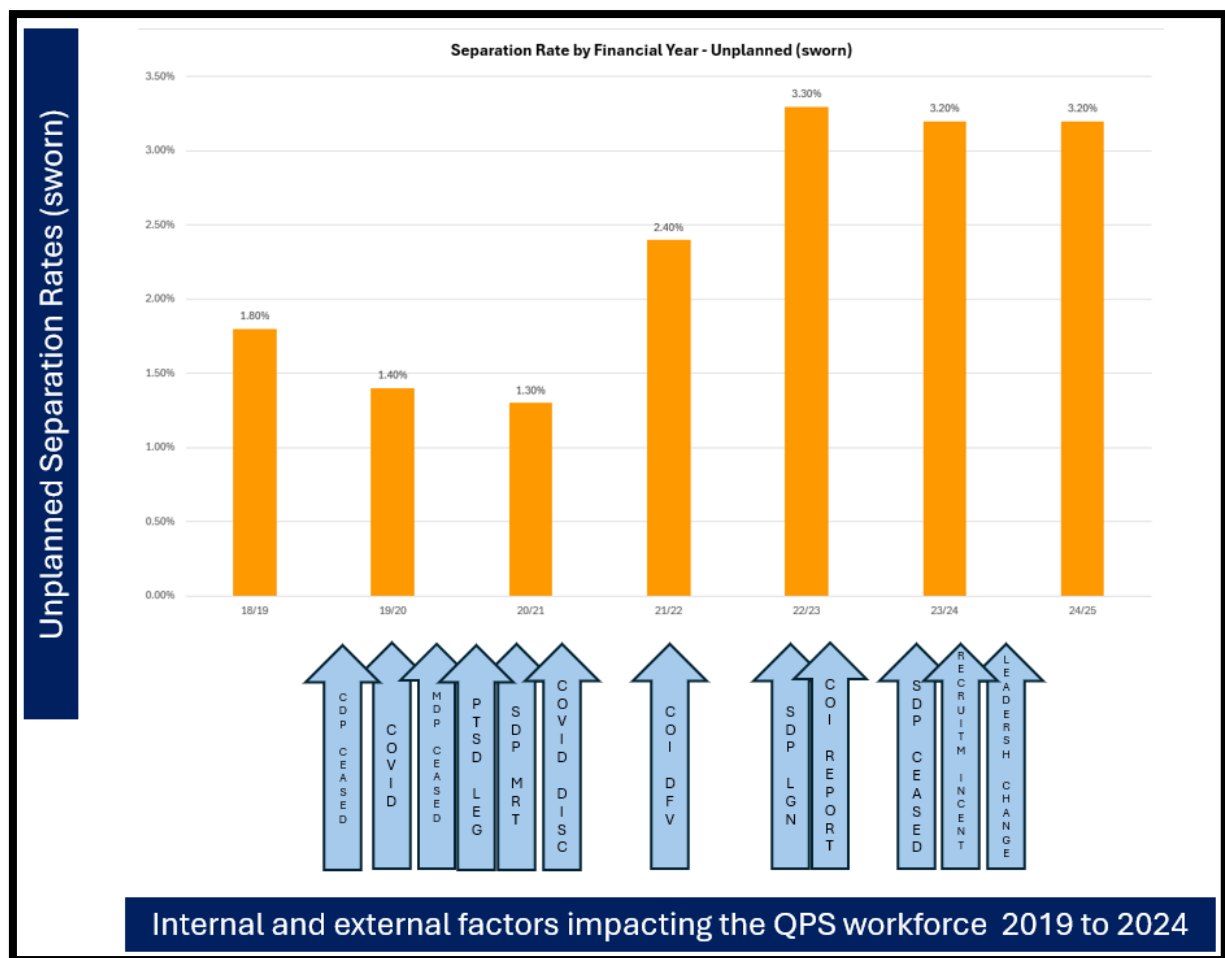


Figure 11: Internal and external factors impacting QPS sworn workforce from 2019 to 2024

The QPS is not the only policing agency experiencing challenges with workforce retention, with interjurisdictional and international policing agencies also reporting similar concerns (see table 12). In the NSW Police Annual Report 2023-24, 575 police officers were reported to have resigned and total police turnover numbers (including retirement) had almost doubled in four years. Similar trends were reported with the NSW Police unsworn workforce. ANZPAA workforce data obtained for 2023-24 (figure 5) projected Northern Territory Police as having the highest attrition rate (6.2%), followed by Western Australia Police (5.0%).

Whilst this data set showed QPS as projected to have a sworn attrition rate of 2.9%, the actual attrition rate was later recorded as 3.2% upon completion of the reporting period. This data, however, was used as a comparative guide only for the purpose of this review and validated the assumption that all policing agencies are experiencing similar concerns relating to workforce retention. As the data set comprises estimates only, it did not provide comparative trend analysis over subsequent financial years for each policing agency.

Estimated Police Officer Resignation Rates ANZPAA Jurisdictions – 2023-24*	
Jurisdiction	Estimates Resignation Rate
Northern Territory	6.2%
Western Australia	5.0%
Tasmania	4.4%
New Zealand	3.9%
Australian Capital Territory	3.6%
New South Wales	3.4%
South Australia	3.0%
Queensland	2.9%
Victoria	1.8%
All Jurisdictions	3.2%
*Resignation Rate for Queensland based on sworn resignations divided by average of monthly sworn headcounts for 2023-34. Rates for other agencies are based on ANZPAA data – sworn resignations for agencies divided by the average of agency sworn headcounts as at 30 June 2023 and 30 June 2024. Rates are estimates as there may be data inconsistencies between agencies.	

Table 12: Police officer estimated resignation rates across ANZPAA Jurisdictions for 2023-24

## Previous reviews

The QPS has undergone multiple internal and external audits, reviews, and recommendations which included examination of attrition. As previously canvassed in this document, in 2023, the Queensland Audit Office (2023 Queensland Audit Office report) released a report, *‘Deploying police resources’* which highlighted the absence of a QPS strategic approach to workforce planning and challenges in retaining staff. This report further identified the need for the QPS to develop a statewide program to support retiring officers wishing to return to the Service. In 2024, the QPS Internal Audit (2024 QPS IA) released the *‘Recruitment and Retention Review’* which identified the absence of a QPS Retention Framework. The report outlined a lack of Service oversight, accountability and setting of expectations to meet retention activities. In 2024, the Queensland Human Rights Commission (2024 QHRC report) released, *‘Strengthening the Service’* which included recommendations relating to needs of the QPS workforce, including the requirement for QPS members to access flexible working options. In 2024, the QPS Communications, Culture and Engagement Division championed an external review, *‘A Study of Retention Drivers’* (2024 CCE Review) which delivered a series of recommendations to the QPS to reduce attrition in both sworn and unsworn workforces. Recommendations from these reviews are at various stages of consideration and delivery, however, will be referenced here where relevant.

## Current QPS strategic position for retention

On the back of these reviews, it is important to note the current QPS position with respect of workforce retention. The QPS Strategic Plan 2024-2028 outlines, ‘Healthy and engaged workforce – build an engaged and capable workforce with health, safety and wellbeing of our people a priority’ as one of the four strategic objectives. The Plan outlines ‘Building a highly skilled, resilient workforce enhancing our capabilities to meet future demand’ as an opportunity. A listed strategy within the Healthy and Engaged Workforce objective is, ‘grow a capable workforce that represents and understands the community we serve’. The QPS

Operational Plan 2024-25, which is informed in part by the Strategic Plan, outlines a series of key activities including, 'Deliver an additional 400 of the 900 police personnel positions to meet increasing policing demands in serving communities', together with, 'Develop a Diversity Recruitment Strategy for police officer recruitment'.

The Strategic and Operational Plans also inform the QPS Strategic Workforce Action Plan 2024-25. Whilst action B3 of this plan relates to 'Strengthening our recruitment and retention strategies to attract and support diverse talent and expertise', examination of the sub-actions identified a focus on the recruitment and delivery of additional personnel, as well as increasing diversity and inclusion with the QPS.

As in the Strategic and Operational plans, there are no identified actions within the Strategic Workforce Action Plan to address workforce retention as a strategic priority.

The 2024 QPS IA report stated, '*...agreement had been reached between the Deputy Commissioner Regional Services and the Deputy Chief Executive, Strategy and Corporate Services that HR were best placed to be the owner and developer of the [Retention] framework*'. It is noted some recommendations arising from this audit however remain open and are not due until 30 June 2025. The 2024-25 Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Plan includes actions to grow organisational knowledge regarding why employees leave the organisation, with a view to improving employee retention. The review team were advised, however, quarterly reporting against this plan was placed on hold due to uncertainty around QPS Governance arrangements.

In late 2024, a QPS People Working Group was established with the TOR outlining the group's purpose 'to promote a more cohesive approach to our work, workforce and workplace'. It is understood the People Working Group will sit within the People Sub-Committee under the new QPS Strategic Governance Framework. The PWG is currently coordinating 27 recommendations arising from the 2024 CCE Review, with responsible owners appointed to each of the recommendations. Acknowledging the group is in its infancy and there have been changes in QPS strategic governance, there appears to have been minimal progress in implementation of the recommendations. As an interim measure, the Executive Director CCE commenced a 'Retention Drivers Project' to maintain momentum with implementation of recommendations, however this project is only focussed on the six (of the 27) recommendations assigned to CCE. The Retention Drivers Project is being undertaken by a single sworn Sergeant currently seconded to CCE. This would appear inadequate considering the sustained increases in workforce attrition observed over recent years and the concomitant risk to frontline service delivery.

In summary, the 100 Day Review identified the Service is yet to establish workforce retention as a key strategic priority, which has subsequently resulted in a lack of strategic investment, actions or reporting on this issue. Further, the Service is yet to develop a holistic workforce retention strategy and there is an apparent absence of a structured, coordinated and actionable approach to reduce attrition. It is imperative the Service rapidly develops a coordinated strategy to maintain a healthy, capable, and supported workforce to effectively meet needs of the community. To support oversight of retention strategies, the service may consider investment in ICT platforms similar to NSW Police, which undertakes a complete review of employee sentiment and engagement through a single platform. This technology also predicts at-risk groups and develops interventions to improve retention and recruitment.

## Data Analysis and Identification of Drivers of Attrition

To better understand factors contributing to attrition, the review undertook trend analysis of QPS separations data. Data relating to voluntary separations is managed by Human Resources Division Workforce Strategy and Analytics, utilising the information management platform 'HR Connect'. HR

Connect feeds into an interactive ‘Separations Dashboard’, which displays separation metrics including locations, rank/class, gender, workstream and length of service. Due to the time limitations of the 100 Day Review, detailed multi-variable analysis was not feasible, however from the work done, a series of key observations and conclusions regarding drivers of attrition was made possible. The analysis provided strategic insight into separation rates amongst different demographics and workforces across the Service. Ongoing data analysis should be regularly undertaken by the Service to ensure strategic effort and targeted investment in workforce retention strategies are deliberate and aligned with QPS priorities.

Beyond whole of service data already presented, analysis of separation data was undertaken by demographic factor to further examine separation rates across the QPS. By region, Northern Region are currently projected to have the highest rate of unplanned separation (sworn) at 5.3%, followed by North Coast Region at 3.2% (see Figure 12). Separation rates, however, were found to vary significantly across regions and financial years. To illustrate this disparity, Northern Region (which projected highest in 2024/25 at 5.3%) recorded the lowest regional unplanned separation rate of in 2023/24 with 2.5%. The volatility associated with this series diminishes its utility.

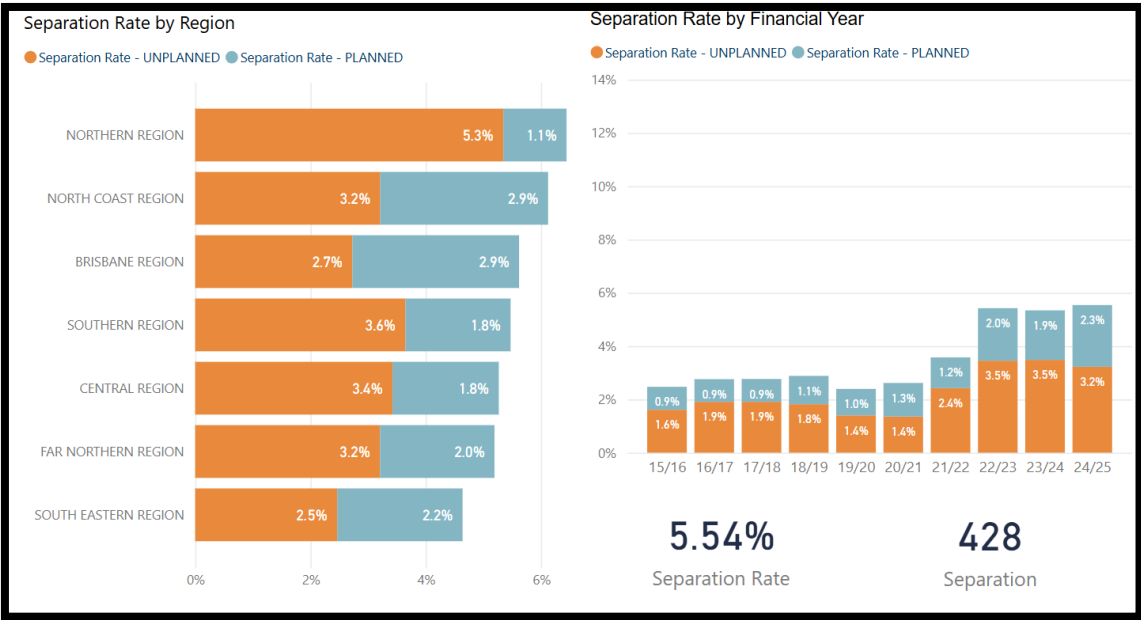


Figure 12: Police officer separation rates (unplanned and planned) – by region

Analysis undertaken of strategic level portfolios (Deputy Commissioner/Chief Executive level) did identify clear disparity in separation rates across the portfolios, with higher separation rates for police (compared to QPS ALL) within the Regional Operations and Youth Crime (DCROYC) portfolio (see table 13). The roles and functions performed by sworn members within the DCROYC are predominantly frontline/first response roles, which due to the inherent nature of duties performed, would be reasonably expected to record higher separation rates. The importance of this concept will be explored in further detail throughout this review. The Disaster and Emergency Management and Strategy and Corporate Services portfolio were not included due to very low numerical counts of actual separations.



Metrics – Separation Rates (Unplanned) – QPS ALL v Portfolio (%)										
	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24	24/25*
QPS ALL (police)	1.7	1.9	1.9	1.8	1.4	1.3	2.4	3.3	3.2	3.2
ROYC	1.6	1.9	1.9	1.8	1.4	1.4	2.4	3.5	3.5	3.2
SO	1.8	2.2	1.8	1.5	1	1.3	3.1	2.9	2.5	3.1
RS	1.6	1.4	1.7	1.4	1.9	0.9	1.6	2.7	2.3	2.6

KEY

> QPS ALL

= QPS ALL

Table 13: Police officer separation rates (unplanned) – by Deputy Commissioner portfolio

The data below (see table 14) provides a comparative analysis of separation rates across districts for sworn members. Whilst there is disparity across financial years and districts, clear trends can be identified in districts including Moreton and Mackay Whitsunday Districts, both of which have consistently recorded separation rates equal to or above the state average.

Metrics – Separation Rates (Unplanned) – by district (%)										
	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24	24/25*
QPS ALL (police)	1.7	1.9	1.9	1.8	1.4	1.3	2.4	3.3	3.2	3.2
TVE	2.5	1.2	2.4	1.2	2.3	2.2	3.5	3.8	2.9	6
IPW	2.1	1.8	3.1	1.7	1.2	1.4	3.2	2.8	2.4	5.1
WBBD	1.7	1.3	1.8	1.8	1.4	1.1	1.3	1.9	3.9	4.1
MRT	1.2	2.1	1.5	2	1.5	1.5	3.2	4.8	4.9	3.2
MWD	2.2	3.8	3.6	2.8	2.4	1.4	2.9	3.4	5.9	3.3
CAP	1.9	2.2	1.9	1.7	1.5	1.7	1.8	3.4	3.8	3.5
FND	2.3	1.6	1.3	1.8	1.1	1.3	1.8	3.1	3.4	3.2
LGN	1.9	2.6	1.8	1.6	1.4	0.8	1.6	4.9	3.7	2.6
NBD	1	1.9	1.4	2.2	1.6	1.4	3.1	3.6	2.1	2.8
MID	-	2.1	0.6	1.1	2.1	3	1.6	2.2	1.1	3.2
SCD	1.3	1.6	2	1.4	2.3	1.1	2.3	2.7	3.5	2.4
SBD	1.6	1.6	1.7	1.8	1.1	1	2.1	2.7	3.8	2.7
GCD	1.4	2.3	2.4	1.3	1	2	3	3.3	3.6	2.4
DDD	1.9	2	2.3	1.9	1	1.4	1.9	3.7	4.5	2.6
SWD	1.1	-	1.6	5.1	0.5	0.5	1.1	4.3	2.7	2.9

Table 14: Police officer separation rates (unplanned) – by district

A trend of consistently high rates of unplanned separation in sworn members with 0 – 4 years of service is reflected in the table below (see table 15). The trend is highlighted in separation data displayed by rank (see Table 16), whereby sworn officers at the rank of constable have consistently higher rates of unplanned separation in comparison to the state rate, across a number of financial years. Officers at the rank of senior constable have also recorded high rates of separation in 2023/24 and this is expected to be confirmed for 2024/25.

Metrics – Separation Rates (Unplanned) – by LOS (%)										
	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24	24/25*
QPS ALL (police)	1.7	1.9	1.9	1.8	1.4	1.3	2.4	3.3	3.2	3.2
> 30	4.3	4.6	4.4	5.3	2.8	2.3	2	3.2	1.8	2.7
25-29	0.9	1.5	1.4	0.7	1.1	0.9	1.3	2.9	2	2.1
20-24	1.4	1	1.4	1.5	1.1	1	2.1	2.7	2	2.1
15-19	1.4	1.1	1	0.7	0.9	0.4	2.2	1.4	2.9	2.6
10 - 14	1.6	1.2	1.5	1.6	1.1	0.9	2.4	3.9	3.8	3.2
05 - 09	1.1	1.6	2	1.6	1.3	1.3	2.3	3.1	3.9	3
0 - 04	2.1	2.5	2.2	2	2.2	2.1	3.6	5.2	4.4	4.7

Table 15: Police officer separation rates (unplanned) – by length of service



Metrics – Separation Rates (Unplanned) – by Rank/Class (%)										
	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24	24/25*
QPS ALL (police)	1.7	1.9	1.9	1.8	1.4	1.3	2.4	3.3	3.2	3.2
Commissioned Officer	3.1	2.4	1.5	3.4	2.6	2.7	1.9	4.3	1.2	2.1
Sen Sgt	2.6	1.9	2.7	2.8	1.5	1	1.9	2.8	1.6	1.9
Sgt	1.5	1.6	1.8	1.6	1.1	0.8	2.1	2.5	1.9	1.9
Scon 8-10	1	1.7	1.3	1.4	1.1	0.9	2.3	2.5	3	3.2
Scon 1-7	1.3	1.5	1.5	1.2	1.2	1	2	3.2	4.2	3.5
Con 3-6	1.7	1.5	2.2	2.1	1.6	2.2	2.8	5.2	3.3	3.3
Con 1-2	3	4.3	3.5	2.8	3.6	2.9	5.1	5.5	5.4	5.5

Table 16: Police officer separation rates (unplanned) – by rank/class

Analysis undertaken regarding attrition rates within workstreams (sworn members) identified the general duties workforce as recording consistently high rates of attrition since 2015/16, which aligned with the earlier observation regarding highest attrition rates observed within the DCROYC portfolio (see Table 17). Considering the size of the general duties cohort across the organisation, this represents the loss of significant frontline capacity across the Service, with 202 voluntary separations from general duties recorded in 2022/23, 225 in 2023/24 and 183 (to date) in 2024/25.

Metrics – Separation Rates (Unplanned) – by Workstream (%)										
	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24	24/25*
QPS ALL (police)	1.7	1.9	1.9	1.8	1.4	1.3	2.4	3.3	3.2	3.2
Community Engagement	2.8	5.1	2.3	3.4	1.1	1.1	1.6	4.4	2.8	4.4
Legal	3.6	1.8	2.6	1.1	1.1	1.5	6.4	2.9	6	4.2
General Duties	1.8	2	2.2	1.8	1.4	1.5	2.8	3.7	4	3.8
Other	3.3	2	2.5	2.7	1.9	1.6	2.7	4	3.6	3.6
Education Training	1.5	2.7	2.9	0.07	2.5	1.5	1.5	4.2	1.5	3.5
Comms/Plink	1.8	2.7	1.8	1.3	1.8	0.5	2.3	4.2	2.8	3.3
Intel	1.6	1.1	0.7	2.9	1	0.3	2.6	2.9	1.9	3
Investigative	1	1.5	1.5	1.4	1.2	0.9	1.7	2.1	2.3	2.4
Road Policing	0.07	1.6	0.9	1.5	1.6	1.6	0.5	1.6	2	2.4
Vulnerable Persons							1.5	5.1	5.8	2.2
Watchhouse	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.9	1.1	1.1	2.7	6	2.7	2.1
Forensic	1.4	0.5	1.8	1.1	1.8	0.5	2.6	3	2.5	2
Specialist Response	1.4		1.4	0.7	0.7			2.5	1.2	1.7
Specialist Services	0.7	1.6	0.9	1.6	1.3	0.9	0.3	0.9	2.1	1.5
District/Region Mgmt	1	1.6	0.6	3.4	2.2	1.3	2.6	4.6	0.3	0.9

Table 17: Police officer separation rates (unplanned) – by workstream

No consistent trends in separation rates by gender were observed when undertaking analysis across sworn workforces. The timeframes associated with the review, however, precluded more granular analysis exploring gender trends across workstreams, lengths of service or ages.

In terms of QPS data holdings beyond HR Connect, survey data and analysis were obtained from the QPS WFQ Team to support investigation of attrition drivers within the QPS. The WFQ Team reported ‘*Intention to leave the QPS*’ responses have been trending upwards since 2015 and in 2024 was recorded at 18%. In the 2024 survey, sworn members ranked ‘*senior leadership is of a poor quality*’ and ‘*I am emotionally exhausted*’ as the top two reasons for their intention to leave, whilst unsworn members identified ‘*lack of future career opportunities*’ as the primary reason with ‘*senior leadership quality*’ as the secondary reason.

WFQ survey responses more generally relating to ‘*burnout*’ are consistently and significantly higher for police officers than staff, with the gap widening over more recent years. Analysis of free text comments indicated that officer burnout is directly correlated to a member’s intention to leave, with commonly referenced causes of burnout cited as increasingly high workloads resulting from shortages of experienced police. Other factors contributing to burnout and intention to leave include not being released for relieving opportunities, rostering practices impacting work-life balance, and a lack of support from executive/senior leadership. The review noted that the number of people indicating an intention to leave the organisation in the WFQ survey is not replicated in actual attrition figures. However it is noted that this is still an indication of employee dissatisfaction within the organisation.

WFQ results relating to employee engagement are key indicators of healthy and productive workplaces. High levels of engagement correlate to low intentions to leave, whereas low levels of engagement contribute to burnout. By length of service, engagement peaks in the first year then reduces until the 10–14-year range, a trend which correlates with workforce attrition rates. Engagement has generally decreased year-on-year across the Service, except in 2024 where a slight improvement was observed. Despite this outlier, the DCROYC portfolio recorded significantly lower employee engagement levels than service wide. This aligns with trends in separation data observed across the deputy level portfolios, where separation rates within the predominantly frontline DCROYC portfolio are consistently higher than other portfolios.

As outlined, the intent of this review was to investigate drivers of attrition, to identify opportunities that may exist to address the accelerated rates of separation from the Service to reduce the direct impact on frontline service delivery. The methodology to achieve this intent focussed on analysis of data sets, with a strong focus applied to the ‘workforce voice’ obtained from both in person and desktop engagements. This included deep examination of workforce feedback obtained directly from the QPS 100-Day Review Survey and the work undertaken by the Independent Advisory Panel (IAP) members who also conducted face to face interviews. At the conclusion of analysis and engagement, a series of attrition drivers were identified from which recommendations were developed to address the accelerated rates of separation from the Service currently observed.

## **Recruitment, training and induction into the Service**

Examination of recruit attrition revealed volatility across the time period studied, however since 2021, there has been an average attrition rate of 6.4%. In 2024, 52 recruits separated from the Service prior to graduation, which included both self and Service initiated separations. Forty-three first year constables (FYCs) separated from the Service over the same period. Separating recruits and FYCs are invited to complete the HR Connect exit survey, which provides generalised metrics regarding reasons for separation. In 2024 the Recruit Training Program (RTP) commenced independent recording of separation data for FYCs to identify improvements in how the Service trains and shapes recruits to better prepare for the frontline. The primary reason for separation provided by recruits was ‘personal reasons’ whilst FYC identified ‘family commitments’ as the primary reason for separation. In many cases, the absence of free text commentary hinders efforts to identify further context relating to separation reasons.

The recruiting drive initiated by the Service in 2023 has seen record numbers of applicants proceeding through the recruiting pipeline and transitioning into the frontline. Professionally developed recruit marketing strategies, often depicting the more desirable and yet increasingly less common policing functions, are likely to contribute to unrealistic expectations of frontline policing formed by recruits which may contribute to higher attrition in early service. The average estimated end-to-end cost of training each Recruit in 2025 through to graduation is close to \$100,000, with additional costs incurred by way of the Recruit Incentives Policy. There is a significant investment in the training of Recruits and FYCs and retention of these members throughout the early years of service is paramount.

The highest rates of attrition across the sworn workforce were observed within the Constable pay point 1 – 2 and Constable pay point 3 – 6 bands. Attrition within the Constable 1 – 2 band has been consistently higher than the QPS ALL rates for a continuous period of 10 years, with marked increases observed since 2021/22. Given the Service’s significant investment in the recruiting pipeline, examination of drivers contributing to attrition within this specific cohort became a priority of this review. The Constable 1-2 band was further broken down by Workforce Strategy and Analytics, to determine what percentage of the cohort related to FYC attrition. In 2022, FYC attrition was 6.5%, followed by 8.4% in 2023 and 6.4% in 2024 (see Figure 13). This clearly identifies that FYCs have the highest separation rates across the entire sworn Service. Given the high costs met by the Service associated with their training, retention of these members should be a priority.

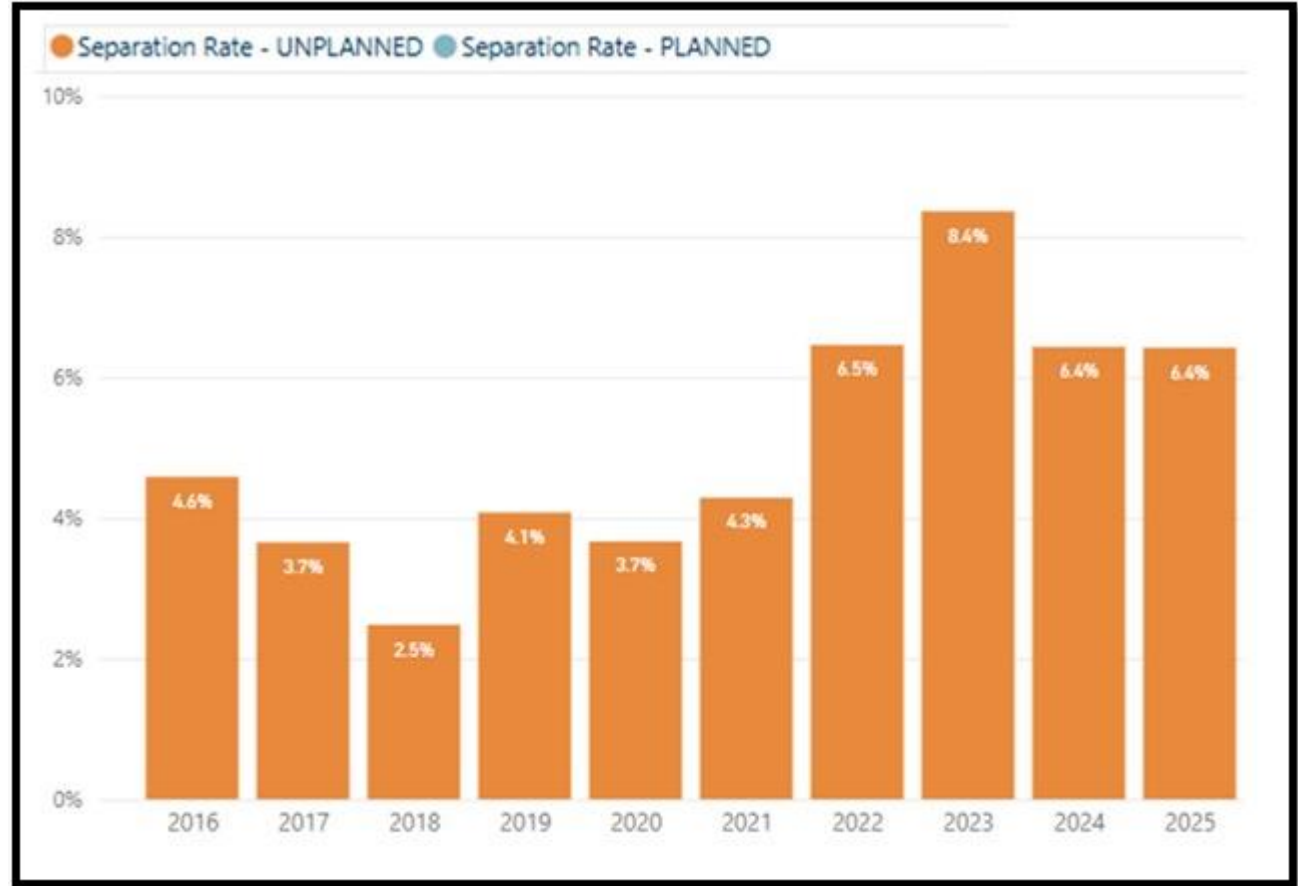


Figure 13: Police officer separation rates (unplanned) – first year constables

In investigating high rates of attrition in early career, staffing challenges at the Queensland Police Service Academy were identified as a key factor likely to influence training quality, recruit experience, frontline preparedness and subsequent separation. The facilitator/recruit ratio at the Oxley academy has reached between 2-4 facilitators (often reported to be less) for an intake of up to 144 recruits, resulting from intensive recruiting campaigns which have not been coupled with commensurate increases in facilitation staff. These large ratios were not experienced at the Townsville academy which was reported to have smaller ratios. In 2020, facilitator numbers at the Oxley academy were reduced under the Service Alignment Project (SAP), which saw reallocation of 16 sergeant facilitator positions from the Recruit Training Program (RTP) to the Ipswich, Logan, North Brisbane and South Brisbane districts. This decision was made during an environment of diminishing recruit numbers at that time and there was agreement that these members would be available to surge at the Academy if required. Due to the growing demands on

frontline workforces, the ability of those districts to return sworn staff to support the RTP has proven challenging. RTP have consequently progressed a number of strategies to grow facilitator resources including workforce change requests and submissions for the 2024/25 growth priority list. An executive briefing note dated 27 May 2025 titled, *'Critical Staffing Needs to December 2028 – Recruit Training Program'* has been drafted however not yet submitted pending further consultation.

Insufficient facilitators are reported to have impacted the quality of recruit training, including through reductions in face-to-face skill-based training, physical fitness training and facilitator support/engagement. Each of these factors detracts from frontline preparedness. Training inefficiencies and wasted time were reported due to the lack of facilitators available to complete scenario-based assessments within specified assessment blocks. Other recruits had to be utilised as role-players in scenario assessments, which detracted from the training experience and preparation of recruits for the frontline. These factors were identified to have adversely impacted the overall recruit experience whilst at the Queensland Police Service Academy, and most importantly, impaired the development of organisational culture which is critical to the role of policing and supported integration into the QPS.

A review of the RTP undertaken by external academic and researcher, Dr Abby McLeod, supports the findings of the QPS review team regarding concerns with the number of facilitation staff. Dr McLeod summarised current staffing challenges facing the RTP, stating, *'no organisation can do more with less...the degree to which understaffing and mass recruitment is impacting the QPS workforce was abundantly clear...'*. Dr McLeod found the ability of RTP staff to meaningfully engage with recruits was extremely limited due to intake sizes and the provision of frontline policing experience to recruits was untenable. The review noted that many of Dr McLeod's recommendations were implemented by the QPS as part of the drive to improve recruitment into the organisation. The review noted the resulting campaign to recruit more people into the organisation was a success and had a positive mitigating effect with respect to attrition rates.

There is further flow on effects within the workforce resulting from the record high numbers of police recruits. Upon exit from the RTP, officers are partnered with a Field Training Officer (FTO) for their first eight weeks of service. Due to the increased numbers of FYC, a corresponding increase in demand for FTO is experienced to support the high FYC numbers. This has resulted in reported instances where FTO have been required to work with two FYC in a vehicle, or alternatively, the premature appointment of very junior inexperienced members as FTO to meet the increased demand. During engagement, some FYC reported the impact on FTOs who are responsible for the supervision of newly appointed FYC. Dr McLeod reinforced the importance of the eight-week mentor phase which could make or break a policing career, a finding that was supported by interviews conducted with all staff involved across the police training cohort.

Integration of the recruit cohort into the frontline could be strengthened through establishment of networks with district representatives whilst still at the academy. A relevant district representative from their allocated district could attend the academy prior to graduation and make invaluable initial connections with the recruit. Representatives would ideally be positioned as members who will likely be involved with the FYC in their first year, including an Education and Training Officer (ETO), FTO or Peer Support Officer (PSO). The district representative can provide information about the district and offer advice to assist with relocation to a new area, reducing a recruit's sense of being overwhelmed. The district representative could also be involved in scenario-based training exercises to bolster frontline preparedness.

A support model such as this would strengthen the support and mentorship provided to recruits as they progress through the training cycle and transition from recruit to FYC.

The factors outlined above are highly likely to contribute to high rates of attrition observed within the recruit, FYC and constable cohorts. It is apparent the Service has heavily invested in building capacity through

record-high numbers in the recruiting pipeline, however, has significantly underinvested in the building of capability amongst this same cohort.

## Training and professional development

A review of 2024 WFQ data identified responses relating to 'professional development/career development' as the lowest results category in the survey. Sworn members within the DCROYC portfolio reported lower scores than police overall, suggesting the operating context of policing functions is impactful when it comes to accessing professional development opportunities. Free text comments relating to professional development indicated the following:

- There is no time to engage in professional development due to workload.
- It is hard to be released for relieving due to staff shortages.
- Development opportunities are not equally shared.
- There are more development opportunities for ranks of senior sergeant and above, than lower ranks.
- There is a lack of supervisor/manager investment in developing teams and mentoring junior employees.
- There is reduced incentive for self-development with the abolishment of Constable Development Program.

A decision was made in 2019 to cease the Constable Development Program (CDP) and replace it with a three-day Frontline Leadership Program. The 2019 EBN addressing the cessation of CDP stated it was a Service decision and that no other options were considered by PCAP. The EBN did indicate however the decision would result in the return of approximately 1000 shifts to operational functions, which appears to have been a consideration in cessation of the program. This approach prioritised the development of organisational capacity over workforce capability. Successful completion of CDP was a pre-requisite to progression to the rank of senior constable, whilst the LEAD program is not, meaning there are currently no mandatory developmental milestones, competencies or assessments required for progression to the rank of senior constable. LEAD workshops are facilitated throughout the state, including in regional locations, however, were observed to be regularly cancelled. Of the 10 workshops planned for 2025, three courses were cancelled and only two of the remaining seven courses held were hosted in locations outside of SEQ. Feedback from a regional District Officer indicated that hosting LEAD workshops in regional locations may not always be feasible due to existing resource constraints on the frontline.

The cessation of CDP and transition to the voluntary LEAD workshop has resulted in no formal professional development (outside of mandatory training) required of constables and senior constables, until an officer decides to pursue promotion to sergeant and commences the Leadership Capability Program (LCP). Hence, a segment of the workforce has the potential to accrue approximately 15 years of service, progressing from Constable pay point 1.1 to Senior Constable 2.10, without engaging in any form of professional development. This issue is of notable concern for the Service, as it may foster an organisational culture that undervalues intentional and deliberate learning unless it is linked to promotion.

## Access to training

Beyond training delivered by PCAP, examination of professional development/training funded within regions and commands was undertaken. The average annual training expenditure within regions in 2024 was approximately \$37/FTE, whilst the average spend within commands was approximately \$765/FTE (note: PCAP and DFV&VPU were excluded from this analysis due to increased expenditure associated with delivery of mandatory training requirements). Regionally based frontline workers outside of SEQ face

difficulties in attending professional development seminars and conferences due to travel costs, time requirements, and challenges related to being released from their duties due to rostering pressures. It is, therefore, not surprising that officers within the DCROYC portfolio reported lower WFQ responses regarding professional development and equitable access to development opportunities.

## Study and Research Assistance Scheme

Financial and study support for non-commissioned QPS members (sworn and unsworn) to undertake external professional development is available through the Study and Research Assistance Scheme (SARAS). Examination of SARAS data provided by PCAP identified relatively low levels of uptake across the Service, with only 284 approved applications over the past five years. 104 of these applications were approved for members at the rank of senior sergeant or below and 81 of these applications related to unsworn members. According to the policy, members may be reimbursed up to \$500 per semester where courses are deemed ‘highly desirable’ and \$250 when deemed desirable, however this provides minimal financial supplementation given the current costs of tertiary education. In 2023/24, a total of \$24,000 only was expended for approved SARAS applications, with current QPS SARAS budget set at \$35,000.

PCAP staff feedback revealed varying interpretations of the SARAS policy and a lack of awareness about the scheme within the Service has led to challenges in its uptake. Although a review of SARAS began in 2019, it was never completed for reasons unknown. Considering the evolving needs of the QPS workforce, conducting a review of SARAS could be beneficial to ensure its relevance to Service requirements and optimisation of benefits for QPS members.

Responding to the developing needs of the QPS workforce, Operational Policing and Leadership (OPAL) had already commenced a review of leadership capability across the Service. A Leadership and Development Strategy and Framework remains in draft but does identify current development available to QPS members together with a proposal for future development programs required to enhance QPS capability across all levels. OPAL have further drafted an Integrated Capability Development Pathways proposal designed to support members seeking development in their existing role and to support promotional aspirations.

A proposed Constable Capability Program remains currently under consideration by PCAP. The QPS Transformation Office have appointed a project officer to develop a Leadership Capability Development project, however this project is still in its infancy at the time of this review. It is understood a working group will be formed as part of this project, involving the Transformation Office and subject matter experts from PCAP. The Service needs to prioritise this project to enhance development of leadership skills across all levels of the organisation and renew its focus on intentional learning and continuous improvement.

## Work-life balance and access to flexible working opportunities

Surveys undertaken during the QPS 100-Day Review identified a lack of flexible working opportunities and work-life balance challenges as drivers of attrition. This is corroborated by research undertaken during the 2024 CCE Review which identified *‘how healthy a member perceives their work-life balance was found to have a significantly high correlation with their decision to stay or leave’*. Focus groups indicated a perception of increased opportunities for flexibility and an improved work-life balance outside of the Service, with lower responses among the sworn workforce when compared to the unsworn. Sworn members reported inequity in accessing flexible working opportunities, corroborated by 2024 WFQ data which recorded 20% of police officers and 9% of staff members reported that flexible work arrangements (FWA) are not possible due to the nature of their work. 25% of police officers reported they did not have the flexibility to manage their work and non-work interests, which increased to 30% for police in the

predominantly frontline DCROYC portfolio. The Service is not alone when it comes to the overcoming resistance to embracing FWA for its workforce. A UK study identified policing organisations need to *‘proactively and strategically plan for reduced hours working with further provision of high-quality part-time roles’* to reduce attrition.

The HR Connect system has limitations in determining whether difficulties accessing FWA contributed to a member's departure. Several separation reasons within HR Connect could indicate a member's separation associated with FWA-related issues, such as 'secured other employment,' 'transferred to another Queensland Agency,' or 'personal reasons.' Of note, these are the three highest recorded reasons for separation across both the sworn and unsworn workforces. Improving separation data or conducting of exit interviews is essential to identifying separations caused by lack of access to FWA, which could then be used in the development of retention strategies.

Senior managers found QPS systems for recording and managing FWA to be inadequate. The current HR Connect system fails to meet operational needs, hindering access to FWA data and therefore creating challenges in effective workforce management. OIC believe FWA cannot be declined due to a lack of understanding of the policy or proper assessment of potential impact on demand. Managers feel unsupported in making FWA determinations, lacking confidence in the Service to support their decision-making should a grievance be lodged by the applicant member.

A representative from the FWA Committee noted knowledge gaps, legacy impacts, cultural barriers, and a lack of understanding of demand management among decision-makers are significant challenges in optimising FWA opportunities within the Service. The Committee also reported HR system issues, partly because FWA matters were only addressed monthly and some matters were not properly tracked in the HR Connect system. The Committee had previously delivered a series of workshops across the State to educate and empower managers in making sound FWA decisions, however these sessions had become less frequent over time. The Committee reiterated the need for targeted upskilling and education of all parties involved in the FWA process, from senior management through to members, coupled with the availability of centralised support to managers charged with making FWA decisions. The Committee also strongly advocated for design of an appropriate system to record, manage and report on FWA related matters to improve efficiencies and reduce negative workforce perceptions often associated with FWA.

The 2024 QHRC report outlined the need for the QPS to build and enable flexible and inclusive workplaces that offered flexibility. The report highlighted the importance of leadership in creating a culture where flexible work arrangements are normalised, and further, that *‘high operational demand is a reason to use flexibility rather than avoid it’*. The report further cited that FWA data collection within the QPS needs to be improved so the Service can record and analyse workplace arrangements.

A series of recommendations were made relating to flexible working arrangements, which have been incorporated into the QPS 2024-2025 Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Plan. According to the monitoring and reporting statement, this plan will be monitored through quarterly reporting and reviewed annually. Some key recommendations of relevance to flexible work within the QPS falls within the ‘Our Organisation’ section of the plan, including system enhancement to better support improved data collection and approaches to flexible work. Upon inquiry with Human Resources Division, the QPS review team were advised quarterly reporting had been placed on hold due to uncertainty around QPS governance arrangements. As such, the current implementation status of these improvement recommendations remains unknown.

The desire of some QPS members to access flexibility and improve work-life balance was identified during examination of the special constable cohort. Engagement with PCAP staff reported that approximately 50%



of applications to become a special constable are received from age-retiring members, with the remaining 50% either being recently separated or in some cases, currently serving QPS members at time of application. Of the current cohort of 66 special constables, 10 were identified to have separated as a full-time sworn member and successfully rejoined the QPS as a special constable within a 6-month period. Seven of these 10 officers were found to have applied to become a special constable even prior to formally separating from the QPS.

Data regarding the reasons for separation and re-application as a special constable is not currently maintained by PCAP, other than within the application itself. The applications of the 10 members who rejoined within six months were manually reviewed by the review team identifying four members cited work-life balance, three members mentioned rostering-related reasons, and one member referred to the inability to obtain an FWA as their reasons for separation. It is suspected these drivers may also apply across the remaining cohort of special constables who separated from the Service pre-age retirement (unplanned).

The number of hours worked by special constables were examined and found to vary considerably, with one special constable identified as working 76 hours and earning \$13,300 for the month of May 2025 alone. This analysis provided insight into reasons why members separated from their substantive position within the Service but seek to remain employed as a general duties officer, indicating the flexibility and casual nature of employment offered through the special constable initiative may be a key incentive.

The current Special Constable (State Officer) Standard outlines eligibility requirements for applicants, including sufficient currency in frontline general duties policing. It was reported that this eligibility has excluded approximately 30% of applicant pools, including applicants who are highly skilled in specialist and corporate policing functions. This does not include other members who did not apply due to not fulfilling eligibility requirements. This represents significant loss of unrealised capability to the frontline and frontline support functions. In 2024, at the request of PCAP, the special constable initiative was the subject of a review by QPS Research and Evaluation. This evaluation identified several future considerations for the QPS, including broadening the scope of the initiative beyond general duties functions to include specialist and/or frontline support functions.

This evaluation was used by PCAP to inform a draft update of the special constable policy, which included expansion of the roles and functions performed by special constables. Members of the QPS Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and the Queensland Police Union of Employees (QPUE) were consulted during development of the policy update to ensure changes had a frontline focus. This draft is currently awaiting review by Employee Relations prior to submission to ELT. The draft update also outlines the benefits to the organisation by streamlining the transition of a sworn member across to a special constable (where suitable), without the need for formal separation from the Service and re-application for a special constable position.

The special constable workforce, by way of design, is a frontline policing capability that performs duty on a casual basis. The uptake of this initiative by current and recently separated non-age retiring QPS members gives an indication of the appetite of the QPS workforce for change, including development of alternative workforce models that could support flexibility and improved work-life balance. The below table outlines approximately 5,000 hours/month have been delivered as a casual frontline supplement over the past several months at a total cost of approximately \$500,000/month (see figure 14). The table also indicates the increasing rate of take-up of the special constable initiative since commencement.



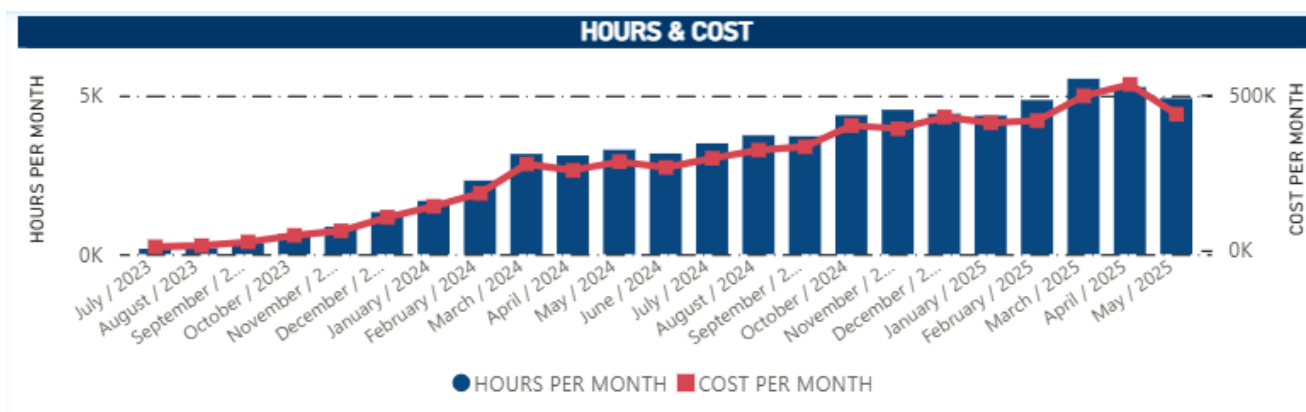


Figure 14: Hours and cost of Special Constables between 1 July 2023 and 30 May 2025

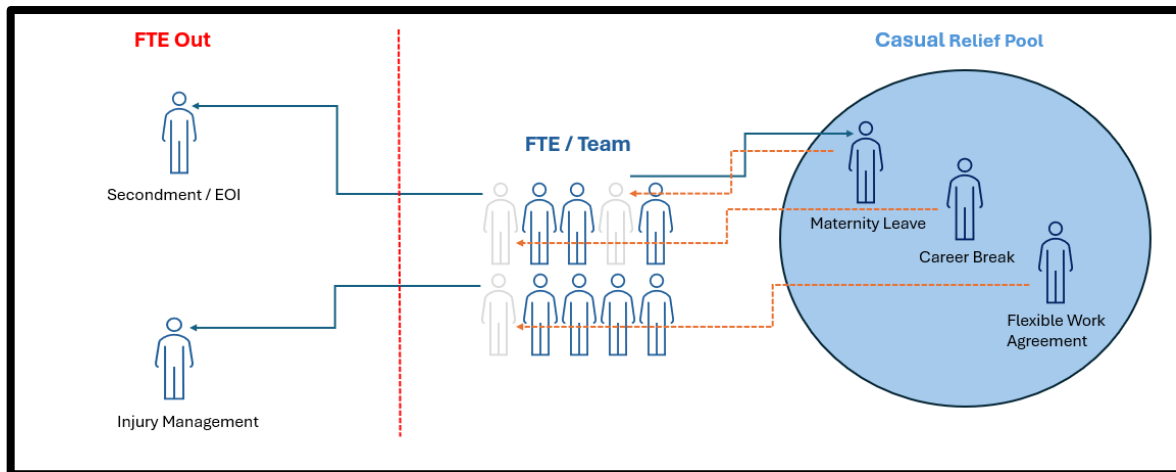
The review has confirmed that certain members of the QPS workforce seek enhanced flexibility and work-life balance by undertaking duties on a casual basis. The special constable initiative exemplifies how a casual policing workforce can support the Commissioner's priorities, ensuring that both the community and members of the QPS feel safe and supported. It can provide an option for officers managing parental responsibilities, offering an alternative to a flexible workplace agreement while still enabling the possibility of returning as a substantive sworn officer later. It also would demonstrate the Service's commitment to remain contemporary and responsive to the needs of the current and future QPS workforce, as cited in the 2023 Queensland Audit Office report which stated, '*the QPS needs to take a pragmatic and strategic approach to growing, optimising and upskilling the workforce to meet future demand, including consideration of attrition and an aging workforce*'. One further advantage of a casual workforce model is that it can be discontinued or scaled back without substantial industrial or organisational consequences.

## Relief pools

Through examination of inter-jurisdictional models of policing, another casual workforce model was identified. In 2022, NSW Police commenced a 'Relief Pool' initiative with the support of the Police Association of New South Wales. The relief pool concept offers casual shifts to NSW Police members currently accessing forms of long-term leave or FWA, on a strictly voluntary basis. Eligible members can choose to fill available shifts based on roster gaps and advertised openings. Eligible leave types initially included unpaid leave, career break leave and paid maternity/paternity leave, however, have now been extended to include recreation leave (under certain conditions). The relief pool was established to support frontline service delivery and improve the wellbeing of its members by maintaining workforce engagement during protracted periods of absence from the workplace. Engagement was undertaken with key stakeholders from NSW Police involved in this initiative who described it as a 'game changer' for the workforce, which has now been extended to other parts of the organisation due to demand.

The relief pool initiative is one further example of a casual workforce model that could be developed to support the QPS and its members. Some members returning from long-term leave may face difficulties re-entering the workplace after extended absences. These challenges may involve adjustments to workplace changes, shift patterns, maintaining training standards, and reintegrating into police culture. This can be further exacerbated by members accessing career break leave, who commonly seek to pursue other employment in a trial capacity and have already considered a path to separation. Long-term leave can lead to staffing shortages and increase pressure on other employees, potentially causing workplace tension and complicating the return of those on extended absence.

NSW Police reported the performance of casual shifts via the Relief Pool had assisted not only the work unit but also improved workforce cultural perceptions towards members accessing extended periods of leave. NSW Police also utilise relief pool shifts for training including operational skills-based training, enabling members to be qualified and available for immediate operational deployment upon returning from long term leave. This issue for the QPS was identified during review team engagement with PCAP whereby members returning from long term leave potentially required 4 to 6 weeks of compulsory training/upskill before being able to return to frontline duties.



*Figure 15: Relief pool concept*

The above diagram (figure 15) provides a basic representation of the Relief Pool concept. In the 2025/26 financial year, the Service will implement a revised financial model making regions and commands accountable for managing their full budgets, including vacancy savings. A case study developed by the review team identified the potential to effectively utilise regional and command vacancy savings to fund a casual workforce model as a cost-neutral, low risk solution to meet operational demands affected by current vacancies. Application of a voluntary casual workforce has the potential to reduce overtime expenditure, demand and fatigue on FTE (case study costings of casual workforce model is provided at appendix J).

Should the Service recognise the benefits of implementing casual workforce models, such as expanding special constables or establishing relief pools, it is imperative to develop appropriate and consistent governance frameworks to support a recognised casual workforce capability. Evidenced through the special constable evaluation and reinforced by workforce engagement, there is currently a gap in the management of and capability ownership for special constables capability across the Service. There remains ambiguity in how special constables can be deployed which has limited use of the capability outside of traditional policing boundaries. Inconsistent management practices across the existing special constable workforce creates financial and industrial risk for the Service and its members, including the implications of failure to manage fatigue and non-compliance with industrial entitlements. Lack of capability ownership also results in deployment of the casual workforce being siloed within districts and optimal deployment opportunities not being realised for service-wide benefit.

Dependent on the uptake of these initiatives, the Service may explore an efficient digital platform to manage growth of a casual workforce. Potential exists to leverage off systems similar to the E-Shift application being operated by Queensland Ambulance Service. This application allows members to apply for advertised shifts and incorporates rostering compliance parameters and consideration to fatigue management.

If developed appropriately, casual workforces could be utilised to deploy to locations where a temporary policing surge is required to supplement resourcing gaps in frontline policing. Alternatively, casual workforce pools could be utilised to offset rostering gaps created where substantive members seek to undertake professional development by way of training, relieving or secondment. Development of a centralised capability will support frontline managers in delivering efficient and effective frontline policing services, whilst adopting the 'centrally managed, locally led' ethos. Whilst PCAP are established capability owners for recruitment of Special Constables, management of the capability post-recruitment is currently left to districts and in most cases, already overburdened middle level managers such as OICs and shift supervisors who lack the requisite experience to appropriately manage casual employees. The QPS should give consideration to acknowledgement of casual workforces as a new capability, with a designated owner appointed to develop and strategically manage the capability.

## Transitioning to unsworn

When evaluating work-life balance and the demand for flexible working arrangements, it is essential to recognise that not all individual circumstances may be compatible with the responsibilities of a police officer. This incompatibility may arise from difficulties in balancing work-life demands with the operational requirements and shift patterns inherent in policing duties. Some members, however, may be highly suitable to perform other roles within the Service, where their skills and training could be retained for use in an unsworn frontline support function where greater flexibility may be offered. This could include roles such as assistant watchhouse officer (AWO), protective services officer (PSO), administration officer (AO3) or casual shifts as a special constable. Currently, the only identified process supporting the transition of sworn members into unsworn roles within the organisation exists under section 8.3 of the *PSAA* in the injury management career transition process. These absences associated with long-term sick leave are rarely covered, causing resourcing gaps and in many cases negative workplace sentiment towards the injured member causing further harm.

Without a clear career transition process (outside of the injury management cycle), members who cannot or do not want to remain sworn police officers but wish to remain a QPS employee must formally leave and re-apply for a suitable unsworn role within the Service. This process is rigid and inflexible and does not place appropriate value on members who have self-identified an incompatibility with operational policing. A process supporting transition to a suitable unsworn role (where deemed appropriate) could also serve as an early intervention strategy for a member's health and wellbeing, without the need to embark in a protracted injury management cycle or initiate a path to separation from the Service. This option would also benefit the Service in filling vacancies in support of reducing attrition in unsworn workforces. It is important, however, that this transition opportunity proposal is only available for entry level positions (e.g. AO3), to ensure the substantive unsworn workforce is not unfairly disadvantaged and career progression opportunities are not limited. This also acts as a deterrent for sworn officers against departure, ensuring they do not receive financial advantages through leaving their sworn position.

For special constables who continue to perform operational policing functions on a casual basis, establishing a process that facilitates their transition back to a substantive full-time operational position could assist in reducing attrition. The special constable initiative could be expanded to support members temporarily transitioning into a casual work arrangement while retaining the opportunity to return to full-time employment conditional upon meeting eligibility criteria. It may also act as an alternative to a career break, during which the member's role often remains vacant and impacts frontline resourcing. A UK study of voluntary resignations in policing across 2014-2019 identified benefits in supporting members to re-enter the organisation after separation, including to promote career break opportunities and support wellbeing.

The study outlined however, that there needed to be organisational systems in place to promote this re-entry. This same notion could apply to members seeking a career break by way of transition to casual employment.

Implementing a comprehensive ‘multiple pathways’ strategy to assist employees transitioning through various roles within the service should also be extended to retiring police officers. This approach may facilitate a dignified and person-centred departure from the Service while recognising and valuing the skills they have cultivated. It also supports the 2023 Queensland Audit Office Report that outlined the requirement for the QPS to improve strategic workforce planning to optimise the employee mix including police, staff, Protective Services Group and retiring police who wish to extend their career with the QPS beyond retirement. The multiple pathways approach may also support workforce planning through testing emerging opportunities for diverse workforces in preparedness for the 2032 Brisbane Olympic Games.

## **Leadership, culture and engagement**

A theme distilled from workforce engagement by the review team was the broad-based concerns regarding QPS leadership. These issues were observed at various levels of the organisation, highlighting an expectation gap between senior leadership and frontline staff, shortcomings in leadership development and capability, and changes in police culture throughout the organisation.

The 2024 WFQ survey results identified senior/supervisor leadership as one of the top five reasons supporting an intention to leave the Service. This was observed across both sworn and unsworn cohorts, however in the sworn workforce, leadership was seen as the primary reason for an intention to leave. Concerningly, this sentiment was also expressed in the 2024 CCE Review which found that senior leadership was the lowest scoring driver of employee retention in surveys conducted with the workforce. The 2024 CCE Review undertook a deeper examination of the impact of leadership on attrition and retention of QPS members, identifying concerns relating to leadership capability and development. The review noted that senior QPS leaders were perceived as lacking authenticity, transparency, and accountability.

Similar findings were identified in a UK study on voluntary resignations across 2014-2019. This found that whilst resigning police highly valued their occupation, they had become frustrated by a lack of voice, leadership, autonomy and support. The study found these factors had damaged working relationships between officers and leaders which had contributed to a decline in organisational commitment. The study concluded that once a police officer’s commitment to the organisation became impaired, the ‘path to turnover’ had ultimately commenced.

2024 WFQ survey results relating to employee engagement were also explored. This is due to employee engagement being a key indicator of a healthy and productive workplace, where high levels of engagement reduce intentions to leave and low levels of engagement contribute to burnout. Employee engagement levels across the Service have generally decreased year-to-year, except in 2024 where there was a slight improvement. However, the DCROYC portfolio consistently shows lower employee engagement compared to QPS ALL, likely due to factors related to frontline service delivery.

Workforce engagement revealed an apparent disconnect between senior leadership and frontline teams, with senior leaders seen to be making decisions without adequately consulting frontline staff. Earlier in this review, multiple environmental factors were identified that may have contributed to increases in attrition rates since 2020/21. Some of these factors were external, while others were attributed by the workforce to decisions made by QPS leadership, including the Service Delivery Program and the reduction in investment in leadership capability and development across the Service.

There was intense media and community scrutiny of the QPS workforce following the COIDFV, coupled with a perceived lack of public advocacy for the workforce by QPS senior leadership (including during evidence given by senior QPS leaders during COIDFV hearings).

The QPUE, however, did provide advocacy on behalf of its membership which was positively received by rank-and-file members of the Service. The situation, however, undeniably strained the relationship between the workforce and QPS leadership. During engagement with members of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT), it was reported that a trend has emerged among junior QPS members whereby the QPUE serves as their initial point of contact for resolving minor disputes within the workforce. This issue was identified in the 2024 CCE Review, which described a perception held that unions are the only way for members to accrue benefits or improvements suggesting a distinct lack of trust in, and support of, QPS leadership.

Immediate steps are required by the Service to support these relationships and restore confidence in senior leadership. This may be achieved through development of a targeted ELT/frontline engagement strategy, intended to reduce the 'us and them' culture that has emerged within the organisation. Many members of the workforce are not aware of the ELT representative for their location or workgroup, whilst some members of the workforce view the ELT as being out of touch, the reality is many ELT members have operational policing backgrounds and shared experience that position them as more relatable to the workforce than commonly perceived. Efforts to meaningfully engage with the workforce are often challenged by schedule conflicts, and therefore any engagement strategy should be realistic, achievable and leverage off multiple communication platforms including in-person and virtual.

The establishment and embedding of consultative committees within QPS governance structures would also likely reduce the cultural divide between leadership and the workforce. Within the policing environment, committees could provide a voice to the workforce in support of the 'frontline first' decision making ethos whilst also acting as a conduit for reciprocal information sharing across various levels of the organisation. Consultative committees could be established for ranks including constable/senior constable and sergeant and extended to unsworn cohorts as well.

Consultative committees should be provided an opportunity to have input into tactical and strategic level decisions affecting the frontline workforce and services they deliver. To demonstrate the Service's commitment to this initiative, consultative committee representation should be formalised in governance structures including business management meetings and relevant performance reviews. This will support the workforce, and importantly the frontline, to feel seen and heard whilst also contributing to more robust decision-making outcomes across the Service. The review team identified various regions and commands where this concept has been successfully adopted. For example, the Logan Frontline Advisory Group implemented technology solutions (QR codes) throughout their police establishments providing direct pop up of priority communications from SLT and ELT.

A theme consistently reoccurring throughout the review centred around the role of the officer in charge. There is a common view across all levels that OIC are one of the most important cohort of leaders within the Service. The role of the OIC is also highly influential in the setting of tone/culture within a work unit. Interviews conducted during this review identified several examples where a healthy and engaged workforce was observed to be directly linked to an effective, visible and respected OIC.

While OIC hold responsibilities for managing crime, finances, and human resources, development opportunities associated with their role and specialised support is lacking. QPS leadership capability is thought of in four domains: leading people (leadership), managing systems and processes (management), commanding through crisis (command), and core skills of policing.

Presently, there is a gap in the leadership curriculum requiring the reintegration of management and supervisory skills to achieve improved leadership and management outcomes.

OIC are not receiving adequate assistance in acquiring or improving the critical knowledge necessary for effective management of personnel and resources. Records obtained from the Central Panels Unit identified very small applicant pools for OIC positions, with average application numbers for OIC vacancies ranging between 6 – 9 across 2023 - 2025. Limited applicant pools may result in the appointment of individuals to OIC positions who may not be ideally suited for the role, which could affect the capability of the future commissioned officer cohort. The situation is concerning and demonstrates the lack of appetite for OIC roles, a position only further challenged by superannuation entitlements recently extended to shift allowances.

Workforce sentiment was overwhelmingly strong in calling for the return of the OIC program (or equivalent), coupled with the requirement for provision of ongoing workplace support and leadership development for OIC. Part of this training should include establishment of mentoring networks for newly promoted OIC. The 2024 CCE Review recommended reinstating an OIC specific training program. Representatives from PCAP supported this recommendation, noting they frequently receive inquiries about the former OIC Program. Members of the SLT also strongly reinforced the need for targeted development opportunities and ongoing workplace support within the OIC cohort. It is expected the need for OIC development will be identified throughout the Leadership Capability Development Project being undertaken by the QPS Transformation Office and an associated training needs analysis process. This project is also expected to capture leadership development of all members in supervisory and management roles, both in the sworn and unsworn workforces.

In 2018 and with the support of employee unions, the QPS launched the Our People Matter Strategy (OPMS) to improve the health and wellbeing of QPS members, families and workplaces. This strategy has provided funding opportunities (up to \$200,000 annually) to support locally led activities designed to enhance employee engagement and organisational culture. Despite the best of intentions and some early successes, the review noted the OPM brand has become tarnished in the workplace. Employees often use the OPM moniker in a negative context to describe service decisions or processes that are not perceived to deliver any benefit.

OPMS has not been reviewed since inception. Funding applications are submitted by individual work units with support of locally based OPM workplace champions, prior to submission to the OPM Committee for approval. Examination of the 2023-24 OPMS funding program overview identified disparity in the numbers of activities approved across the Service, with no key performance indicators or outcomes recorded. The success or failure of the OPMS in achieving positive outcomes and delivering on its intent is unclear. The list of OPMS Principal Workplace Champions was found to be significantly outdated, which indicated the strategy is not being appropriately driven at either strategic or local levels. Whilst any Service led strategy targeted towards improving health, wellbeing and engagement of members should be encouraged, it was evident a review, re-fresh and re-brand of the OPMS may be required to deliver enhanced service wide outcomes in line with the strategy's intent.

## **Career progression and support**

The ability of a member to 'grow and advance their career' was identified in the 2024 CCE Review as an important factor influencing a person's intention to stay or leave the QPS. This finding was based upon interviews, focus groups and WFQ results examined during the review. A lack of future career opportunities for the unsworn workforce was recorded as the top driver for a member's intention to leave the Service in the 2024 WFQ survey.



Sworn members reported low results for career progression themes, citing workload, staff shortages, inequitable access to development opportunities, and lack of supervisor interest. These results were significantly lower across the DCROYC portfolio, which as outlined, would be expected given the current demands facing frontline services.

There is a perceived unfairness in the workforce regarding opportunities to access expressions of interest (EOI). Frontline personnel frequently face challenges in accessing secondment or relief opportunities due to operational demands and resourcing shortfalls. This is particularly evident within the general duties workstream, where backfilling arrangements are not feasible. Members genuinely invested in progressing their careers are not supported by the current EOI information management system. The EOI Portal, managed by Human Resources Division processes each application in a siloed manner and does not provide a holistic, member-centric approach in support of EOI selection. There is no tracking of previous EOI submissions, feedback to members, or transparency regarding approval for relief periods. This might lead to some members repeatedly applying for EOI and being denied, causing frustration and perceptions of unfairness in the process. The 2024 QHRC report noted the QPS lacks a consistent method for recording and reporting relieving opportunities. Surveys completed during the 100-Day Review revealed similar discontent with staff members not being able to access and attain EOI, including the Service's failure to fill temporary administration positions which is leading to fatigue and attrition.

In 2016, in response to unfavourable WFQ outcomes in the South Eastern region relating to inequitable access to professional development opportunities, a regional Relieving Opportunities Database (ROD) was developed (RODSER, with SER denoting South Eastern Region). Database features included automated digital methods of EOI advertisement and requests for OIC release, retention of EOI selection panel decision rationale and feedback mechanism for applicants. Importantly, the database also provided an EOI history for each user. This system was considered far superior to the statewide EOI portal which offers an electronic option for advertisement only and relies on email and manual handling of all other processes. Due to the introduction of RODSER, a 10% positive increase in SER WFQ results across learning and development was observed. Due to the success of RODSER, the database was rolled out into Northern Region (RODNOR) who reported similar success, and now subsequently expanded into Far Northern and Central Regions also. Brisbane, Southern and North Coast Regions are not currently using ROD database.

A demonstration of the database was delivered to key stakeholders including Human Resources Division and Frontline and Digital Division representatives who fully supported the system. In August 2021, following in-principle support from the then Commissioner, ROD was presented to ELT who recognised the benefits of the system and endorsed a statewide roll out of ROD. In 2022, the Executive Director, Human Resources advised ROD was being considered within a Gazette modernisation project and in 2023, following inquiries from the QPS Leading Women's Network, Finance and Digital Division advised they were considering options to progress the ROD proposal. A business case has been presented to Frontline and Digital Division who are currently reviewing options to transition the ROD initiative to Sharepoint, however, there have been significant delays experienced without meaningful progress over several years. The business case outlines benefits, risks and costs associated with the system however it remains under consideration. In May 2025, due to significant delays in this project, an Executive Briefing Note was drafted by Leading Women Network representatives under the hand of the Executive Director, CCE, recommending a prioritised service-wide rollout of ROD. The Executive Briefing Note was awaiting approval at the time of authoring this paper.

The QPS formal mentoring system was examined by the review after WFQ 2024 free text responses identified workforce frustrations relating to the lack of mentoring. The QPS does have a formal mentoring program in place which is facilitated by Staff Member Development and Training within PCAP, however, informal mentoring within work units may also be undertaken.



The program is open to both sworn and unsworn staff. Data analysis between 2022 and 2024 shows that participation in the program is low and has decreased in recent years. Over the 3-year period examined, 69 mentor-mentee pairings were established with several mentors being used multiple times. Thirty successful pairings were made in 2022 and 31 in 2023, however in 2024 only six successful pairings were made.

The 2024 CCE Review identified a strong workforce desire for development of mentoring relationships beyond work groups and immediate supervisors. Reference was made to successful mentoring programs within other policing and defence agencies, including the Australian Defence Force (ADF) and ACT Police which had resulted in the building of strong networks throughout services and enhancements in job satisfaction. Identifying the linkage between mentoring and leadership capability, the review delivered a recommendation for implementation of a mentoring program within the QPS to establish relationships outside work units and chains of command.

There is potential for mentoring relationships to extend beyond the existing workforce, through a more informal networking arrangement. The QPS workforces is ageing, with significant numbers of members separating from the workforce in the near-term due compulsory age retirement. This cohort has many years of accumulated policing experience which will be lost as they make this transition. With the influx of new members joining, there is an opportunity to establish a networking program between new members and those retiring to leverage their experience.

The potential benefit to the QPS utilising a retired police labour force was examined by former QPS Assistant Commissioner Doctor Ben Marcus in his 2007 doctoral thesis, *'Should I stay or should I go – Retirement Age Triggers of Sworn Members of the QPS Entitled to Access Voluntary Retirement at Age Fifty-Five'*. The thesis considered optimisation of the retiring workforce under paid models of employment under a 'procruting' model, however the benefits explored could be expanded across to unpaid or voluntary duties. Developing networking relationships with retired members has the potential to enhance perceptions of self-worth among retirees, fostering continued connection with the workforce. This is particularly valuable during a period of significant transition when many retirees experience a profound loss of culture and identity. Benefits to the organisation and its members may include better perceptions of 'the police family' and a stronger organisational culture. Networking can help new recruits integrate into police culture and support them feeling welcomed.

An issue closely allied with mentoring is career planning. There is currently no formal career planning capability within the QPS. Members do not have any access to programs which could support them in progressing their career and advancing their skills. This has likely impacted experiences of members joining the QPS, with perceptions the QPS would have structured career planning mechanisms in place. The lack of capability associated with career planning may be evident in QPS separation data with those members selecting 'dissatisfaction with career path' as one of their reasons for separation. It is essential to establish networks within regions, commands, and divisions through the appointment of career planning officers. Regular upskilling of career planning officers is necessary to maintain the relevance and integrity of career planning processes.

Incorporating skills audits into any career planning process is essential and will be of significant benefit in planning for the Brisbane 2032 Olympics. There is currently no established method to document an officer's skillset through a comprehensive skills audit process, either at the commencement of or throughout their career. The organisation does not fully leverage tertiary education qualifications and prior life experiences, including previous policing experience. This is particularly relevant for PACE recruits who bring a diverse range of experiences and skills to the QPS.

During engagement undertaken during this review, PACE recruits reported frustration at their prior experience and skills being overlooked upon joining the QPS, despite the potential benefits these skills could provide to the Service. Recommendation 29 of the 2024 QHRC report also detailed the need for the QPS to identify ways by which skill sets of police from diverse backgrounds can be recorded.

Lastly, the importance of leadership and supervisors in career advancement activities should not be understated. 2024 WFQ responses identified many members reported frustration that their supervisor/manager was not invested in their career progression. Promotion and relieving were mentioned in over 450 free text comments in 2024, identifying that processes lacked transparency and were subject to favouritism. Members reported the current QPS Performance Management system was not utilised to support career progression and genuine career development conversations were non-existent, with only 19% of police reporting they discussed professional development with their manager. An employee whose supervisor is engaged and committed will receive better support for career development compared to an employee whose supervisor is not invested, particularly in situations involving workplace conflict or biases.

Currently, supervisors and leaders are not required to invest in professional development or career planning for their members. Investing in others remains a moral obligation, which has the potential to create inequity and resentment within the organisation. The QPS must re-instil a performance culture across all levels of the organisation, through mandating the requirement for leaders/supervisors to formally invest in the career development of those around them. This is required at all levels (including executive level) and should be included as a mandatory objective within annual performance agreements. Recommendation 29 of the 2024 QHRC supported this position in recommending the improved use of performance management processes to increase meaningful engagement. While some may oppose a mandate, it is entirely reasonable to expect supervisors to genuinely invest in the professional development of their team members over the course of a 12-month DAP cycle.

## **Recognition, appreciation and job satisfaction**

The QPS Honours and Awards (H&A) system provides a formal process through which sworn and unsworn members may be recognised for their achievements and contribution to the organisation. Beyond medals issued for diligent and ethical service (Qld Police Service Medal, National Medal) and incident/event specific awards (Valour, Bravery), the QPS has a number of other medal/award categories rewarding meritorious achievement. These include the Meritorious Service Medal for substantial contribution in multiple areas over extended periods and the Exemplary Conduct Medal for exemplary conduct in specific role or duty enhancing the professional image of the QPS far exceeding what may be reasonably expected. A new Remote Service Medal was approved in recent times for completion of minimum periods of service in remote locations. It is to be noted a full analysis of available awards and medals for QPS members, including previous recipients, was not undertaken as part of this review.

The QPS Workplace platform has been widely used to acknowledge members under the H&A system and is often subject of extensive workforce commentary. Unfortunately, some of this sentiment is negative and perpetuates perceptions of unfairness, inequity and frustration in delays with the awards system. Negative commentary is likely to impact workforce culture by creating tension between different workstreams (corporate, operational, specialist), whilst also undermining the overall system of recognition. The H&A section sits within PCAP and is resourced by a small team of sworn and unsworn staff. To assist with the processing of administrative backlogs due to demand, the team were recently supplemented by additional staff on a temporary basis only. H&A utilise the HAIMS database for recording of awards, which was reported to be outdated and incompatible for auditing, reviewing or reporting purposes. Data requests for recipient information submitted by the review team had to be extracted from the HAIMS system and

manually prepared which was a time-intensive process and only displayed the current rank/level/role for the recipient and not retrospective at time of being awarded. The lack of proper systems to record award data prevents auditing, monitoring and analysis, which could be used to identify disparities across award variables including geographical location, workstreams and criteria.

To investigate perceptions of inequity in recognition, the H&A section was asked for data detailing recipients of the Meritorious Service Medal and Exemplary Conduct Medal. A total of 243 recipients of the Meritorious Service Medal (since 2015) were examined, during which it was identified awarding of the medal was biased heavily towards recipients in the corporate and specialist fields (approximately 73%). Approximately 13% of recipients fell within the operational and leadership field only (generally OIC). Members working in first response fields, including DDO, represented only approximately 5% of recipients. Awarding of the Meritorious Service Medal was also heavily weighted towards sworn members, with approximately 8.6% of recipients only being unsworn members despite comprising approximately one-third of the QPS workforce. Recipients of the Meritorious Service Medal are generally in the later stages of their career given the criteria calls for 'extended periods' and is sometimes considered as a 'retirement medal'.

A similar examination was undertaken of Exemplary Conduct Medal recipients, a medal which requires exemplary conduct in a specific field. The Exemplary Conduct Medal is presented with a clasp to note the nature or duty for which the recipient is awarded the medal.

Table 18 describes the clasps introduced to date:

G20 – 2014	Investigations	Major Events	OP Resolute
TF Maxima	TF Take Back	Community	Forensic
Legal	OIC	Road Policing	Specialist
Leadership	Operational	Projects	Communications
Corporate	Training	XXI Comm Games	Disaster Management
DVI			

*Table 18: List of Exemplary Conduct Medal clasps*

Two hundred and sixty Exemplary Conduct Medals awarded since inception of the medal were examined in conjunction with this review. Approved Exemplary Conduct Medal clasps were observed to be preferentially weighted towards specific roles within specialist and corporate fields, with approximately 55% awarded for specialist roles. Approximately 17% were awarded for corporate/project roles, whilst only 12% were awarded to members for unsworn contributions. While there is an 'operational' clasp, there is no clasp designation for 'First Response' or 'General Duties' to acknowledge the contributions of the largest workstream in the Service. Furthermore, first response officers were notably underrepresented even within the operational clasp category, which in itself only made up 6% of recipients. Introduction of a 'First-Response' or 'General Duties' clasp to the Exemplary Conduct Medal, coupled with education and marketing of future first response award recipients, would enhance culture by recognising the contributions of long-standing first responders to community safety.

One possible factor contributing to this situation is the nomination process. Nominations are manually completed by filling out a form or completing a report, ensuring sufficient detail and evidentiary material are provided in support of the nomination. This process can be time-consuming and disproportionately accessible to members. Articulating detailed achievements makes nominations challenging in workstreams like first response or unsworn frontline functions given the demands associated with those roles.

Although corporate members and specialist investigators might be able to showcase extensive project participation or complex investigations, the articulation of this level of detail is frequently more difficult for long-serving first response officers or dedicated unsworn members providing frontline support.

Discontent is often expressed within the workforce when member actions are not properly acknowledged by the awards system. This issue frequently arises among first responders, typically resulting from nominations not being completed in a timely fashion at the divisional or district level. There is also a perception the recognition culture for unsworn contributions is not as strong as for sworn members. There is an erroneous view that management are responsible for completion of award nominations, rather than every member having equal opportunity to initiate a nomination through chain of command. Whilst some work units or locations may have a highly developed culture of recognition, this may not be the case for others resulting in disparity in recognition and perceptions of inequity. This notion was supported during engagement with PCAP staff who could readily identify regions that progressed more nominations for recognition than others.

To overcome some of these challenges, the Far North Region commenced 'Project Recognise'. The project developed an efficient method for recognising commendable work contemporaneously through data entry using a QR code. Locally appointed 'Project Recognise' officers regularly monitor submissions and action accordingly, including through DAP entries or escalation to senior officers recognising formal acknowledgement. Where matters are identified requiring higher-level recognition, award nominations are submitted using the preliminary information captured within the QR nomination. A QR nomination process could be completed via QLITE to further increase equitable accessibility and timely nomination by frontline teams. The creation of a similar process statewide has enormous potential to increase morale and equity throughout the workforce, by removing the barriers experienced by frontline operational officers in completing nominations for recognition.

The criteria for the newly released Remote Service Medal were briefly considered as part of this review. Disparities regarding minimum service periods in specified locations for awarding of the medal were identified. For example, officers who had successfully completed minimum tenure requirements in a 2-year tenure location such as Mt Isa were required to serve 3 years under eligibility criteria. Therefore, some members are required to perform 12 additional months following completion of minimum tenure, whilst other recipients are required to complete the specified minimum tenure only. This has potential to cause angst and upset amongst a cohort of people who proudly completed tenure in remote locations and who may feel their rural and remote service was not appropriately valued. A fairer process would consistently recognise members who have completed minimum tenure requirements, whether it be 2 or 3 years. It is understood this concern will be considered in future meetings of the State H&A Committee.

Recognising the contributions of members at their separation from the Service is crucial, especially for those retiring after years of dedicated service in various policing areas. According to the eligibility criteria specified in the QPS Separations Policy, departing members may receive a Commissioner's Certificate of Service (CoS) which details their service history and awards received, and is signed by the Commissioner. As outlined by the policy, however, this certificate is not provided in circumstances where an employee separates whilst the subject of an unfinalised discipline or criminal investigation.

What is not considered by this policy, however, is the full context surrounding the unfinalised matter/s. For example, the outstanding matter may be of a very minor nature that would have otherwise resulted in finalisation by way of local managerial resolution. It could also relate to unjustified delays in the discipline process at no fault of the member, or from the separating member's unavailability due to commencement of pre-retirement leave. The current policy does not include a provision for consideration of exceptional circumstances.

This may prevent appropriate recognition of the officer's contribution, leading to an undignified and disgruntled exit from the Service after many years of qualifying service. This sentiment could extend to the member's family, who have supported the member over many years of service. Further, there is also potential for negative perceptions of the Service to develop amongst the member's colleagues.

A minor amendment to the policy can resolve this issue by allowing exceptional circumstances to be considered by the owning Assistant Commissioner/Executive Director, who will then make a firm recommendation to the Commissioner's Office regarding appropriateness of the CoS being issued.

Whilst internal recognition of members is valued, recognition of members within the wider community is also of great importance. The 2024 CCE Review observed that employees believe the Service quickly identifies minor wrongdoings but does not adequately recognise good work being done. The review cited, 'members would like to see QPS advocate for more public and media recognition for noteworthy contributions to the community'. This sentiment extended to the unsworn workforce, who felt their contributions were underacknowledged by the service. With teams now based in every region, QPS Media have the potential to develop a strategy to improve perceptions and better acknowledge the positive contributions of QPS members within the Service and the community.

Attrition drivers relating to job satisfaction primarily relate to changes in the policing environment, whereby the roles and responsibilities of a police officer extend well beyond traditional functions. As outlined in the 2024 CCE Review, this includes mental health, youth diversion programs, holistic DFV investigations requiring intensive case management strategies, and prisoner custody management. The perception of the workforce is these functions fall within the remit of other government agencies, including the Department of Families, Seniors, Disability Services and Child Safety, Queensland Health, and the Queensland Corrective Services. These responsibilities place additional demands on police officers, thereby minimising the opportunity for police officers to interact with the community in a more meaningful and proactive way. The frustration experienced by the workforce was illustrated through a key finding of the 2024 CCE Review, where 81% of survey participants overwhelmingly indicated their expectations as a police officer were only 'rarely' or 'sometimes' met. This was explained further during 100-Day Review engagement where many members reported that, quite simply, policing is no longer enjoyable.

Whilst decreases in job satisfaction had to be acknowledged as a key driver of attrition, a series of recommendations pertaining to this subject have been comprehensively examined in previous sections of this review paper and will not be further explored here.

## **Valuing the workforce**

A surprising theme arising during the engagement phase of the review was the sentiment expressed by the workforce regarding the current recruiting strategy. Commencing in July 2023, and in response to ministerial commitments amidst rising attrition rates, the Police Recruit Incentives Policy saw the introduction of significant financial incentives and benefits to new police recruits, including applicants who had served international and interstate police services. Financial incentives included payment of tertiary education, training and living allowances, and one-off incentive payments. PCAP was tasked with implementing this strategy, which ultimately led to unprecedented increases in recruitment numbers. The review also noted that elements of the workforce expressed discontent with this initiative with perceptions centred on there being a lack of value and appreciation of current members (CCE 2024). The review also noted the intent of these payments was to offset a portion of the costs for international and interstate applicants moving to Queensland to join the QPS.

Existing separation processes were found to affect workforce sentiment related to perceived value and appreciation. The process to separate from the QPS is guided by the 2022/02, 'Separations Guidelines'. The introduction within this guideline outlines, '...the QPS encourages employees intending to resign to consider alternatives before submitting their resignation'. The guideline advises members to submit the online separation form via the QPS Intranet following which a series of procedural requirements are outlined including return of QPS property. There is currently no requirement for completion of an exit interview with a member prior to separation.

An online separation survey link is forwarded to the separating member however completion of the survey is entirely voluntary. This survey invites departing members to select from pre-formatted drop-down options regarding their reasons for separation, such as 'personal reasons' and 'secured other employment'. Members are also encouraged to respond to pre-formatted positive and negative statements about the QPS, including aspects related to working conditions, culture, and relationships. The survey allows for entry of free text to provide further context in support of pre-formatted selections. Currently, supervisors do not have an avenue to document their observations and issues concerning an employee's separation, ensuring a comprehensive reflection from the organisational perspective. Engagement with QPUE representatives, however, confirmed exit interviews and improved data collection activities are now being undertaken independently by that organisation.

The review analysed a sample of separation survey data results extracted via HR Connect noting the separation descriptors are highly generalised and lack sufficient detail to provide meaningful insight into reasons for separation. For one member, '*personal reasons*' may mean difficulty with shift work; for another, it may involve being required to provide full-time care for an elderly relative. Approximately 15% of voluntary resignations included free narrative commentary, though not all were detailed enough for meaningful analysis. Therefore, a detailed suite of information and insights into separation reasons was not captured. Additionally, about 20% of online separations were filed on behalf of the separating member, thus exit survey responses were not provided.

Recommendations relating to improvements in the collection of exit data were made in the QPS 2024 Internal Audit (IA) Report related to recruitment and retention. The review noted ANZPAA recommendations for all police agencies intended to enhance the collection of exit data. This an issue already being addressed by the Australian Federal Police who are developing exit (and stay) interview templates. The IA recommendation, however, was closed in January 2025 following a report from the Acting Executive Director, Human Resources Division, which advised that inquiries undertaken with other public service agencies had failed to identify useful data which could be gathered through exit interviews.

Improvements in data collection processes should extend beyond members separating to include members re-entering the Service or transitioning to other roles within the Service (eg. special constables). Data relating to re-entry, both as a full-time member and also as a special constable, was requested during this review however had to be manually extracted from existing records which was a time-intensive process. Enhancements in re-entry records will be useful for workforce planning, as they can monitor cultural changes and motivations within the workforce, supporting retention and attraction efforts.

There is currently no process supporting early intervention with members who have indicated an intention to resign. A properly conducted exit interview can identify personal or workplace factors that may be addressed to help retain the employee. Although a suitable solution may not always be immediately available, making an effort to explore opportunities for member retention shows the workforce that employees are valued by the Service. As previously mentioned, there is potential to explore a 'multiple pathways' approach with members during the initial stages of separation. This may include transitioning to other roles within the Service such as unsworn positions or casual employment through the special

constables function. This approach highlights the importance of the employee and their retention within the organisation, albeit in a different role or function.

An early intervention approach could be developed by the Service through amendments to the separation policy and update of QPS systems. One approach might be to introduce a 'cool-down' period at the onset of the online separation process, via lodging of a notice of intention to separate (or similar). Ideally this period would last two weeks and include a face-to-face interview with a supervisor (preferably the OIC or delegate), during which the supervisor explores reasons for separation and identifies potential retention opportunities. At the conclusion of the cool-down period, the member could either continue with (or rescind) their decision to separate from the Service, without affecting their separation date. A formal exit interview should follow and be undertaken by a Commissioned Officer, during which meaningful exit data is drawn from both the employee and supervisor.

The separation rates of officers in the general duties workstream have consistently matched or exceeded the service-wide separation rates within the sworn workforce. With over 6,000 members in general duties, these rates represent high numbers of actual turnover and loss of capability within a workforce described by Baroness Casey in her review of the London Met as 'the workforce the community sees and relies on day to day'. For the financial year to May 2025, there have been 291 unplanned resignations from the sworn workforce, with 183 of these resignations being from within the general duties workforce. General duties is the largest cohort in the QPS and are positioned to significantly influence Service culture. The significance of the services delivered by these officers underscores the necessity for their retention, and a visible commitment from the Service to acknowledge their value is needed.

The 2024 CCE Review called out the perception that there is less prestige attached to the role of 'general duties' and that there is a need to reframe the role to acknowledge the complexity of the skills required to perform it. The renaming of general duties was a recommendation of the 2019 Greenfield Review (GSA, 2019), to better reflect its growing specialist nature and relative importance to the organisation however the recommendation did not progress. Considering the responsibilities of general duties officers, a suitable alternative could be 'first response' which acknowledges the role of general duties officers as the initial point of police response to most calls for service.

Given the range of modern policing duties, this has become a specialised function in its own right. The reframing of general duties has been canvassed by the recently formed People Working Group; however, support was muted. Concerns were raised regarding the evidence supporting the intended benefits, and the implications of a name change, such as updating corporate policy, position descriptions, and QPS systems like QPRIME. The review considers this issue can be left with the People Working Group for any further recommendations to the Commissioner.

Integrating attrition and retention into performance frameworks is crucial for maintaining focus on the importance of retaining experienced employees. One of the four pillars of the performance framework is the focus on a 'healthy and engaged workforce' however retention has not featured prominently in recent Commissioner's Performance Reviews. In 2024, Commissioner's Performance Review templates addressed topics such as WFQ outcomes, equity and diversity, cultural capability, and leave takings, but did not canvas retention in a way that would afford a deeper examination of separation data or contributing factors. Due to the effects of attrition on service delivery and its subsequent impact on member wellbeing, the QPS needs to prioritise workforce retention as a key strategic focus for the organisation.

Lastly, an issue to surface during the QPS 100-Day Review was the retention of the unsworn workforce, particularly those working in key frontline support roles within districts. This cohort includes corporate support roles which are critical to effective business operations, with many delivering direct support to



frontline functions. The highest separation reason identified in HR Connect data for unsworn staff was ‘transferring to another Queensland government agency’ with the second being ‘secured other employment’. The senior district officer cohort advised that in many cases, the QPS is not able to offer the requisite level of remuneration to retain experienced staff, and that staff are exiting to other roles that are higher paying and less demanding.

## The internal attrition cycle – impacts of long-term absence on frontline demand

The cumulative effects of attrition amplify the influence of factors contributing to it, resulting in what can be termed an attrition cycle. For instance, frontline attrition leads to rostering gaps and fewer resources available to meet demand, placing strain on the overall service system. This affects the safety and wellbeing of members, potentially resulting in extended sick leave due to fatigue and burnout, further reducing frontline strength. Roster gaps result in fewer opportunities for remaining members to access career development opportunities such as relieving or training, which impacts morale and engagement. The perceived inability of the QPS to develop a solution to interrupt this cycle perpetuates sentiment among the frontline that they are undervalued and unsupported, creating a divide between senior QPS leaders and the frontline. The common factor across each of these drivers is the cumulative impact of absence on the frontline and the challenges experienced by the Service in managing frontline demand. For this section, this phenomenon will be referred to as ‘internal attrition’.

Internal attrition within frontline teams, and in particular general duties, is a prominent issue across the Service. This issue was canvassed in the 2024 CCE Review which reported ‘... members felt burdened, unsupported and constrained by the Service’s inability to address resourcing challenges’. Frontline teams have been impacted by increasing levels of long-term psychological injury since the introduction of presumptive workers’ compensation legislation in 2020, as evidenced in the table below (see table 19), with the most significant increases seen in the predominantly DCROYC portfolio. There is currently no consistent workforce strategy in place to support internal attrition arising from long-term sick leave.

ORG_UNIT_LEVEL_03	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Total
CRIME CT & SPECIALIST OPS	31	38	37	27	35	12		1			181
DISASTER & EMERGENCY MGMT									1	6	7
EXTERNAL AGENCIES			1								1
FRONTLINE & DIGITAL SERVS	1										1
MINISTERIAL & EXEC SERVS	1										1
REGIONAL OPS & YOUTH CRIME	57	61	81	106	107	128	185	206	252	223	1406
REGIONAL SERVICES	8	16	16	35	39	40	73	64	65	64	420
SPECIALIST OPERATIONS	5	9	5	12	17	16	29	35	27	28	183
STRATEGY	1										1
STRATEGY & CORP SERVICES	1			3		1	7	8	13	12	45
TRANSITION & RESTRUCT									2		2

Table 19: Number of psychological cases with case length greater than six months between 2015- 2024

Internal attrition also arises through the resourcing of specialist teams like district tasking and coordination centres, crime assessment management, property crime teams, and domestic and family violence and vulnerable persons units. These specialist teams often pull resources from general duties within the district under secondment or relieving arrangements, sometimes without clear tangible benefits for the investment. General duties teams are often called upon to supply staff to relieve in specialist areas such as criminal investigation branch/child protection investigation unit, highway patrol, or water police, but do not receive backfill or operational support to manage the created absences. There is, therefore, a

significant disparity between the staffing strength of first response units and the actual number of personnel available to meet demand. Further, the QPS does not have a demand management tool currently available to support operational planning and identification of 'boots on the ground' resources at any given time.

There is significant benefit for the QPS in developing a frontline supplementation initiative/s within a wider strategic workforce planning strategy. The Service does have resource surge capability through the State Flying Squad and Operation Whiskey Legion; however, these initiatives are not designed to address structural, frontline rostering gaps. While casual workforce initiatives may address temporary staffing gaps, a more comprehensive strategy is necessary. The model should focus on flexibility and agility, like those used in disaster response, where members self-nominate via EOI for rapid deployment. Financial incentives, including travel allowances, and temporary changes in work environment and location can be offered to deploying members.

A disaster response model could be implemented within a 'Ready Reserve' framework. An EOI deployment list could be maintained by regions, commands, and divisions, where members can self-nominate on a voluntary basis. Operating on an escalation model, districts would need to use local resources efficiently before requesting additional resources, either from within the region or externally. Deployments outside the district could be negotiated with final approval given by the assistant commissioner. The ready reserve model can offer benefits to deploying members, such as respite and role diversity. The Service may benefit from promoting borderless policing models, developing service-wide networks, workforce upskilling, and strengthening a unified police culture. Additionally, a ready reserve model could provide short-term relief to support members in undertaking professional development activities, which may typically be limited in high-demand environments.

To implement a ready reserve model, governance structures would need to be established, including deployment criteria, thresholds, and approval authorities. The expenditure associated with ready reserve deployments, such as accommodation and travel allowances, would require careful monitoring and management. Crucially, districts would need resources allocated beyond their approved staffing models to support potential deployments outside traditional policing boundaries. These additional resources could be formally appointed to divisional stations, increasing the overall district full-time equivalent (FTE) count to account for potential external deployments.

The use of casual workforce supplementation should be incorporated into any strategic workforce planning intended to support the frontline. Casual workforces can be made available through the optimisation of capabilities, such as expanding the special constable initiative and developing a relief pool. These models help address resourcing gaps in the frontline and alleviate pressures. Governance arrangements would need to be developed, and expenditures managed. Integrating casual workforce models under a single centralised capability could provide organisational benefits. This approach resembles a central functions arrangement, where capability ownership is centralised but deployments are directed by regions/districts following a locally led and centrally supported approach.

Creation of a ready reserve pool may also support Service efforts to operationalise recommendation 38 of the Commission of Inquiry into Queensland Police Service Responses to Domestic and Family Violence, through the provision of additional resources to districts which could be used to offset temporary reallocation of members to other roles. A ready reserve model may also support recommendations contained within the 2023 Queensland Audit Office report regarding resourcing at patrol group levels to enable more flexible deployment of staff.

## Organisational Assessment

Review priority three of the review terms of reference required an assessment of the growth of the QPS senior leadership including the senior executive cohort and the Executive Leadership Team (ELT) against their impact on frontline service delivery and operational efficiency.

The ELT has grown significantly over the past decade and whilst this has enabled the QPS to recruit significant expertise across the breadth of specialist, and corporate areas, it has led to significant underrepresentation by regional and operational members. Despite the growth at executive level, the QPS has seen increased demand and attrition, budget overspends and worrying results in consecutive WFQ surveys.

Recurrent themes arising during consultation included the perception the QPS is Brisbane-centric, and that Brisbane based divisions and commands were not sufficiently supporting the districts and regions. Further, there was a perceived disparity in the allocation of resources to the disadvantage of the frontline.

To understand the impact of the executive leadership on frontline service delivery, the review considered the suitability of the current organisational structure, effectiveness of the current central functions model, impacts of centralised governance arrangements and decision making (including delegations).

### Central functions overview

In 2013, QPS adopted a Central Functions Model formally articulating the relationship between the QPS commands and the regions where command capability is hosted. The model spoke to the governance and control of command resources hosted throughout the state and sought to standardise practices, achieve economies of scale, and align activities with whole-of-service priorities.

The QPS Central Functions Policy was developed to provide clarity around the application of specialist resources by establishing ‘rules of engagement’ for centrally owned units, however it remained a standalone policy which has not been integrated into service manuals. The policy provided for consistency in standards and practices, efficient resource deployment, and operational responsiveness to community needs.

The 2019 QPS Strategic Review (GSA, 2019) recommended redesigning the model to return accountability for deployment to the districts and regions whilst preserving the benefits of centralised capability. This led to the Service Alignment Program and its introduction of the ‘Partnership Model’. Under this model, some capabilities transitioned back to district control through shared accountability arrangements.

The 2019 review and subsequent internal assessments highlighted several issues including:

- An imbalance of power and resources that favour central commands and divisions.
- Confusion around governance and hosting arrangements.
- Misalignment between centralised control and priorities, and that of local needs.
- Dual reporting lines causing accountability and morale issues.
- District officers held accountable without full control of resources.

Feedback through consultation and engagement indicates a gradual erosion of central functions arrangements and persistent confusion due to dual reporting structures and inability for districts and regions to deploy hosted resources.

Discussions at district officer level underscored the critical role of central functions in supporting district-level operations. Managers emphasised the need for better coordination, integrated systems, and an organisational approach to improve resource allocation and service delivery. Delivering human resource and finance services at the district level was seen as essential for meeting business needs. Additionally, having appropriately remunerated, subject matter experts at both district and regional levels was highlighted as key to enhancing support and retaining talent.

Multiple internal reviews have recommended decentralising capabilities to enhance frontline decision-making. The Safety and Injury Management Review report (2020) recommended a hybrid model for capability management and leveraging federated resources. A hybrid management model policy would clearly define rules specific to owning/hosting resources and including rules for deployment of resources.

The Corporate Capability Review (2022) found that centralising corporate functions post formation of the Public Safety Business Agency has led to inefficiencies and limited flexibility, particularly disadvantaging districts and regions by concentrating talent and resources in central hubs. Further, the success of central functions arrangements to date has largely depended on relationships and collaboration, with no standardised operating guidelines.

The current state reflects different operational models with varying hosting arrangements, including locally owned and hosted resources. Achieving a balance between retaining management of expertise and executing closer to the frontline requires collaboration, a reset in objectives, and a consistent framework.

### *A new approach to Central Functions*

The review developed an alternate model for the delivery of central functions – the ‘CORE’ model - Central Oversight with Regional Execution. The proposed CORE model is a representation of the proposed shift from ‘hosted resources’ to ‘locally led’ (refer appendix K). It is a governance-led model where the central unit sets policy, standards, and provides support, while regional units focus on delivery. Adopting and implementing this model should provide strategic alignment of services, consistent and documented frameworks, and, ultimately, better service delivery outcomes for the community.

The proposed CORE model is supported with a set of guiding principles which are detailed in appendix L. The alignment of central capability with the CORE model under the proposed principles offers significant benefits to frontline operations by empowering local decision making, enhancing responsiveness, and ensuring resources are deployed where they are needed to enhance community safety.

Adopting a locally led approach to the operation of select specialist capabilities, grants regions and districts more autonomy and clarity, facilitating quicker and more targeted responses to meet community needs and address local priorities. The proposed CORE model will address the gap in the existing central functions policy by fostering stronger alignment between operational and central capabilities with the benefits of strategic oversight, specialist support, and quality assurance provided by central function commands/divisions.

## **Frontline corporate support**

The review found that the approach in the delivery of corporate support to the frontline is not adequately meeting frontline needs. Recurring themes raised during consultation included:

Theme	Summary
<i>Localised decision-making</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strong support for empowering regional assistant commissioners, district officers and OIC.</li> </ul>
<i>Disconnect between HR and Frontline</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Concerns that centrally managed HR services are too removed from day-to-day challenges of operational policing.</li> <li>Perception that central HRD lacks contextual understanding of regional and district environments.</li> </ul>
<i>HR functions are fragmented</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HR responsibilities are spread across multiple units leading to confusion and inefficiencies.</li> <li>Requests for better coordination and integration of HR functions.</li> </ul>
<i>Under-resourced HR support</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>High staff-to-support ratios resulting in reactive service delivery.</li> <li>Inability of current structures to plan proactively or meet frontline demands consistently.</li> </ul>
<i>Inconsistent application of HR policy and delegations</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Variability in the interpretation and application of HR processes across regions.</li> <li>Need for clearer guidelines, training, and delegation frameworks.</li> </ul>

*Table 20: Themes and summaries of issues raised during consultation relating to corporate support*

The Greenfield Review identified systemic challenges including a disconnect between centrally managed functions and local operational needs. One key finding noted previous structural changes had limited the ability of districts to respond effectively to local priorities (GSA, 2019).

The QPS Annual Report 2022–2023 reinforces the organisation’s commitment to modernising and decentralising its corporate functions to improve service delivery and operational responsiveness. The report outlines structural reforms, including efforts to embed corporate support such as human resources, finance, and digital support within regional structures to better align with local operational needs (Queensland Police Service, 2023).

## Frontline Corporate Support Model

The review proposes the transitioning of corporate support from a centralised approach to a decentralised, locally led approach. A Frontline Corporate Support Model (refer appendix M) has been developed under which core corporate support will shift from a shared centralised model to being locally ‘owned’ and managed by regions and districts, whilst continuing to be centrally supported.

The Frontline Corporate Support Model presents a redefined framework for the delivery of corporate support across QPS. It is a shift from a shared centralised approach to a regionally owned model, to support locally led service delivery and aims to enhance frontline support and improve responsiveness to local needs.

The model identifies proposed functions and structure, whilst number of personnel is to be determined according to size, operating complexity and risk environment. Appendix N includes a proposed chain of command for corporate support staff within the regionalised model (noting the relevant assistant commissioner and district officers would retain discretion in establishing local reporting arrangements). Indicative staffing requirements for the Frontline Corporate Support Model for all regions is provided at appendix O.

While the focus of the Frontline Corporate Support Model was to better meet the corporate support needs of the regions, and districts, the model can be adjusted for application to commands and divisions. Appendix P outlines a concept model illustrating proposed corporate support for larger command

structures. Prior to finalising a corporate support model for commands and divisions a comprehensive review will be required to determine the appropriate level, structure, and placement of services transitioning from central functions to the command and divisional level. The proposed model has been developed to be scalable dependent on the size, operating complexity and risk environment of individual commands and divisions.

By moving corporate support closer to the frontline, QPS is better positioned to deliver agile, efficient, and responsive support that empowers regional leaders, improves service delivery, and fosters a resilient, future-ready workforce. Benefits include:

- *Improved responsiveness and relevance* - locally owned corporate support embedded within regional and district structures allows for more operationally aligned and responsive service delivery. This model ensures services are tailored to local demands while remaining consistent with strategic policy, processes, and compliance.
- *Leadership and capability uplift* - the decentralised model strengthens leadership capability at all levels by bringing decision-making closer to those with operational responsibility.
- *Workforce retention and engagement* - locally owned services improve visibility, access, and trust in corporate functions. For example, district-based human resource and workplace health and safety support enables issues to be resolved quicker, with more tailored wellbeing interventions, and a stronger overall employee experience.

Implementation of the model will require focused investment in people, systems, and infrastructure to ensure regional and district teams are equipped to operate effectively under the new model. Decentralised delivery must continue to align with QPS policies, standards, and legislative frameworks to ensure consistency and compliance across the organisation. The model must remain adaptable as QPS grows, with mechanisms for feedback, monitoring, and continuous improvement built in from the outset.

While the benefits are significant, the success of this reform will depend on strategic implementation, adequate regional and district resourcing, and strong governance to maintain quality and consistency.

## Frontline corporate support staffing model

Transitioning to a Frontline Corporate Support Model will require an uplift in staffing to ensure adequate capability and capacity. Whilst regular increases in police officer capacity are critical to ensure frontline services are met, equally as important is sufficient capacity and relevant capability in corporate support business functions (Corporate Capability Review, 2022).

The Frontline Corporate Support Staffing Model provides an overview of current and proposed workforce arrangements to support the implementation of the regionalised model. It identifies existing positions located within regions and districts that can quickly transition to support the implementation of this model.

To enable and sustain the new model, additional positions are proposed to strengthen capacity, capability and ensure adequate support across all areas. These roles are designed to enhance operational responsiveness, improve consistency in service delivery, and align resources with local needs.

The model also highlights areas where current roles should be uplifted to build on existing strengths and address workforce gaps. Staffing figures are indicative and will need to be validated through workforce analysis.

To support the implementation and sustainability of the new staffing model, a range of new positions are proposed. These include:

- AO6 senior procurement officer - will be placed within each region to provide expert guidance on procurement processes and procedures. This position will ensure procurement activities are compliant, consistent, and effectively support operational priorities at the regional and district level.
- AO4 accommodation officer - will be introduced within nominated districts to better manage facility and housing requirements. An identified disadvantage of centralised support is the ability to conduct site visits, knowledge of property conditions, utilisation, and management. This position will manage, monitor and report minor works projects and submissions to ensure quality outcomes are achieved.
- Additional AO6 senior HR business partners - will provide targeted support to nominated commands (i.e. Operations Support Command; Crime and Intelligence Command). This may include other commands after an assessment process is conducted. This role will coordinate and deliver HR support, offering high-level advisory and operational support to ensure consistency and compliance.
- To enhance the QPS wellbeing response, senior sergeant wellbeing coordinator positions will be introduced. One for each region and within identified commands. These positions will be responsible for the coordination and oversight of employee wellbeing services, encompassing health and safety, injury management, and proactive wellbeing initiatives.
- Additionally, AO5 wellbeing officer positions will be established to support the development and delivery of wellbeing services at the district level. Each district will have a dedicated wellbeing officer, with additional officers positioned within identified commands. This will ensure consistent, accessible, and proactive support for QPS employees.

In addition to the proposed new roles, there will be a need to uplift existing capability to ensure sufficient coverage and meet demand requirements at the regional and district level. This includes increasing resourcing across key corporate functions such as human resources, wellbeing, finance, and ICT. Strengthening these areas will be essential to support the effective delivery of regionally owned corporate support.

Existing positions will also need to be reassessed to ensure alignment with the priorities of the Frontline Corporate Support Model. For example, AO5 workforce coordinator, AO4 accommodation officer and AO5 business coordinator roles should be reviewed to clarify their roles and responsibilities. This reassessment will help eliminate duplication, strengthen coordination, and ensure that each role contributes meaningfully to effective service delivery.

Transitioning corporate support to regional ownership may create a capability gap within central corporate service functions, requiring an uplift in personnel to sustain their core responsibilities. A comprehensive review of central corporate functions will be necessary to determine whether shifting capability to frontline support impacts the capacity of central functions in providing strategic planning, policy development, governance, and oversight. Maintaining capability within central corporate services will be essential to ensure consistency, alignment, and long-term organisational effectiveness.

Prior to implementing the Frontline Corporate Support Model, a comprehensive review and evaluation of capability and capacity across all regions and districts should be undertaken. This assessment will be critical to ensuring that the transition of key functions is sustainable and positioned for success. Identifying gaps and readiness at the local level will help inform focused support, resourcing strategies, and risk mitigation measures to enable a smooth and effective implementation.



Transitioning corporate support to a locally owned and managed approach presents a strategic opportunity to enhance responsiveness, strengthen local leadership, and improve service delivery across the QPS. With clear governance and a structured implementation plan, this transition will deliver long-term benefits to both frontline operations and corporate service effectiveness.

## Capability management

The issue of siloing within large, structured agencies such as the QPS presents significant challenges to the delivery of efficient, effective and integrated policing services. Despite efforts to address siloing, the QPS continues to encounter issues related to coordination and resource allocation, impacting overall service delivery to the community. The solution lies in a more coordinated approach, focusing strategic effort and optimising investment to achieve QPS priorities. This is achievable via a capability management approach.

Capability management does not require the dismantling of existing structures or operational business domains within them. Instead, it aims to enhance coordination and enable work to be conducted effectively and collaboratively across existing structures. Creating a system to identify and build capabilities across the QPS, via a systemised and coordinated approach, will better support our people and the services we deliver. By overseeing capabilities and avoiding unnecessary duplication, the Service can efficiently and effectively enhance the delivery of safer and more secure communities in alignment with QPS objectives.

The development of capabilities begins with mapping the top-level QPS functions. These functions categorise the activities performed by QPS to define, build, and communicate intended outcomes. This process also integrates services collaboratively provided by QPS along with partner agencies. An accountable executive should be appointed to maintain responsibility for each capability, and is accountable for building, enhancing and maturing their assigned capabilities. Sub-capabilities can also be identified and allocated if required. Executives are not expected to work alone. Ideally, a capability management office should support them in designing capabilities and coordinating governance. QPS strategic governance maintains responsibility for resolving capability related disputes, prioritising issues and resource allocation.

During the discovery phase of capability development, the accountable executive may align a capability with a relevant pre-existing QPS project. Adopting a capability management approach ensures all QPS projects, both current and future, align against priorities and promotes more transparency particularly related to capital investment. If strategic governance prioritises a particular capability, it increases the probability of new projects being approved to develop that capability further. Not all capabilities will be matured/developed to the same extent, as capability requirements are closely tied to organisational objectives.

Extensive work has already been undertaken to identify and define top-level capabilities across the Service, inclusive of input from QPS executives. Capability modelling and development included desktop analysis of a previously developed QPS Capability Framework and other external factors impacting QPS service delivery (e.g. external reviews, commissions of inquiry).

This process resulted in the identification of new capabilities, which should now be further developed to ensure the QPS is well positioned to meet current and emerging challenges in the policing environment.

To further progress the capability management approach, the QPS should consider establishment of a Capability Management Office within the QPS Transformation Office. The Capability Management Office, should also be recognised as a capability within a proposed QPS Capability Framework, with the Executive

Director, Transformation appointed as the accountable executive. Whilst a full staffing model analysis has not been undertaken, resourcing of the Capability Management Office upon commencement should be an inspector and an AO6 at a minimum, with further resourcing requirements considered upon maturity of the office. The Capability Management Office should review current capability ownership in the QPS and map existing practices to ensure all Service capabilities are accurately recorded. Future deliverables of the Capability Management Office should include ranking and prioritising all QPS capabilities, and integration of activities, where appropriate, into existing QPS governance processes.

## Delegations

The QPS maintains a structured framework for human resource and financial delegations, and authorities, to devolve decision making to appropriate levels within the organisation whilst ensuring compliance with legislative and policy requirements. Delegations are underpinned by the following principles:

- *Empowerment of frontline managers*: human resource delegations should devolve decision-making to appropriate levels within the Service, enabling managers to effectively oversee their teams. This approach fosters a sense of ownership and accountability among frontline leaders.
- *Compliance with legislative and policy frameworks*: delegated authorities must be exercised in accordance with relevant legislation, industrial instruments, directives, and policies. This ensures that decisions are legally sound and align with QPS standards.
- *Defined scope of authority*: delegations are typically limited to the delegate's area of responsibility, usually encompassing subordinate employees. Exceptions are explicitly stated within the delegation instruments.
- *Position-specific delegations*: when a delegation is assigned to a specific position title, only the incumbent of that position may exercise the authority, regardless of their area of responsibility.
- *Managerial responsibility requirement*: employees can only exercise delegations if they hold managerial responsibilities at the specified rank or classification level. For instance, an AO8 Project Officer without supervisory duties would not possess delegation authority under the schedule.
- *Proper submission of human resource requests*: delegates must ensure that HR requests are submitted correctly, using the appropriate forms and channels. Incorrect submissions result in further follow up to resolve outstanding issues.
- *Decision-making considerations*: when exercising delegated authority, decision-makers should assess whether the decision is justifiable, complies with legislative requirements, considers natural justice, aligns with QPS values, and is free from conflicts of interest. If a conflict arises, the matter should be escalated.

Delegations were a recurring topic during consultation, including a lack of clarity around certain human resources processes, administrative burdens on both frontline managers and HR Services, and delays in areas such as surplus and lateral transfer management. Key themes raised during consultation in relation to delegations included:

Theme	Summary
<i>Delegations</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delegation levels are often too low to support operational realities.</li> <li>• There is a disconnect between financial and HR delegations.</li> <li>• Officers call for empowerment of frontline leaders and NCO.</li> </ul>
<i>HR Processes</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HR support is distant, overstretched, and reactive.</li> <li>• There are calls for embedding HR in districts and realigning</li> <li>• HR functions to better serve the frontline.</li> </ul>
<i>Recruitment, Transfers, Promotions</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recruitment and promotion processes are inefficient and delayed.</li> <li>• Lateral transfer and surplus selection processes are inconsistent and burdensome.</li> </ul>

<i>Budget and Finance</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Funding allocations are insufficient, and procurement rules are restrictive.</li> <li>• There is a push for more local budget control.</li> </ul>
<i>Strategic HR and Workforce Planning</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is a lack of strategic workforce planning, demand modelling, and HR vision to support future needs and reduce attrition.</li> </ul>
<i>Cultural and Structural Reform</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is a need to unify people functions under a single leadership and realign HR structurally to support frontline operations.</li> </ul>

*Table 21: Themes and summaries of issues raised during consultation relating to delegations*

As a result of consultation with members, an analysis of human resources, financial, and legal delegations was undertaken to determine whether there were opportunities to better align delegations with the realities and requirements of frontline decision-making and move decision-making closer to frontline.

By enabling timely, locally informed decisions, managers are better positioned to respond to operational demands, align workforce planning with performance and development needs, and enhance member wellbeing. Addressing inefficiencies in current delegation structures, while maintaining compliance with legislative and industrial frameworks, has the potential to strengthen service delivery, reduce administrative overhead, support consistent human resources practices, and build greater confidence in frontline leadership across the QPS.

Delegating human resources responsibilities to frontline managers delivers several benefits, including:

- *Improved operational responsiveness:* frontline managers with HR and financial authority can respond quickly to operational needs, such as crime surges or staffing gaps.
- *Increased accountability and ownership:* aligning authority with responsibility encourages managers to take ownership of both operational and people outcomes, fostering a culture of accountable leadership (Bach, Kessler, White, & Harris, 2005).
- *More effective use of executive time:* Delegating appropriate decisions to middle managers allows senior executives and HR to focus on strategy, innovation, and stakeholder engagement, improving agility and reducing delays (APSC, 2020).
- *Enhanced staff morale and retention:* Empowered managers create more responsive and supportive workplaces, which improves staff satisfaction, reduces bureaucracy, and supports wellbeing. Leadership quality and timely HR decisions are linked to retention (CIPD, 2021).
- *Development of future leaders:* Practicing HR and financial decision-making builds critical competencies for future executive roles, promoting a pipeline of experienced, executive-ready leaders (Harvard Business Publishing Corporate Learning, 2023).
- *Better business and operational outcomes:* Delegated decisions help align workforce deployment with local needs, enabling flexible staffing, quicker adjustments, and better community service (QPSC, 2021).

The review has identified specific delegations and approval authorities for consideration for transfer to enable decisions to be made locally. Appendix Q lists these delegations, each with proposed levels, rationale, and supporting commentary. However, the proposed delegations should be subject to further consultation and review prior to implementation, to validate their alignment with operational needs and to surface any unidentified risk.

Shifting human resources and financial delegations to the frontline is a cultural and operational change that will require structured support. Without sufficient knowledge or confidence, frontline leadership may apply delegations inconsistently or hesitate to act. Strengthening their understanding of policy, legislation, and procedures can help build confidence and support timely, informed decisions.

The transition of HR services to regional and district ownership may result in a reduction of expertise within central human resources functions, potentially impacting their ability to deliver effective support across the organisation. This shift in service delivery must be carefully managed to ensure central HR services retains sufficient capability to fulfil its strategic, policy, and oversight responsibilities. To mitigate the potential impact, it is recommended that a workforce capability assessment be undertaken. This should be accompanied by a workforce plan that ensures central human resources services retains sufficient capacity and capability to meet organisational needs.

### *Surplus member suitability arrangements*

The current lack of clarity around the assessment and determination of surplus suitability is a key source of frustration for both operational leaders and HR Services. Inefficient processes and failure to follow established guidelines have resulted in delays and inconsistent application of processes. These issues are exacerbated by the absence of a formal surplus policy and limited guidelines, reducing transparency and consistency.

Ongoing designation of members as surplus presents organisational risks, including misallocated resources, reduced efficiency, and lower morale. Repeated refusals by surplus members to accept suitable placements further undermine the intent of the process. There is also no specific HR delegation approving appointments under surplus, with suitability assessments currently required from the area proposing to advertise a vacant position. Issues identified by the review team include unclear assessment processes, non-compliance with guidelines, inconsistent application, prolonged surplus status, and repeat refusal of roles.

An 'appointment to surplus' delegation should be established, with approval authority assigned to level 2 and level 3 (in line with the levels for the existing delegation 'Approve the appointment of non-commissioned police officers and constables'). A policy should be developed to ensure consistent decision-making in line with the intent of surplus members processes. The existing guideline should be updated to support the policy by outlining the suitability assessment, management, and resolution processes.

## **Organisational structure**

The need for policing organisations to ensure they remain structurally sound and fit for the delivery of their functions or purpose for the current state is not unique to Queensland. In recent years, policing organisations across the globe and Australasia have reviewed and transformed their organisations to this end.

The QPS structure directly influences its ability to effectively deliver its functions. It is apparent that the existing organisational structure does not best support the delivery of policing services and structural change is required to ensure the recommendations of the report can be delivered.

Issues were identified across the review priorities which are rooted in an organisational structure that is not fit-for-purpose. Recurring themes included disparate spans of control, service delivery gaps, trust in leadership, disconnect with frontline, and lack of integrated corporate services.

Additionally, the current structure has embedded an overly conservative risk appetite leading to reduced engagement and morale. It limits the agency's ability to respond to change and drive transformation. This has directly and indirectly impacted the ability of the frontline to respond to calls for service.

The most common themes and issues identified during the consultation and engagement stages of the Review have been considered in order to achieve:

- an informed assessment of the growth of the QPS Executive Leadership Team (ELT) and Senior Executive Cohort; against their combined impact on frontline service delivery and operational efficiency; and
- a rapid evaluation of QPS organisational structures, focusing on resource allocation, leadership, and spans of control.

The review identified the current organisational structure of the QPS needs streamlining and realignment with an increased emphasis on ‘frontline first’ across the commands and divisions, and spans of control need rebalancing. While the recent updating of the corporate governance framework is anticipated to better support a frontline focus in decision making, this re-focusing needs to occur across the Executive Leadership Team.

The review proposes changes to the structure of the QPS Executive Leadership Team and Senior Executive Cohort, which comprise the level 1 and level 2 delegate portfolios. The scope of proposed changes extends to district, group and business units in some circumstances. As Frontline and Digital Division will undergo an external review by a specialist ICT consultancy no structural changes to that division are proposed beyond a rebranding of the division. The review, to be undertaken by a specialist ICT consultancy, is anticipated to inform changes to the QPS ICT operating model, provide a clear direction for the QPS Enterprise Systems Strategy, and inform current and future procurement activities.

It is intended the proposed restructure will enhance the Service’s strategic decision-making capabilities, improve service delivery, and promote leadership and employee wellbeing by transitioning to a more contemporary organizational structure. This transition will involve adopting modern management practices, streamlining processes, and fostering a culture of innovation and collaboration.

The organisational structure proposed by the review will be released once the Commissioner has fully consulted with the organisation.

## Spans of control

An analysis of spans of control (down to group level) was undertaken in accordance with the category 1 roles within the Australian Public Service Commission benchmarks (2014). The review team considered issues of risk and complexity associated with individual positions, rather than the arbitrary benchmarks of 3-7 direct reports. The review did identify obvious outliers with respect to spans of control, particularly Forensic Services Group and the Emergency Management Coordination Command.

Additionally, current spans of control (including at the commissioned officer and senior officer levels) are highly favourable for divisions and commands relative to regions. Given 81% of current commissioned officers growth positions have been provisionally allocated to divisions and commands the disparity may be further exacerbated.

The existing whole-of-service district constructs were considered as part of the span of control review. With the exception of central Brisbane, no evidence was identified that would justify the establishment of new or additional districts.

In conjunction with the 100-Day Review, the Acting Assistant Commissioner, Brisbane Region developed an options paper exploring the need for alternative regional structures given the evolving demands and business needs of the region, and in consideration of the upcoming 2032 Olympic Games.

Options included a return to two regions as well as the establishment of a third district encompassing the central business district. The paper is reproduced at appendix S.

The region concluded that the status quo should remain though the existing command structure should be augmented with a chief superintendent position and support staff to address command and capability gaps. Whilst the review supports the view of the Acting Assistant Commissioner, the strategic and operational demands associated with the 2032 Olympic Games will likely necessitate a third district for the region. The region's preferred option should, perhaps, be seen as an interim measure or bridge to that future state.

## Supporting changes

Implementation of the new organisational structure is contingent upon several additional supporting recommendations. These recommendations relate to a number of discrete establishments and capabilities across the organisation.

The review also makes a number of recommendations which are intended to directly support the frontline, including improving the performance and service delivery of entities that constitute the People and Assets portfolio, a review of the current state of the Public Safety Response Team, and reviewing the Strategic Intelligence Group and Intelligence Directorate. The review also proposes the rationalisation of policy and research capabilities across the organisation to ensure these specialised skillsets are deployed in a coordinated manner to support the strategic intent of the Commissioner and organisational priorities.

Overall, the proposed organisational structure proposal aims to ensure the structure of the organisation is contemporary and fit-for-purpose to meet the emerging issues and challenges facing the QPS. Importantly though, the management and resolution of impacted employees should be a key tenet of any implementation strategy linked to the review recommendations. The focus of the review on member wellbeing should remain a priority going forward and during implementation.



## Conclusion

The Commissioner's 100-Day Review of the Queensland Police Service has found the organisation at a critical juncture. The agency must decisively realign its legislative mandate, operational structures, and internal culture to meet the evolving demands of modern policing. The review has identified systemic issues that have contributed to mission creep, workforce fatigue, rising attrition, and a disconnect between strategic leadership and frontline realities. These challenges, while significant, also present a unique opportunity for transformative reform.

The review's 65 recommendations provide a comprehensive roadmap for change, grounded in evidence, consultation, and interjurisdictional analysis. Central to this transformation is the reaffirmation of QPS core policing responsibilities under Section 2.3 of the *Police Service Administration Act 1990*. By clearly delineating core and non-core functions, and by divesting or reforming non-essential activities, the QPS can refocus its resources on frontline service delivery and community safety.

Equally critical is the prioritisation of workforce wellbeing. The review has highlighted the urgent need for a fatigue-informed, demand-based rostering system, a comprehensive wellbeing strategy, and a decentralised support model that empowers local leadership. These reforms are essential to restoring morale, reducing burnout, and fostering a culture of care and accountability.

Addressing attrition requires a shift in strategic focus—from recruitment alone to holistic retention. This includes investing in leadership development, flexible work models, career planning, and recognition systems that value the contributions of all members. The proposed reforms to training, mentoring, and professional development will help build a resilient and future-ready workforce.

Finally, the review calls for a structural rebalancing of the organisation. The adoption of the CORE model and the Frontline Corporate Support Model will decentralise decision-making, enhance regional responsiveness, and ensure that corporate functions are aligned with operational needs. These changes, supported by refined delegations and capability management, will enable the QPS to operate with greater agility, transparency, and effectiveness.

This review is not merely a critique—it is a blueprint for renewal. It offers the QPS a pivotal opportunity to modernise, to lead with purpose, and to build a policing organisation that is trusted, capable, and committed to the communities it serves. The successful implementation of these reforms will require sustained leadership, clear governance, and a shared commitment to change. With these in place, the QPS can emerge stronger, more focused, and better equipped to meet the challenges of contemporary policing in Queensland.



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