

VICTORIA

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Auditor General

Victoria

# Planning for a capable Victoria Police workforce

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AUDITOR GENERAL  
VICTORIA

The Hon. Monica Gould MP  
President  
Legislative Council  
Parliament House  
Melbourne

The Hon. Judy Maddigan MP  
Speaker  
Legislative Assembly  
Parliament House  
Melbourne

Dear Presiding Officers

Under the provisions of section 16AB of the *Audit Act 1994*, I transmit my performance audit report on *Planning for a capable Victoria Police workforce*.

Yours faithfully

JW CAMERON  
*Auditor-General*

31 May 2006

# Foreword

The ability of governments today to regulate and to deliver high quality services to the community is influenced increasingly by the capacity and capability of the various workforces in government agencies.

This is especially so for police forces as they respond to wide-ranging changes in the nature of crime and the social and economic makeup of our community.

Victoria Police is actively engaged in moving to modern policing. In order to succeed in this endeavour, it needs to ensure that its workforce has the capacity and capability to carry out these changed ways of working.

This audit focuses on the how well Victoria Police is planning for its workforce now and in the future.

This audit builds on the work of our December 2004 report *Meeting our future Victorian Public Service workforce needs*, and our earlier reports on the nursing and teaching workforces.



JW CAMERON  
*Auditor-General*

31 May 2006

# Contents

<b>FOREWORD</b> .....	<b>v</b>
<b>1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b> .....	<b>1</b>
1.1 Workforce planning in Victoria Police .....	3
1.2 Overall conclusion.....	4
1.3 Does Victoria Police have a sound basis for workforce planning? .....	5
1.4 Is Victoria Police planning its future workforce effectively?.....	6
1.5 Is Victoria Police recruiting and placing its workforce effectively? .....	8
1.6 Is Victoria Police effectively developing its operational capability? .....	9
1.7 Is Victoria Police adequately sustaining its workforce capability?.....	10
<b>2. INTRODUCTION</b> .....	<b>13</b>
2.1 Workforce planning and Victoria Police .....	15
2.2 About Victoria Police .....	16
2.3 Workforce planning better practice .....	19
2.4 Audit methodology .....	20
<b>3. DOES VICTORIA POLICE HAVE A SOUND BASIS FOR WORKFORCE PLANNING?</b> .....	<b>23</b>
3.1 Introduction.....	25
3.2 Is the purpose of Victoria Police clearly stated and communicated? ....	25
3.3 Are organisational values and culture defined, modelled and embedded into practices and systems? .....	27
3.4 Does Victoria Police integrate workforce planning into its business planning? .....	31
3.5 Overall conclusion.....	32
<b>4. IS VICTORIA POLICE PLANNING ITS FUTURE WORKFORCE EFFECTIVELY?</b> .....	<b>35</b>
4.1 Introduction.....	37
4.2 Is Victoria Police undertaking workforce planning?.....	37
4.3 Does Victoria Police evaluate the impact of its strategies on its workforce capability? .....	45
4.4 Overall conclusion.....	47

<b>5. IS VICTORIA POLICE RECRUITING AND PLACING ITS WORKFORCE EFFECTIVELY? .....</b>	<b>49</b>
5.1 Introduction.....	51
5.2 Is Victoria Police recruiting to ensure that it has the required workforce with the right skills and behaviours? .....	51
5.3 Is Victoria Police allocating its resources to ensure that it has the right people in the right places?.....	62
5.4 Overall conclusion.....	65
<b>6. IS VICTORIA POLICE EFFECTIVELY DEVELOPING ITS OPERATIONAL CAPABILITY? .....</b>	<b>67</b>
6.1 Introduction.....	69
6.2 Is Victoria Police improving its operational capability? .....	69
6.3 Overall conclusion.....	77
<b>7. IS VICTORIA POLICE ADEQUATELY SUSTAINING ITS WORKFORCE CAPABILITY? .....</b>	<b>79</b>
7.1 Introduction.....	81
7.2 Is Victoria Police implementing strategies to retain its workforce? .....	81
7.3 Is Victoria Police developing its workforce? .....	88
7.4 Overall conclusion.....	95



# 1. Executive summary



## 1.1 Workforce planning in Victoria Police

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Effective strategic workforce planning involves determining and shaping the capacity (number of workers) and capability (knowledge, skills, experience and the ability to apply them) of a workforce to achieve organisational goals.

In 2005, Victoria Police employed approximately 13 500 people. Its 2004-05 budget was about \$1.35 billion, of which \$1.01 billion was spent on salaries and related costs. The workforce is clearly its major asset.

It is, therefore, essential that Victoria Police looks well into the future to determine its capacity needs, and the skills and experience its employees will need.

As with all major organisations, Victoria Police is being reshaped by demographic and social changes. It is also influenced by changes in the nature of crime resulting from technological advances, globalisation, new forms of terrorism and threats to public safety.

These changes are placing new demands on policing. The skills and knowledge needed within police forces to deliver services to the community are changing. At an organisational level and at an individual level, a new capability is required.

Policing is not a static activity and has evolved over time to deal with new forms of crime, cope with new laws and respond to changing community demands. Since the late 1990s, there has been a greater emphasis on the prevention of crime through the use of intelligence and working in partnership with the community and other agencies.

Victoria Police needs not only to ensure that it has sufficient numbers of police, but that it has the right skills and attributes. It must also ensure that its experienced workforce also develops the capability to proactively address criminal activity and work with the community. Cultural change is also critical to the success of this new model. Workforce planning within this context is, therefore, even more complex.

In this audit we assessed whether Victoria Police is adequately planning for a workforce capable of achieving the outcomes established by the government's *Growing Victoria Together* policy, particularly in relation to the need to improve public safety.



Our December 2004 audit, *Managing our future Victorian Public Service workforce needs*, identified 8 elements of better practice in relation to strategic workforce planning:

- The purpose of the business and its strategic directions are widely communicated and understood.
- Organisational values and cultures are defined, modelled and embedded into practices and systems.
- Strategic workforce planning occurs at the highest level and is a critical part of business strategy.
- The external environment is scanned for issues impacting on the business and its workforce.
- The organisation collects and analyses internal workforce information to assess its capacity to meet current and future business needs.
- Capability frameworks for the workforce, including critical job roles, are developed and incorporated into organisational systems.
- Investment in initiatives to attract, recruit, develop and retain employees is pivotal, and is made to address workforce planning issues.
- Comprehensive data is used to measure the impact of workforce strategies on business performance

These elements were used to assess workforce planning in Victoria Police.

## 1.2 Overall conclusion

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Victoria Police has a sound basis for workforce planning through its clear intention of moving to a more intelligence-based policing model, focused on prevention of crime as well as reacting to crime, and working in partnership with the community. This direction is articulated in its strategic plan *The Way Ahead: Strategic Plan 2003-2008* and in its values and behaviours which are modelled by senior managers in the organisation.

Victoria Police has moved from a focus on workforce numbers to a more sophisticated form of planning which attempts to integrate workforce issues in all its activities.

Currently, Victoria Police operates on a resourcing model based on the opening hours and services provided by individual police stations, rather than on the policing needs of the local area. This can result in some areas being under-resourced and others over-resourced.

Victoria Police has developed a new resource allocation model which will provide a robust and evidence-based mechanism for identifying the overall capacity of its sworn officer workforce. It will also provide a basis for the allocation of sworn officers to police districts on the basis of the specific policing needs of the local area and address the issue of under-staffed and over-staffed stations.

Unfortunately, this model does not address the number of unsworn personnel required to provide specialist support, or where they should be placed.

Workforce planning in Victoria Police is constrained by several factors. One is the lack of a robust human resource information system to enable the organisation to fully achieve best practice workforce planning.

A more significant issue is the fact that although Victoria Police has control over its unsworn workforce levels through its operating budget, it is not able to substitute police positions with unsworn staff even when this would be a better use of resources. It needs to be able to employ unsworn officers in specialist support roles as it sees fit. It is currently restricted by the government's funding approach and by industrial constraints.

Victoria Police has a range of initiatives in place to improve its operational capability which are well planned and are already having an impact on the daily work of sworn officers. It is also implementing a range of strategies to sustain its workforce, especially to retain its older officers.

However, its performance management system and its succession planning approaches need to be improved in order to fully support workforce planning.

### **1.3 Does Victoria Police have a sound basis for workforce planning?**

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To assess Victoria Police's basis for workforce planning, we examined whether it is an integral part of business planning, and whether its purpose and direction, values and culture are clearly stated, understood and used in business practices.

We found that Victoria Police's move to a proactive, intelligence and community-based model of policing is clearly communicated and understood by managers across the organisation.

There is a focus on workforce planning at the most senior levels in the organisation. There is a very clear understanding of the role of workforce planning in achieving the policing model described in Victoria Police's strategic plans.

Organisational values and behaviours are clearly articulated and integrated into policies and practices across the organisation. However, the adoption of the values and behaviours required to support the move to proactive policing across the workforce is a continuing challenge. Victoria Police needs to constantly monitor progress towards the change in culture it seeks.

It is currently reviewing its performance management system to ensure its alignment with the values and behaviours. This review is essential as an effective performance management system would be a valuable tool for measuring progress in changing the culture of the organisation. It would also measure progress in the move to the more intelligence-based and proactive community policing.

### Recommendation

1. **That Victoria Police improves its performance management system to ensure that it supports and monitors the culture change necessary for the move to proactive policing.**

## 1.4 Is Victoria Police planning its future workforce effectively?

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To assess the effectiveness of workforce planning in Victoria Police, we examined whether it has identified issues in its external environment affecting the capability of its current and future workforce, and the capabilities it needs to deliver its services.

We also examined whether Victoria Police has adequate data on its current workforce and how well it evaluates the impact of its strategies on its workforce capability.

Victoria Police has adopted a sound approach to scanning its external environment and identifying general workforce trends which are then considered in business planning across the organisation.

Although Victoria Police has identified the potential gaps in its workforce capability, it has not adequately identified the gaps in the competency of its existing workforce. Its performance management system should identify the contribution individual officers are expected to make to the organisation. It should also monitor progress in addressing any gaps in skills or knowledge.

Victoria Police is effectively addressing key aspects of its workforce capability such as the need to professionalise the workforce and improve its criminal investigation capability.

Victoria Police's proposed review of its performance management system and its intention to develop a capability framework, should both improve its ability to plan and manage its workforce.

A new people allocation model is the core of the workforce planning approach in Victoria Police. It provides a system for the long-term planning of its workforce capacity and the allocation of its workforce to local areas. However, the new model deals only with sworn officers and does not address the issue of numbers of specialist support staff required to implement the new proactive policing model.

Workforce planning issues are addressed in business and project planning across the organisation, but to varying degrees. The development of a new approach to investigating major crime demonstrated sound practice through its comprehensive analysis of workforce issues. This approach should be applied to all major projects in Victoria Police.

Victoria Police's management forums are a powerful tool for evaluating and improving performance. Workforce issues such as use of unplanned leave and the impact of staff on reduced duties are a key component of these forums. The intention to also conduct regular forums focused on the workforce should ensure that people issues are addressed across the organisation.

Effective strategic workforce planning requires systems which can provide workforce data and profiles and track capability and manage career development. Effective workforce planning also requires an ability to evaluate individual strategies and programs as well as the overall impact of the workforce planning approach.

Unfortunately, Victoria Police's current human resource information system is unable to support the more strategic elements of workforce planning. This reduces the ability of the organisation to evaluate the impact of its workforce strategies.

## Recommendation

### 2. That Victoria Police:

- invests in a robust human resource information system which includes a comprehensive reporting capability
- develops evaluation strategies and performance measures for its overall workforce planning and for its individual workforce initiatives
- implements changes to its performance management system to ensure its alignment with workforce planning.

## 1.5 Is Victoria Police recruiting and placing its workforce effectively?

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To assess whether Victoria Police is recruiting and placing its workforce effectively, we examined how well it manages its workforce capacity, recruits people with the right capability and ensures that it has sufficient staff in the right place at the right time.

The trend in all Australian police services has been to increase the participation of specialist unsworn officers in core policing. The changing nature of the specialist skills required in policing means that it is no longer possible to treat the sworn and unsworn officer workforces separately.

The Victorian Government has legislative responsibility for determining the numbers of sworn officers in Victoria Police, and any increase in this number. The number of unsworn officers who work in operational areas is determined by Victoria Police and funded from existing funds.

Government initiated increases in the Victoria Police workforce refer only to sworn officers. Victoria Police is then required to find the funding for any additional unsworn officers required to support sworn officers from existing funds.

These separate arrangements for government initiated increases make workforce planning difficult for Victoria Police. It needs the flexibility to determine the numbers and mix of both sworn and unsworn officers. Without this flexibility, it cannot gain the optimum advantage from its workforce planning. Benefits can be achieved if decisions to recruit more sworn officers are linked to the need for more unsworn specialists to work with these officers.

Victoria Police needs to develop a rationale for the number of specialist unsworn officers it requires to work with sworn officers on operations. It needs to inform the government of the workforce mix it requires to effectively deliver its services to the Victorian community.

Victoria Police also needs to have increased flexibility to recruit sworn officers progressively, rather than in one-off instalments to meet funding targets. Trainees need to be recruited when they are needed, and when they can be most effectively trained and integrated into the workforce.

Victoria Police's approach to recruiting will need to broaden even further in the context of the predicted labour shortages. It will need to provide more flexible entry for experienced applicants if it is continue to be an employer of choice.

### Recommendation

#### 3. That Victoria Police:

- **determines and advises government of the appropriate mix of sworn and unsworn officers to deliver its policing services efficiently and effectively**
- **expands its recruitment approach to provide more flexibility in the recruitment of experienced applicants.**

## 1.6 Is Victoria Police effectively developing its operational capability?

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To assess whether Victoria Police is effectively developing its operational capability, we examined the effectiveness of its strategies to develop capability in its key workforce segments.

Victoria Police is attempting to build its operational capability in both its existing and emerging roles. Victoria Police's new approach to the intelligence function should improve the analytical capability of the organisation. However, the impact of this has been reduced by a delay in its implementation. The lack of funding allocated by Victoria Police to support the training of all intelligence analysts in the more complex analysis of data and identification of criminal trends now required by the organisation is also an issue.

Victoria Police also requires an increased capacity to deal with incidents of family violence. Responding to such incidents is a major source of work for sworn officers and it is, therefore, crucial that they work as effectively as possible with other public sector agencies also responsible for dealing with family violence.

Victoria Police needs the flexibility to use unsworn staff in specialist roles to support investigations. Recruitment of people from outside the force for analyst roles, for example, could free up sworn officers for other operational duties and provide increased flexibility in resource allocation.

Victoria Police is investing in a range of initiatives to improve its capability to deliver its services to the community. However, the support at the regional level for some of these initiatives is variable. Victoria Police needs to continually address the fact that its proactive policing initiatives are not universally accepted. Progress has been substantial, but acceptance will take time.

Victoria Police needs to evaluate the impact of initiatives at various stages of their implementation. This would alleviate some of the concern expressed at the operational level about the diversion of existing sworn officers from general policing duties.

### Recommendation

4. **That Victoria Police:**
  - **invests in ongoing training of all its regional intelligence analysts to improve their strategic analytical capability**
  - **evaluates the impact of its initiatives on its operational capability.**

## 1.7 Is Victoria Police adequately sustaining its workforce capability?

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To assess how well Victoria Police is managing its workforce to sustain its workforce capability, we examined whether it is focusing adequately on the retention and development of its workforce.

Victoria Police is implementing sound strategies to sustain its workforce by focusing on retention and development. It is investigating options for more flexible recruitment and employment arrangements for recruits and older officers. It is also investing in strategies to retain its female sworn officers.

Victoria Police is taking action on an important and longstanding educational issue: the need to professionalise the policing service, in line with the trend across Australasian police services.

Succession planning is a major workforce issue for Victoria Police. Although it has individual strategies in place, it needs to develop a robust and transparent framework for succession planning at all levels across the organisation.

Development opportunities are provided through temporary promotions and assignments to organisational projects. However, more thought is needed about how to make these assignments a structured part of career advancement. Victoria Police also needs to address the process for all assignments to ensure that they are equitable and transparent.

Effective succession planning requires a human resource information system that can record a range of data on individuals and produce information on which decisions can be based. Victoria Police does not have a system which can effectively record the competencies, qualifications and experience of its sworn officers and track these over time.

## Recommendation

### 5. That Victoria Police:

- broadens its employment options to provide more flexibility to retain its sworn officers, particularly women and older officers
- develops a clear and comprehensive framework for succession planning
- invests in a robust information system capable of supporting development strategies and effective succession planning.

### **RESPONSE provided by the Chief Commissioner of Police, Victoria Police**

*Victoria Police is well aware that the workplace is changing very rapidly. How Victoria Police delivers its services to the community is also changing as a result of increased customer expectations, the changing nature of crime and service delivery requirements. It is vital, therefore, that Victoria Police maximises the diversity, capability and flexibility of its human resources and continues to move towards a modern, empowered culture that embodies the organisational values to enable it to achieve the outcomes of The Way Ahead.*



**RESPONSE provided by the Chief Commissioner of Police, Victoria Police - continued**

*Victoria Police recognises that workforce planning is a continuous and sustained process which aligns its human capital to achieve its strategic corporate goals. Accordingly, we will continue our investment in this area to increase our capability and capacity as an organisation to continually better serve the community.*

*In order to provide and maintain a high level of service now and into the future, Victoria Police recognised that it needed to review and develop an effective and contemporary resource allocation model. Victoria Police has developed a model which is able to forecast human resource levels in conjunction with multiple shifts in the social environment and identify the logical and effective number of staff based on drivers for policing services at both a state and local level. It is envisioned that the model will be developed and enhanced across a further 2 stages.*

*The second stage will determine the optimum police workforce mix needed to influence the occurrence of crime and the types of crimes. The police mix would include combinations of general duties police, traffic police, crime investigators and the like. The third stage involves the effective levels of police and public servants for administration, support, management and supervision for the workforce to continue to deliver the outcomes of The Way Ahead. Victoria Police believes that the model, together with these enhancements, will provide a guide, to set target staffing levels and directions, and assist in management decisions.*

*In addition to the above, Victoria Police has developed its Major Crime Management Model, Service Delivery Principles and is in the process of further professionalising policing through the Future of Education Project. All of these have been observed by the audit.*

*I believe that the performance audit – Planning for a capable Victoria Police workforce is a fair and balanced report, and generally agree with the conclusions and recommendations made.*

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## 2. Introduction



## 2.1 Workforce planning and Victoria Police

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In 2005, Victoria Police employed approximately 13 500 people, including sworn officers (those with the power of arrest) and unsworn officers (such as public servants). Its 2004-05 budget was about \$1.35 billion, of which \$1.01 billion was spent on salaries and related costs. The workforce is clearly its major asset.

Effective strategic workforce planning involves determining and shaping the capacity (number of workers) and capability (knowledge, skills and attributes) of the workforce to achieve organisational goals.

As with all major organisations, Victoria Police is being reshaped by demographic and social changes. Over the next 40 years, the proportion of the population aged over 55 will increase as a result of increasing life expectancy, decreasing fertility rates and limited immigration. The composition of the Victorian community is also becoming more diverse in terms of its cultural background.

Labour force participation in Australia is decreasing, leading to a highly competitive labour market. The composition of the labour market is also changing, with more women and older workers making up the workforce in the future.

Growth in knowledge-based work is increasing the demand for people with generic and knowledge management skills. Changes in the attitudes towards work of younger generations will also have an impact. Much has been written about the different work priorities, motivations and expectations of "Generation Y" compared with previous generations.

Changes in the nature of crime, such as those resulting from technological advances, globalisation, new forms of terrorism and threats to public safety are placing greater and new demands on policing. An increasing emphasis on working with the community is also changing the ways in which policing services are delivered.

The skills and knowledge needed within all police forces to deliver the services to their communities are changing. At both an organisational and an individual level, a new capability is required.

Workforce planning is a significant challenge for any large organisation. It is, therefore, essential that an organisation such as Victoria Police looks well into the future to determine the numbers, skills and experience its employees will need to achieve its goals.

The complexity of policing today, and the need to focus on community safety and well-being, makes workforce planning an important and essential management function for Victoria Police.

## 2.2 About Victoria Police

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### 2.2.1 Workforce profile

Victoria Police has 2 main types of employees: sworn officers (also commonly referred to as members and operational police) and unsworn employees, i.e. public servants.

*Sworn officers*, those with powers of arrest, include police, protective service officers, and reservists (the latter do not carry a firearm).

Recruits are considered as employees on probation until they complete training, when they are sworn-in as police.

The government determines the number of sworn officers who are employed under the *Police Regulations Act 1958*.

*Unsworn employees* are public servants who generally undertake support functions (such as intelligence analysis, financial and human resource management) and specialist technical officers such as forensic scientists and information technology experts.

Unsworn employees are employed under the *Public Administration Act 2004*. Victoria Police determines its number of unsworn employees within its annual budget allocations.

Figure 2A shows the Victoria Police workforce by employment category.

**FIGURE 2A: VICTORIA POLICE WORKFORCE BY EMPLOYMENT CATEGORY**

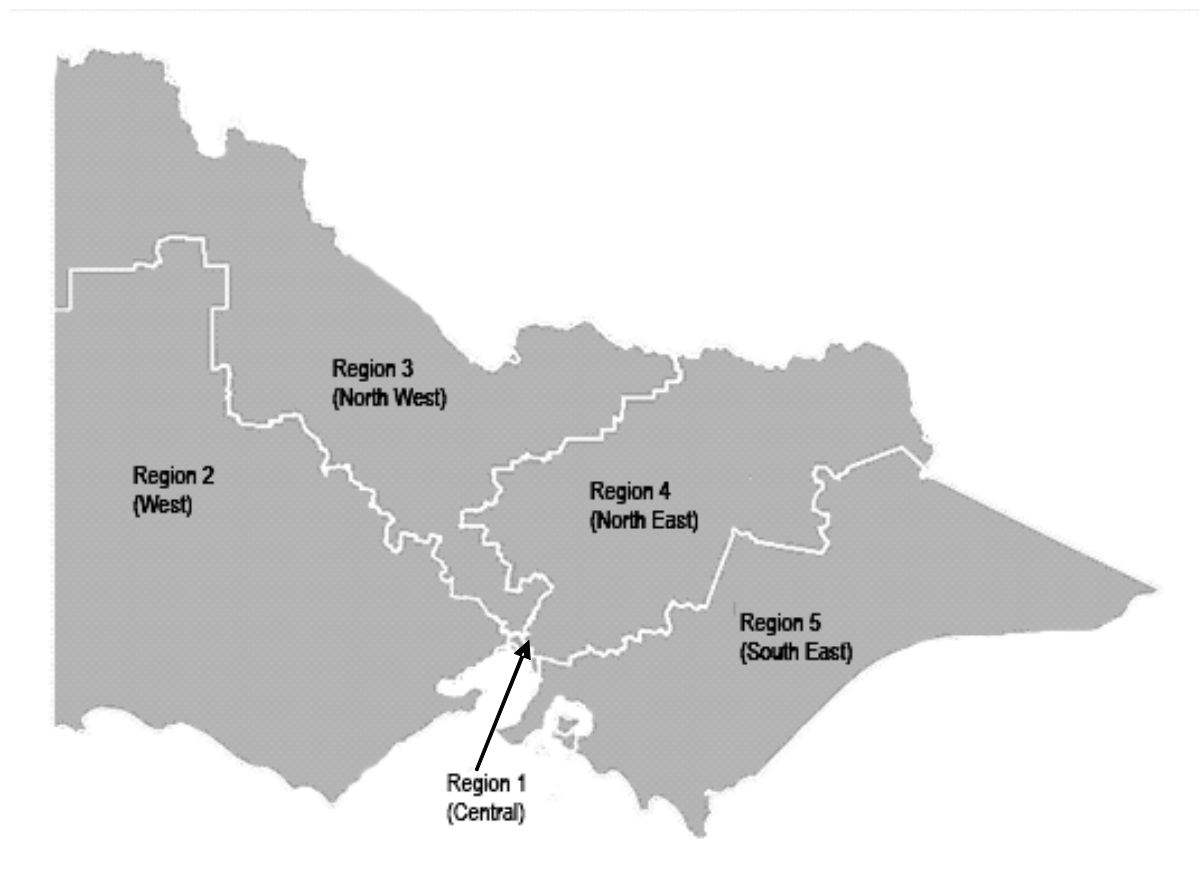
	Jun-99	Jun-00	Jun-01	Jun-02	Jun-03	Jun-04	Jun-05
Police	9 347	9 307	9 617	10 235	10 277	10 322	10 569
Recruits	153	340	375	107	91	192	197
Protective service officers	135	129	141	140	141	1 489	143
Reservists	42	35	29	22	19	17	16
Public servants	1 682	1 711	1 781	1 849	2 146	2 172	2 291
<b>Total workforce</b>	<b>11 359</b>	<b>11 522</b>	<b>11 943</b>	<b>12 353</b>	<b>12 674</b>	<b>14 192</b>	<b>13 216</b>

Source: Victoria Police.

## 2.2.2 Regions

There are 5 police regions in Victoria, as shown in the Figure 2B.

**FIGURE 2B: VICTORIA POLICE REGIONS**



Source: Victoria Police.

Each region is managed by an assistant commissioner who is responsible for the management and provision of policing services within the region. They have responsibility for all the resources within their regions, including sworn and unsworn staff, buildings and vehicles.

Strategic workforce planning is undertaken centrally. Local recruitment of unsworn officers, and promotion, succession planning and some training for both sworn and unsworn officers are carried out at the local level.

Assistant commissioners are responsible for implementing policy changes and for managing the sworn and unsworn officers they are allocated. This usually occurs at the divisional and district levels with the regions.

### 2.2.3 Changes in Victoria Police

Workforce planning is a significant challenge for any large organisation. Victoria Police has to plan for its workforce within the context of a significant change to the nature of its policing and the way in which it delivers its services to the community.

Policing is not a static activity and has evolved over time to deal with new forms of crime, cope with new laws and respond to changing community demands. From the earliest forms of policing, which tended to deal with criminal activity after it had occurred, the focus has evolved to policing which is based on intelligence and aimed at prevention.

Since the 1970s, policing in Victoria has reflected both reactive and proactive approaches to crime. Task-forces were established to deal with major criminal activity after it had occurred and to develop strategies for preventing such crime. In the 1980s, the emphasis was on working with the community to prevent and deal with crime. In the mid-1990s, local priority policing became the vehicle for working with the community to prevent and react to crime more effectively.

Since the development of Victoria Police's strategic plan: *The Way Ahead: Strategic Plan 2003-2008*, there has been an increased emphasis on proactive and intelligence-based policing, and on working in partnership with the community and other agencies.

Victoria Police needs a workforce which is able to deliver this complex form of policing. Its workforce planning must be focused on developing the capability to operate in this more diverse model. Workforce planning within this context is, therefore, even more complex.

Victoria Police needs to ensure that it has sufficient numbers of police. It must also ensure that its experienced workforce and its new recruits have the right skills and attributes.

A change in the behaviour and work of sworn officers at all levels is critical to the successful achievement of this complex policing model. This cultural change has to be constantly assessed to ensure that it is occurring.

### 2.2.4 Government imperatives

The Victorian Government's *Growing Victoria Together* policy, released in 2001, emphasised the need for a proactive policing service which worked with other government agencies to improve public safety.

In 2001 a ministerial administrative review of Victoria Police, the Johnson Report, examined Victoria Police's resourcing, operational independence and human resource planning. The report recommended that Victoria Police needed to address a range of workforce and human resource management issues. It needed to improve its capability to deliver the government's agenda.

The Johnson Report recommended that Victoria Police:

- attract a more diverse workforce
- improve its understanding of patterns of staff turnover
- provide greater career development opportunities to its sworn officers
- increase flexibility in its mix of staff
- develop a robust basis for deploying sworn officers to areas of greatest need.

Victoria Police has used the Johnson Report as background to its development and implementation of strategic workforce planning across the organisation.

## 2.3 Workforce planning better practice

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Recent performance audits by our Office have examined the teaching and nursing workforces, public sector recruitment practices and workforce planning across the whole public sector.

Our December 2004 report, *Meeting our future Victorian Public Service workforce needs*, identified 8 elements of better practice in relation to strategic workforce planning. They are shown in Figure 2C.

## FIGURE 2C: EIGHT ELEMENTS OF BETTER PRACTICE IN WORKFORCE PLANNING

- The purpose of the business and its strategic directions are widely communicated and understood.
- Organisational values and cultures are defined, modelled and embedded into practices and systems.
- Strategic workforce planning occurs at the highest level and is a critical part of business strategy.
- The external environment is scanned for issues impacting on the organisation and its workforce.
- The organisation collects and analyses internal workforce information to assess its capacity to meet current and future business needs.
- Capability frameworks for the workforce, including critical job roles, are developed and incorporated into organisational systems.
- Investment in initiatives to attract, recruit, develop and retain employees is pivotal and is made to address workforce planning issues.
- Comprehensive data is used to measure the impact of workforce strategies on business performance.

Source: Victorian Auditor-General's Office.

These elements have formed the basis of our examination.

We assess whether Victoria Police is planning and managing a workforce capable of achieving the outcomes established by the government's *Growing Victoria Together* policy. This policy emphasises the need for Victoria Police to work with the community and provide an intelligence-led policing service to improve public safety.

## 2.4 Audit methodology

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### 2.4.1 Objective

The audit objective was to investigate whether Victoria Police is efficiently and effectively planning and managing a workforce capable of delivering the outcome of a safer Victorian community.

The audit focused on the following key questions:

- Does Victoria Police have a sound basis for workforce planning?
- Is Victoria Police planning its future workforce effectively?
- Is Victoria Police recruiting and placing its workforce effectively?
- Is Victoria Police effectively developing its operational capabilities?
- Is Victoria Police effectively sustaining its workforce capability?



## 2.4.2 Scope and focus

The Victoria Police workforce is made up of both sworn and unsworn officers. Both workforce segments play crucial roles in delivering the outcome expected of Victoria Police - a safer Victorian community. Victoria Police must plan for both segments of its workforce.

As mentioned earlier, our previous audit in December 2004, focused on workforce planning for Victorian public servants. It is recognised that Victoria Police needs to consider its unsworn workforce when planning for its future workforce. However, the focus of this audit was on how well Victoria Police is planning for its major workforce segment - its sworn officers.

The audit examined workforce planning in Victoria Police at a corporate level, and then assessed its application at an operational level.

The focus was on Victoria Police's move to a model of policing which is based on intelligence, supported by science and technology, with an emphasis on partnerships with local communities and other law enforcement agencies.

The audit examined corporate documentation and interviewed key central and regional managers.

We conducted fieldwork at the centre and at 4 divisions in 2 of the 5 Victoria Police regions:

### *Region 2 (West)*

- Division 1: Melton, Hobson Bay, Brimbank, Maribyrnong
- Division 5: Warrnambool, Southern Grampians, Corangamite

### *Region 5 (South East)*

- Division 1: Frankston, Mornington
- Division 3: LaTrobe, Baw Baw, Bass Coast

The audit was performed in accordance with Australian auditing standards applicable to performance audits and, accordingly, included such tests and other procedures considered necessary in the circumstances.

### **2.4.3 Acknowledgements**

We thank members of the audit steering committee for their assistance with this audit:

- Dr Inez Dussuyer, Department of Justice (currently seconded to the Ombudsman's Office)
- Dr Steve James, Associate Professor in Criminology, The University of Melbourne
- Mr Bill McGannon, Director, MGN Consultancy
- Mr Bill Robertson, Former Assistant Commissioner, Victoria Police.

We thank staff from Victoria Police and members of our steering committee for their assistance with the audit.

We thank Victoria Police for the photographs used in this report.

### **2.4.4 Cost of the audit**

The cost of the audit was \$512 143. This cost includes staff time, overheads, expert advice and printing.

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### **3. Does Victoria Police have a sound basis for workforce planning?**



## 3.1 Introduction

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Better practice elements for strategic workforce planning include 3 essential pre-conditions:

- the purpose and direction of the organisation must be clearly stated, widely communicated and understood by staff
- organisational values and culture must be defined, modelled and embedded into practices and systems
- strategic workforce planning must occur at the highest level and be incorporated into business strategy and planning.

This part of the report considers the extent to which Victoria Police has these pre-conditions for sound workforce planning.

## 3.2 Is the purpose of Victoria Police clearly stated and communicated?

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In 2002, the Victorian Government asked Victoria Police to develop a strategic plan detailing expected environmental challenges, operational strategies and resourcing proposals. The plan was to be linked to the *Growing Victoria Together* framework.

A new Chief Commissioner of Police was appointed and Victoria Police subsequently developed a 10 year plan, *Victorian Policing Directions 2003-2013*, which provided a clear long-term strategic direction for the organisation. It emphasised the need to develop the capability of Victoria Police to anticipate and respond to changing demands for services. It also identified the need for strong capability in planning and analysis within the organisation.

A 5 year strategic plan, *The Way Ahead: Strategic Plan 2003-2008*, was developed to provide a direction for the organisation in the medium-term. It acknowledged that the Local Priority Policing model of the 1990s needed to be developed to increase both capacity and capability in responding to “after the event” policing and to focusing on prevention of crime.

The plan emphasised the need to move policing from an emphasis on reactive policing to an approach focused more on prevention, guided by intelligence and evidence, and delivered through working with other government agencies and local communities.

The plan identified 4 key value areas required to produce a safer Victoria:

**FIGURE 3A: THE WAY AHEAD KEY VALUE AREAS**

<p><b>Intelligent policing – intelligence-driven, evidence-based and problem-oriented policing</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Building a strategic capability to identify emerging problems, issues and opportunities; and introducing integrated systems to acquire, store, use and secure information.</li> </ul> <p><b>Confident policing – strongly motivated, capable, ethical and high performing police workforce</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developing a working culture that encourages integrity, innovation and creative problem-solving; transitioning to a people-centred and enabling management style; and creating police as community leaders.</li> </ul> <p><b>Community policing – responsive policing, close to local communities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing flexible resource deployment to achieve maximum impact on local priorities and safety outcomes.</li> </ul> <p><b>Partnership policing – collaborative policing, working with other agencies and groups</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishing relationships with partner organisations designed to identify opportunities and solve problems.</li> </ul>
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Source: Victoria Police, *The Way Ahead: Strategic Plan 2003-2008*.

*The Way Ahead* was developed on the basis of research and consultation with external experts and stakeholders. A steering committee comprising the Chief Commissioner of Police and the secretaries of the Departments of Premier and Cabinet, Treasury and Finance and Justice oversaw its development. There was also extensive consultation with sworn and unsworn officers at all levels throughout the organisation.

Victoria Police adopted a whole-of-organisation approach to communicating the new direction to all staff. Regional assistant commissioners and directors of departments were responsible for communicating the plan to their staff. All employees at police stations and in departments were briefed about the plan and provided with videos, brochures and e-mailed information as part of the communication strategy.

The audit found that most regional managers were well aware of the strategic direction outlined in *The Way Ahead* and its impact on their day-to-day work. Some stated that the majority of their sworn officers understood the move towards more proactive policing and how this changed the way they operate on a daily basis. Other regional managers considered that the plan only formalised pre-existing ways of working.

The 4 key value areas in *The Way Ahead* are used as the basis of business planning in Victoria Police. At the regional level, assistant commissioners are responsible for developing business plans to reflect the value areas as well as the needs of their local communities. The regional, divisional and district plans we audited had been developed in line with *The Way Ahead*.

### 3.2.1 Conclusion - purpose

Victoria Police's strategic plan, *The Way Ahead*, has had a major impact throughout Victoria Police. The strategic direction of the organisation - the move to a more proactive, intelligent and evidence-based policing model - is largely understood by managers.

*The Way Ahead* has directly influenced the thinking of senior and regional managers which can be seen in the business plans produced at the corporate and department levels. At the operational level, *The Way Ahead* has provided the basis for regional, divisional, district and local community plans.

## 3.3 Are organisational values and culture defined, modelled and embedded into practices and systems?

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### 3.3.1 Defining and modelling organisational values

Victoria Police has identified the organisational values and behaviours needed to support its move to a more complex policing service. The values and behaviours were developed through extensive staff consultation on the previous statement of integrity which guided the organisation.

Integrity remains a core organisational value, but other values such as leadership, flexibility, respect, support and professionalism have been added. The behaviours needed to demonstrate each value have been identified. For example, leadership is demonstrated by:

- being approachable and consistent
- applying fair processes
- strongly committing to the values of the organisation
- guiding, trusting, developing and empowering colleagues
- making timely decisions that are guided by both values and evidence
- inspiring participation and commitment through a shared vision.

The application of the values and behaviours is regularly discussed at senior management meetings. Senior managers are required to model the values and behaviours, and are accountable for this in their executive performance plans.

Almost all the Victoria Police employees interviewed considered that the behaviour of senior management strongly reflected these values. The majority of regional managers interviewed also demonstrated a strong commitment to the values and behaviours.

In 2005, all Victoria Police employees were surveyed about job satisfaction, individual and workplace morale, supportive leadership, participative decision-making and role clarity. The response rate was 35.6 per cent of the sworn and unsworn workforce originally surveyed.

Figure 3B shows the responses of Victoria Police employees to the following statement: *my team leaders role model their most important values and beliefs*.

**FIGURE 3B: RESPONSE TO STATEMENT: MY TEAM LEADERS ROLE MODEL THEIR MOST IMPORTANT VALUES AND BELIEFS**

Response	Percentage
Strongly agree	10.3
Agree	41.9
Neither agree or disagree	31.7
Disagree	13.3
Strongly disagree	2.8

Source: Victoria Police, Team Leadership Survey, 2005.

These results indicate that approximately one third of the workforce did not have a view on this issue. Another 16.1 per cent disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement. Victoria Police acknowledged in its release of the survey results that there was room for improvement in the alignment of the behaviour of leaders with the organisational values.

Victoria Police unsworn employees also participated in the Office of Public Employment's 2004 *People Matter* survey. Victoria Police's response rate was 32.4 per cent, compared with the overall public service response rate of 13.8 per cent.

Victoria Police public servants were more likely than the public service average to believe that their leaders provided role models for ethical behaviour and had a clear strategy for the organisation. However, they were slightly less likely to consider that managers kept staff informed, were approachable to discuss concerns and listened to employees.

### 3.3.2 Integrating organisational values into practices and systems

Victoria Police has integrated the values into a range of practices and systems. All activities and programs are assessed to ensure that they are supporting the development of the culture needed to support the more complex policing model.

Its recruitment process is aligned with the organisational values. Advertisements for recruits emphasise the values and behaviours, applicants are assessed against them and they are reinforced during induction training.

Training programs for all staff have been amended to ensure that the organisational values and behaviours are reinforced.

The organisational values and behaviours are also used in selection processes for promotion within Victoria Police. Candidates for promotion must be able to demonstrate their understanding and commitment to the organisational values.

In December 2003, Victoria Police established a process where regional and divisional managers and their staff meet with senior management to discuss performance results on all aspects of their operations. These forums focus on comparative statistics of performance across divisions and are known as “compstats”. They reinforce the organisational values and behaviours by focusing on the way divisions and regions are managing staff to achieve their crime reduction targets.

The public nature of the process, with often 40 or more people in attendance, makes regional managers visibly accountable for the management of people, as well as the achievement of the range of outcomes outlined in *The Way Ahead*. The attendance of other sworn officers at these forums ensures that the message is communicated down the ranks.

An effective performance management system is one mechanism to assess progress in changing the culture and moving to a more complex form of policing. Victoria Police developed its performance management program centrally in 1998. Regions and departments are responsible for its implementation.

Management attempted to promote the system by linking it directly to leadership within the organisation. Responsibility for the program was transferred to the Airlie Leadership Development Centre in 2003 and managers were encouraged to include the values in progression criteria and in personal development plans.

Despite these attempts to incorporate the values into individual performance systems, Victoria Police has acknowledged that its system could be operating more effectively. We found that both its profile and application varied greatly across regions. There was little evidence of its outcomes being recorded or used at the regional level.



Victoria Police is planning to assess the system's alignment with the values and behaviours. It is also planning to assess the overall effectiveness of the system in supporting the delivery of policing services.

In 2005, the Human Resource Department developed a cultural alignment strategy to check that the values and behaviours are included in all its current and future activities.



*Victoria Police – a visible part of the community.*

### **3.3.3 Conclusion - values**

Victoria Police is seeking to change its culture by emphasising its organisational values and behaviours in all its activities and at all levels of the organisation. The expectation of cultural change through modelling the values and behaviours is reinforced in a variety of practices across the organisation.

Victoria Police is incorporating the values and behaviours in its selection and induction of new recruits and in its training programs, accountability mechanisms and career progression initiatives.

Senior managers are accountable for modelling the values and behaviours and these are discussed in all forums. The compstat process ensures that the values and behaviours are highly visible and constantly reinforced. However, the results of the team leadership survey indicate that Victoria Police still has a long way to go in developing the style of leadership that it requires across the whole organisation.

Victoria Police needs to measure whether behaviour is changing to reflect the organisational values. Its performance management system should do this. However, we found that Victoria Police's performance management program is not formally aligned to the organisational values, is not consistently applied and its outcomes are not consistently recorded. The proposed review of the system is essential.

## 3.4 Does Victoria Police integrate workforce planning into its business planning?

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### 3.4.1 Corporate planning

In 2004, Victoria Police established a corporate committee as its main governance body. The committee consists of its 25 heads of departments and its primary purpose is to provide the leadership necessary to successfully implement *The Way Ahead*.

The corporate committee is supported by 6 standing committees, 2 of which are focused on people management and organisational development. The committee regularly discusses workforce and capability issues raised by its standing committees.

The role of the Human Resources Department in developing and managing the strategic direction for the organisation is recognised within Victoria Police. This is demonstrated and driven by the People Management and Development Standing Committee. The development of the annual Victoria Police budget is influenced by each of the standing committees and heads of departments.

Victoria Police also hosts the secretariat for the Australasian Police Commissioner's Human Resources Sub-Committee. It has developed a number of discussion papers on workforce planning issues, including diversity, leadership and creating policing as an industry and employer of choice. This knowledge is then used to inform its own workforce planning.

In 2005 the Corporate Strategy and Performance Department was established to enhance business planning at both corporate and regional levels and to identify where workforce capability issues should be addressed.

### 3.4.2 Project level planning

Planning for specific projects includes a focus on workforce issues. A standard project planning template is used which includes a section on workforce issues. The extent of this workforce focus varies across projects.

The development of a Major Crime Management Model in 2005, discussed later in this report, included the identification of:

- a new investigative capability required by the Crime Department
- individual competencies required by investigators
- a range of other workforce management issues such as training and development, performance management and retention.

In the development of the new intelligence model, the only workforce issues identified were those relating to recruitment and training.

### 3.4.3 Conclusion - integrated planning

Victoria Police's integration of workforce planning into business and project planning reflects its commitment to managing its substantial workforce.

Various organisational projects also consider people issues as part of their planning, but to varying degrees. The sound practice demonstrated in the Major Crime Management Model could be extended to other projects to ensure a more consistent approach.

## 3.5 Overall conclusion

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Victoria Police has a sound basis for workforce planning. It has a clear and well-defined strategic direction that is communicated and understood by managers across the organisation.

There is a focus on workforce planning at the most senior levels in the organisation. There is a very clear connection between the strategic view of policing, as described in the *Victorian Policing Directions 2003-2012* and *The Way Ahead: Strategic Plan 2003-2008*, and the use of workforce planning to achieve this form of policing.

The organisational values and behaviours of Victoria Police are clearly articulated and integrated into policies and practices across the organisation.

However, the adoption of the values and behaviours required to support the move to more intelligence and evidence-based policing across the workforce is a long-term challenge. Victoria Police needs to constantly monitor and evaluate the culture change that is needed to support this form of policing.

An effective performance management system is needed to measure progress in this area. The review of this system to ensure its alignment with the values and behaviours is essential.

### Recommendation

- 1. That Victoria Police improves its performance management system to ensure that it supports and monitors the culture change necessary for the move to proactive policing.**
-



## **4. Is Victoria Police planning its future workforce effectively?**



## 4.1 Introduction

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Our better practice principles included the following elements as critical aspects of effective workforce planning:

- the external environment is scanned for issues impacting on the business and its workforce
- information on the internal workforce is collected and analysed to assess its capacity and future business needs
- capability frameworks for the workforce are developed and used in organisational processes and systems
- the impact of workforce strategies on capability is evaluated.

This part of the report considers how Victoria Police's workforce planning addresses these principles.

## 4.2 Is Victoria Police undertaking workforce planning?

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In 2001, a ministerial administrative review of Victoria Police (known as the Johnson Report) reported on Victoria Police's resourcing, operational independence and human resource planning.

The report identified that the Victoria Police did not undertake long-term workforce planning and did not understand patterns of turnover and reasons for resignations and retirements. The organisation could not predict the rate of turnover and had not considered if there was an optimal turnover rate for Victoria Police.

It also identified that the time taken to recruit trainees was too long and that there were not enough female recruits or people from diverse ethnic backgrounds. It also considered that the focus was on recruiting young people rather than people from a range of age groups with varied life experience.

The report noted that advancement through promotion was causing difficulties, as there were not enough positions to meet the aspirations of sworn officers. The lack of career paths, combined with a lack of development opportunities and data for succession planning, were identified as issues that needed to be addressed by Victoria Police.

The report also commented that there was no robust basis for deploying staff to areas of greatest need. The separation between sworn and unsworn officers was also reducing flexibility in the allocation of staff.

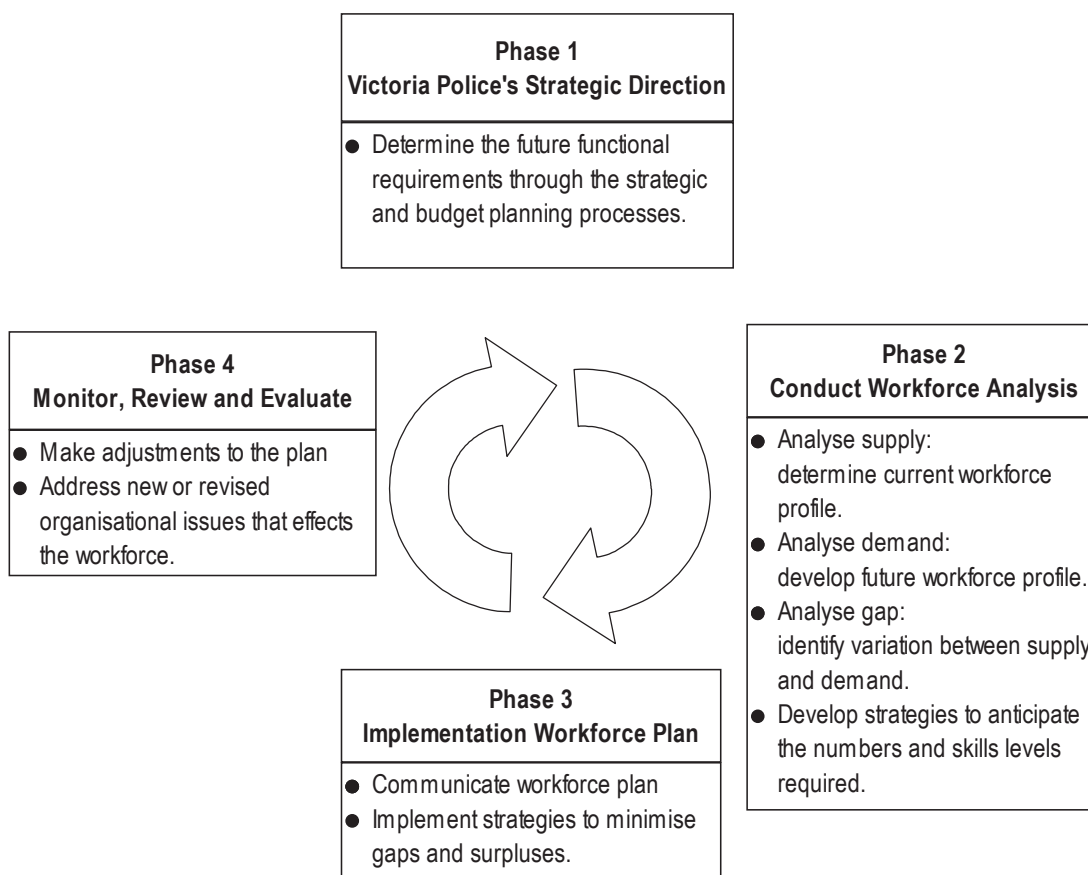
The report recommended that workforce planning needed to be improved in Victoria Police.

## 4.2.1 Workforce planning approach

The Johnson Report’s recommendations were considered in the development of Victoria Police’s strategic plan in 2003. A workforce planning paper presented to senior management in July 2003 identified the need for more robust workforce planning. It stated that a workforce profile would be developed to reflect the skills and capabilities needed by the police workforce to deliver on its strategic outcomes as described in *The Way Ahead: Strategic Plan 2003-2008*.

Figure 4A shows the workforce planning approach that Victoria Police adopted in 2003.

**FIGURE 4A: VICTORIA POLICE WORKFORCE PLAN PROJECT**



Source: Victoria Police Workforce Plan Project.

Phase 1 of the project commenced in 2004. A scan of the external environment was conducted to identify trends in the general workforce and in policing that would impact on the capability of the Victoria Police workforce in the future.

A Labour Demand Analysis report was produced which identified factors reshaping the demand for skills in the general workforce. It identified the changes in the policing environment that would impact on the types of employees and skills needed to position Victoria Police to meet its future challenges.

An analysis of its existing workforce was undertaken as part of the Workforce Plan Project. This identified a range of issues which would have a major impact on the ability of the organisation to deliver its policing services to the community:

- the age of its workforce and the potential for significant numbers of retirements
- the loss of experienced younger sworn officers
- the lack of gender balance in the current workforce
- career bottlenecks due to high levels of recruitment
- the need for greater flexibility in allocating staff to work areas.

The report identified that the future Victoria Police workforce would need to have a range of characteristics, including being more demographically diverse with a mix of skills and expertise from different disciplines and fields.

Employees would need to be technologically literate and systems thinkers with high level of analytical skills to assess risk and strategies from a social, economic and financial point of view.

Other attributes identified included the ability to constantly learn and build partnerships to solve problems, to work with complexity and ambiguity, and to demonstrate leadership skills such as persuasion, motivation and relationship building to achieve desired outcomes.

This workforce analysis did not address the specific competencies required by individual sworn officers in particular roles or at particular ranks.

### **4.2.2 Workforce gaps**

The analysis concluded that Victoria Police would need to address a number of issues relating to the retention of sworn officers, the attraction of women and the re-training of the existing workforce.



The report also identified roles and work units where the proportion of staff eligible for voluntary retirement represented a significant risk to the organisation:

- roles such as district inspectors, senior sergeants, regional managers, regional firearms officers, training officers and officers in charge of “one-management” police stations
- staff within technical and professional areas such as armoury, training, forensic services and fingerprints.

The report concluded that Victoria Police would need more intelligence analysts, investigators, crime scene and forensic officers, and anti-terrorist personnel.

It highlighted the increasing demand throughout the economy for teamwork, communication and problem solving skills which provide the basis for a creative, innovative, adaptable and responsive workforce. These skills were also considered essential for sworn officers in Victoria Police. The initiatives developed to address these gaps are identified later in this report.

Victoria Police did not undertake a comprehensive analysis of the skills and knowledge of its existing workforce and identify gaps required in relation to the new roles and functions.

### **4.2.3 Generic capabilities**

In the workforce project reports, Victoria Police identified the need for employees to have a range of generic skills such as communication and interpersonal skills, the ability to think and learn, manage projects and priorities, provide leadership, and understand and use systems and technology.



*Communication systems play a major role in modern policing.*

The reports also emphasised the need for “employability skills”, i.e. the skills needed to gain employment, achieve potential and contribute to the organisation’s strategic direction and business outcomes.

Victoria Police has used the generic skills contained in the Australian Business Excellence framework for its overall approach to improving its organisational capability. These are used in performance plans for managers and in proposals for significant projects across the organisation. The skills in this framework include:

- leadership and strategic planning
- knowledge and information management
- development of a people, customer and market focus
- focus on innovation, improvement and sustainability.

The workforce analysis did not address the issue of a capability framework for the organisation. Since that time, Victoria Police has recognised the need to identify the capabilities required for positions across the organisation. In early 2006, a Capability Framework Project team was established to identify core capabilities and also specific capabilities for technical and specialist positions.



*Victoria Police graduation parade.*

## 4.2.4 Implementing the workforce plan

Since the development of this workforce planning approach in 2003, the emphasis has moved to integrating workforce planning into all discussions and activities across the organisation. Workforce planning is viewed as a strategy, rather than as an inflexible plan. The approach is now to provide a platform for workforce initiatives which will be periodically reviewed and updated as part of the corporate planning process.

The most significant change in approach has been the development of a workforce planning framework, rather than a plan. The key element of this has been the development of a robust model for determining the number of police required in various work locations across Victoria.

This allocation model seeks to address the concern expressed in the Johnson Report about the lack of a long range police numbers planning framework. It has a 30-year outlook and predicts where police will be needed in the future.

Four other major projects are also part of the framework for workforce planning:

- a Major Crime Management Model - presents a new approach to managing the investigation of major crime
- a Service Delivery Model – guides the process for delivering police services and allocating resources in response to community needs and expectations
- an Ethical Standards Review - outlines options for building capability and capacity to investigate across all areas of Victoria Police
- a Future of Education Project - addresses the need for a more qualified and trained workforce.

These are key aspects of workforce planning in Victoria Police and address the need for a framework raised in the Johnson Report. These projects are discussed in detail later in this report.

## 4.2.5 Workforce data

It is crucial that data, both qualitative and quantitative, is available for Victoria Police to measure the effectiveness of its overall approach and of its individual workforce planning strategies.

Traditionally, Victoria Police has been resourced by government on the basis of numbers. The focus has, been on maintaining data on the numbers of both sworn and unsworn members. The organisation is able to produce data at any point in time on the numbers of sworn officers and use this to create staffing profiles.

Workforce data on people is provided in compstat reports. The performance of each division is benchmarked against the overall results for Victoria Police. The Workforce Planning and Data Analysis Branch reports performance against indicators such as numbers of new recruits, total employees, age and gender profiles, numbers of retirements and total leave liability.

Performance data is collected at the operational level and centrally collated for external reporting in quarterly and monthly reports to the People Management and Development Standing Committee. These reports are prepared for assistant commissioners, directors, commanders and superintendents. Recently, they have been made available via Victoria Police's intranet so that they can be accessed as required.

In February 2006 a themed compstat forum was conducted to emphasise the importance of people management and development. It provided comprehensive workforce information to managers and highlighted their responsibility for people management issues.

Victoria Police is constrained in its workforce planning by inadequacies in its human resource information system. The current system is unable to provide the reporting capability required to support strategic workforce planning. The system cannot:

- track data over periods of time
- record capability requirements or the competency of individual sworn officers
- identify the location and availability of specialists or officers with particular capabilities and assist in their deployment
- provide information on the experience and training of officers for effective succession planning
- assist in the management of recruitment and selection.

The workforce data that is collected has to be downloaded into other applications and analysed to provide useful reports.

## **4.2.6 Conclusion - workforce planning**

Victoria Police has undertaken workforce planning through its analysis of both labour market trends and changes in the nature of policing.

It has an understanding of its workforce profile in terms of numbers, but does not have the human resource information system to provide the information it needs to understand and monitor the capability of its workforce.

It has identified the areas of its workforce where it will have gaps and the generic skills it will need to develop if it is to deliver effective policing services in the future. However, it has not focused on the gaps in the capability of existing staff, which is an important part of workforce planning.

A framework for workforce planning has been developed. This provides a foundation for other initiatives aimed at improving the capacity and capability of the workforce to implement the intelligence-led and proactive policing model.

Better practice workforce planning requires both quantitative and qualitative data. Victoria Police is unable to efficiently record, maintain and access data on the qualifications, experience and competencies of its sworn officers. It is also difficult to maintain and produce reports on their training, work locations, positions held, assignments, secondments or achievements of individuals. The outcomes of the performance management program are not recorded centrally and cannot be used for the development of workforce initiatives.

Victoria Police is able to provide comprehensive data to inform some aspects of its workforce planning. However, the data is not flexible. It is not easily extracted and requires the manual handing of information and collation of reports. This is time consuming and the information is not always available when needed.

Victoria Police's workforce planning is seriously limited by the lack of a human resource information system to efficiently and effectively record both quantitative and qualitative data on its workforce.

### 4.3 Does Victoria Police evaluate the impact of its strategies on its workforce capability?

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Victoria Police has implemented a range of strategies to build its operational capability. It is also developing a range of employment options designed to attract and retain its workforce. These strategies are discussed later in this report.

The Corporate Management Review Division monitors the implementation of projects and undertakes performance audits and evaluations. The Corporate Strategy and Performance Department also evaluates and reviews projects as part of its quality assurance processes. All major initiatives are regularly monitored through standing committees and the Corporate Committee.

Victoria Police has several accountability mechanisms that it uses to monitor performance. The Chief Commissioner meets with each head of department each quarter to discuss performance in their departments. Senior managers also have performance agreements which outline their responsibilities and accountabilities.

The compstat process is the major accountability forum within Victoria Police. The central process has focused on the performance of divisions and this will continue to occur at the regional level in the future. At the central level, themed compstat forums have been implemented to evaluate the impact of specific issues. In late 2005 and early 2006, forums were conducted on traffic management, family violence, country policing and people.

These forums identified good practices and areas for improvement across the organisation. As a result of the People Compstat conducted in early 2006, people management and development targets are being set for all heads of departments.

At project level, the evaluation of the impact of strategies is not addressed as part of the initial project planning. However, there is some work being undertaken in this area. In 2005, Victoria Police's Education Department initiated a project to develop a set of key performance indicators to measure the quality of its programs for sworn officers. The indicators will be linked to the key value areas in *The Way Ahead*. They will represent a shift from measures such as cost, numbers and timeliness to the measurement of return on expectations, i.e. whether the programs meet the needs of clients.

The project aims to place a greater emphasis on measuring the quality of training both on and off the job. However, at the time of our audit, results of this project were not known.

A proposal to review the performance management system is being developed, as mentioned earlier in this report. The performance management program was established in 1998 to aid in workforce and succession planning by identifying individual and overall organisational capability.

The program became linked to leadership capability when it was integrated into the Airlie Leadership Development Centre in 2003. At that time, a review of the program was not considered a priority area as it had been approved by the Corporate Committee. Its alignment with the organisational values or its effectiveness in identifying the capability gaps in the existing sworn officers were not evaluated at that stage.

The proposed review of the system will assess the extent to which it is supporting the strategic direction in *The Way Ahead*. The project scope includes the development of key performance indicators for effective performance management.

### **4.3.1 Conclusion - evaluation**

The major form of accountability in Victoria Police occurs through the compstat process. This process embeds the evaluation and continuous improvement of performance as a regular part of business practice. The management of people and other workforce issues are key agenda items at these forums. This is sound practice.

Victoria Police has developed and implemented a number of strategies to support the development of its workforce capability. However, there needs to be a greater focus on the evaluation of the effectiveness of these strategies and of the overall workforce planning approach.

Changes to the performance management system resulting from the proposed review need to be implemented. Appropriate performance indicators for workforce planning overall need to be developed.

## 4.4 Overall conclusion

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Victoria Police is planning for the workforce it requires now and will require in the future. It has not developed a specific workforce plan as intended in the original workforce project plan in 2003. The organisation has moved on from this approach to one in which workforce planning is incorporated into business and project planning across the organisation, but to varying degrees.

Potential gaps in its workforce capability have been identified. However, it has not adequately identified gaps in the competency of its existing workforce.

Key capability issues are addressed through the Major Crime Management Model, the Service Delivery Model, the Investigative Capability model, and the Future of Education project. These projects address key aspects of the workforce capability required by the organisation.

A performance management system that reflects the changing objectives of the organisation should identify the expected contribution of individual officers and any competency gaps. It should also monitor progress in addressing these gaps. As stated previously, Victoria Police's system is not able to do this.

Victoria Police's current human resource information system are unable to support elements of strategic workforce planning, such as tracking capability and managing career development. This lack of accurate and easily accessed data also reduces the ability to evaluate the impact of workforce strategies.

Victoria Police should apply the sound practice of integrating workforce planning into all aspects of its projects, as demonstrated in the Major Crime Management Model, to other major projects.

The compstat forum process provides Victoria Police with a powerful tool for evaluating and improving the performance of work units and the organisation as a whole. The intention to conduct regular forums focused on the workforce should ensure that people issues are addressed across the organisation.

Victoria Police needs to place a greater emphasis on evaluating individual strategies and programs. It also needs to develop performance indicators for all elements of its workforce planning.



## Recommendation

### 2. That Victoria Police:

- invests in a robust human resource information system which includes a comprehensive reporting capability
  - develops evaluation strategies and performance measures for its overall workforce planning and for its individual workforce initiatives
  - implements changes to its performance management system to ensure its alignment with workforce planning.
-



## **5. Is Victoria Police recruiting and placing its workforce effectively?**



## 5.1 Introduction

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Effective workforce planning addresses the following issues:

- the *capacity* of the workforce - the number of personnel required to deliver services
- the *capability* of the workforce - knowledge, skills and attributes of personnel.

This part of the report assesses how Victoria Police manages the capacity of its workforce, recruits people with the right capability, and ensures that it has sufficient staff in the right place at the right time.

This relates to the better practice element of investing in initiatives to attract, recruit, develop and retain employees.

## 5.2 Is Victoria Police recruiting to ensure that it has the required workforce with the right skills and behaviours?

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### 5.2.1 Determining capacity

The government determines the number of sworn police officers employed under the *Police Regulations Act 1958*. Since 1999 the government has made 2 major announcements to increase police numbers.

In October 1999, one of the biggest ever police recruitment initiatives known as the *New Century, New Force* campaign, was launched to increase police numbers by 800 police before June 2003. Our report on this campaign found that this target was met by April 2002, 14 months ahead of schedule.<sup>1</sup>

In October 2003, the government agreed to provide \$126 million over 4 years to increase total police numbers by an additional 600 by late 2006.

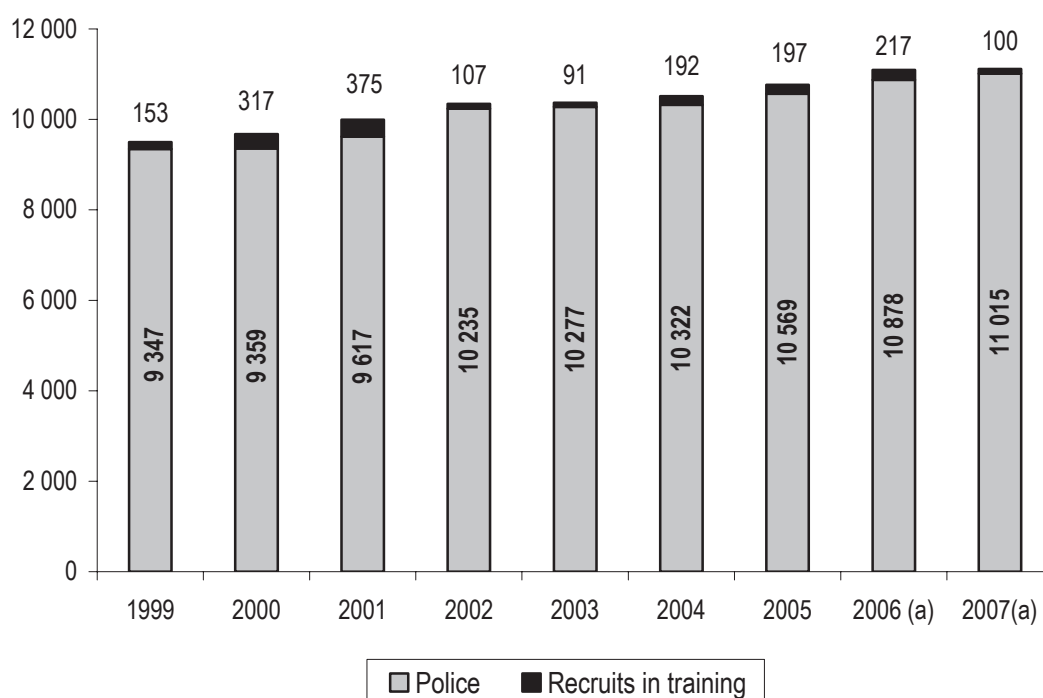
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<sup>1</sup> SCRGSP (Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision) 2002, *Report on Government Services 2006*, Productivity Commission, Canberra.

Victoria Police did not make formal submissions in relation to these electoral commitments in 1999 and 2003. It did not request an increase in the numbers of sworn officers. In 1999, it requested funding for infrastructure, particularly in relation to information technology. In 2003, Victoria Police requested funding for developing its strategic direction and for increasing its forensic capacity and capability.

Figure 5A below shows that the number of police and recruits has steadily increased since 1999.

**FIGURE 5A: NUMBERS OF SWORN POLICE OFFICERS AND RECRUITS**



(a) Projected numbers.

Source: Victorian Auditor-General's Office, from data provided by Victoria Police.

At June 2005 there were 10 569 police and 197 recruits in training. According to its recruitment schedule, Victoria Police is on target to achieve the planned increase in sworn officers, by August 2006.

### **Mix of sworn and unsworn staff**

The *Report on Government Services 2006*<sup>2</sup> shows the level of sworn and unsworn officers across Australian police services. Comparative data shows that Victoria Police has the lowest numbers of sworn and unsworn staff per 100 000 population of any state and the second lowest percentage of unsworn staff of any police force in Australia.

<sup>2</sup> SCRGSP (Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision) 2006, *Report on Government Services 2006*, Productivity Commission, Canberra.

It is difficult to determine the right ratio of unsworn to sworn staff that Victoria Police should be aiming to achieve. The number of unsworn staff is related to the strategic direction of the organisation and the type of policing services to be delivered. The number will vary over time.

Figure 5B shows the variation of unsworn to sworn staff across Australasian police forces at 30 June 2005.

**FIGURE 5B: PERCENTAGE OF UNSWORN STAFF IN AUSTRALASIAN POLICE FORCES**

Agencies	Total unsworn FTEs	Total agency FTEs	Percentage
Western Australia	1 220	6 279	19
Queensland	2 915	12 120	24
Northern Territory	233	1 363	17
Australian Federal Police	1 256	3 542	35
<b>Victoria</b>	<b>2 291</b>	<b>13 216</b>	<b>17</b>
Tasmania	373	1 526	24
New South Wales	3 696	18 075	20
New Zealand	2 346	9 871	24
2004-2005 HR Benchmark	14 329	65 993	22

Source: *Police Agencies HR Benchmarking Report, 1 July 2004 to 30 June 2005.*

Increases in the number of sworn officers is determined and funded by government. There was no funding for unsworn officers to support the increased police numbers resulting from the decision by government to increase numbers in 1999 or 2003. The necessary increase in specialist staff has to be funded by Victoria Police from the reallocation of resources from its annual budget allocation.

Victoria Police cannot opt to change direct funded police positions to unsworn support positions, such as intelligence analysts or experts in surveillance technology, to support the work of sworn officers.

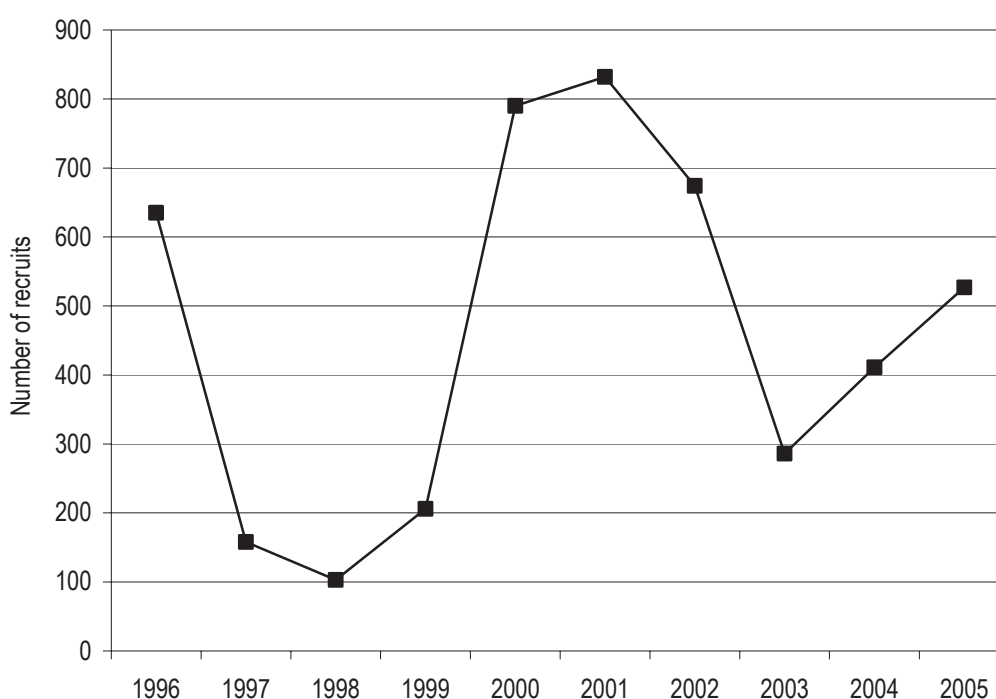
## 5.2.2 Recruitment approach

Victoria Police's normal recruitment strategy is to replace departing staff. In recent years, its recruitment has been governed by increases of police numbers made as electoral commitments. Its recruitment has focused on delivering these numbers.

As we have previously discussed, there have been 2 major increases in the total number of sworn officers in Victoria Police since 1999. As a result, the organisation has had to recruit sufficient trainees to achieve the recruitment targets set by government and to cover natural attrition. Victoria Police, therefore, had to recruit approximately 3 500 new trainees between 1999 and 2005. This number represents approximately 32 per cent of the total sworn officer workforce.

Figure 5C shows the number of new recruits each year from 1995-96 to 2004-05:

**FIGURE 5C: ANNUAL NUMBER OF NEW RECRUITS**



Source: Victorian Auditor-General's Office, from data provided by Victoria Police.

Our June 2002 *Report on public sector agencies* examined the *New Century, New Force* recruitment campaign. It concluded that Victoria Police had been successful in recruiting the additional 800 police by June 2003.

In 2005, a new recruitment campaign was launched which aimed to meet the government's 2003 commitment of an extra 600 sworn officers. The new campaign, *Do you fit the picture? A new era, A new focus*, aimed at recruiting people from a range of age groups with the ability to undertake the more proactive policing role outlined in *The Way Ahead: Strategic Plan 2003-2008*. The campaign also aimed to attract recruits from groups that were under-represented, such as women and people from diverse cultural backgrounds.

At the time of finalising our audit, Victoria Police had a list of a further 346 applicants assessed as suitable for recruitment, with 551 at various stages of the recruitment process.

The need to recruit large numbers of trainees within strict timelines places a considerable demand on recruiting and training resources within Victoria Police. In order to accommodate large numbers of trainees, the time spent in on-the-job training in some specialist work units, such as traffic control and traffic alcohol, have had to be reduced.

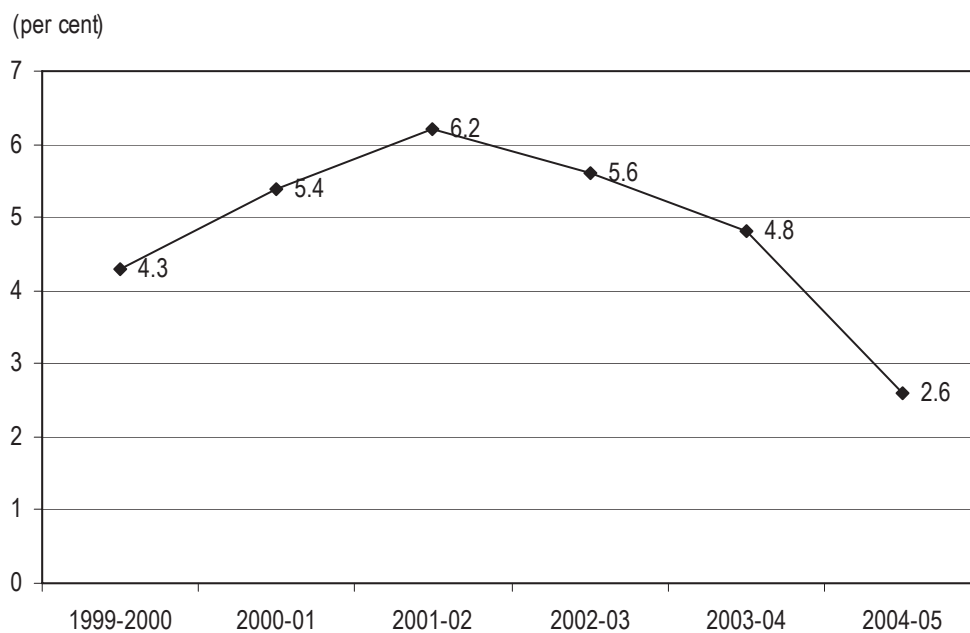
Victoria Police has a 7-stage recruiting process which has been refocused to ensure that it selects people with the right skills and ability to demonstrate the values and behaviours it requires. The process includes:

- assessment of cognitive and communication skills
- initial assessment at a police station
- fitness and medical assessments and psychological screening
- assessment of generic work skills
- assessment of alignment with the organisational values and behaviours.

The rate of attrition of new recruits is an indicator of whether the right people with the right skills and attributes were recruited. Between 1994 and 1999 recruit attrition averaged over 10 per cent.

Figure 5D shows the attrition rate for recruits in training since 1999. It shows that the rate peaked at 6.2 per cent in 2001-02, but has been falling since, reaching a low of 2.6 per cent for 2004-05. The overall attrition rate for recruits in training and sworn officers is currently 2.3 per cent.

**FIGURE 5D: RECRUITS IN TRAINING ATTRITION RATE**



Source: Victoria Police.

Since the commencement of the recruitment initiatives in July 1999, only 171 recruits have resigned from a total of 3 500 (4.9 per cent).

Questionnaires completed by recruit trainers indicate that the quality of recruits is consistently high. Regional managers told us that older recruits were more mature and had greater life experience, which was a real benefit for front-line policing.

Police forces in most other Australian jurisdictions are recruiting across Australia and overseas to attract sufficient numbers of recruits. Currently, Victoria Police is not faced with a shortage of applicants. However, in order to ensure a future supply of recruits, it is investigating how it can continue to be seen as an employer of choice.

### 5.2.3 Attracting a diverse workforce

Victoria Police has had a long standing commitment to having a workforce reflecting the diversity of the Victorian community. *The Way Ahead* restates this intention and identifies the recruitment of women and people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds as priorities.

The significant increase in police numbers since 1999 gave Victoria Police the opportunity to address the imbalances in its sworn officer workforce and to recruit the people with the right skills and experience to deliver its intelligence-based policing.

#### Attracting women

The need to increase the number of women in Victoria Police is driven by a range of equity and cultural issues. It is also driven by the understanding that future workforce shortages will make the recruitment of women essential.

The 1998 *Review of Victoria Police Equity Policies and Practices* and the 2001 *Ministerial Administrative Review into Victoria Police* both highlighted the under-representation of women in the sworn officer workforce and the need for this to be addressed.

Attracting and retaining female sworn officers is, therefore, a priority for the organisation. The *Victoria Police Equity and Diversity Corporate Five Year Plan 2003-2008* establishes a target of 25 per cent female sworn officers to be achieved by June 2007.

Victoria Police has focused on increasing the pool of female applicants rather than lowering the entry standards for females or giving them preferential treatment. The only exception has been certain changes to the physical fitness test for all applicants.





*Victoria Police officer at work.*

In June 1999, 2 slight changes were made. The time for completion of the fitness test was increased from 6 minutes to 6.5 minutes and the vertical wall was lowered from 1.8 metres to 1.6 metres. Since then further changes have been made, including the elimination of the vertical wall, as well as removing the bag dragging exercise for all applicants.

The changes have resulted in a greater number of applicants, particularly women, passing the fitness test. Since 1999, the proportion of female applicants who successfully completed the test is over 80 per cent, compared with approximately 30 per cent in the 1990s before the changes were made.

Victoria Police has sought to recruit women through targeted mass advertising campaigns, increased marketing of policing to females in schools, tertiary institutes and other career forums, special support for women throughout the recruitment process, and follow-up with women who fail stages of the process or withdraw.

These strategies have been successful, as Figure 5E indicates, with the percentage of female recruits increasing from 26.7 per cent in 2000 to 41.0 per cent in 2004-05.

FIGURE 5E: PROPORTION OF FEMALE RECRUITS IN TRAINING

At 30 June	Total recruits	Total female recruits	Percentage of female recruits
2000	790	211	26.7
2001	832	242	29.1
2002	663	216	32.6
2003	281	87	31.0
2004	411	159	38.7
2005	527	216	41.0

Source: Victoria Police.

There has been a significant increase in female recruits of 10 per cent since the implementation of *The Way Ahead* in 2003. In 2004-05, Victoria Police's percentage of female sworn officers, 19.7 per cent, was still below the Australasian police agencies benchmark of 21.6 per cent<sup>3</sup>. However, at the time of our audit, Victoria Police's percentage of female sworn officers had increased to 21 per cent.

### Attracting people from diverse backgrounds

One of the workforce goals in *The Way Ahead* is to attract people from diverse ethnic backgrounds as recruits to ensure that police are representative of the Victorian community. *The Way Ahead* does not set a specific target for this representation of people from diverse ethnic backgrounds.

In a report completed in 2001<sup>4</sup>, we found that about 10 per cent of sworn officers were born overseas. This was significantly less than the wider Australian population, with around 30 per cent of people born overseas<sup>5</sup>.

Since February 2004, the percentage of new recruits born overseas has increased to 17.9 per cent. However, the majority were born in Great Britain, New Zealand or Ireland. Victoria Police's narrow representation of people born overseas is a concern.

Due to privacy legislation, Victoria Police has limited data on the ethnic background of its sworn workforce. "Ethnicity" is a voluntary field and there is no data for many sworn officers. Data is available on place of birth which provides a very limited profile of the ethnic background of the workforce.

<sup>3</sup> Police Agencies HR Benchmarking Report, 1 July 2004 to 30 June 2005.

<sup>4</sup> Victorian Auditor-General's Office 2002 *Victoria Police: 'New Century, New Force' Recruitment Initiative*, in Report on public sector agencies, Victorian Government Printer, Melbourne.

<sup>5</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census, 2001.

Victoria Police has strategies in place to improve its data on the ethnic background of its workforce. These include:

- a workforce census of existing staff to verify and add to their personal data which was not required in the past
- a diversity strategy and plan currently being developed and to be tabled at the Ethical Health Standing Committee meeting in June 2006.

Recruit application forms now request information on country of birth of parents and the “ancestry the applicant identifies with”. This information is also gained for new starters at other levels. Victoria Police also intends to communicate to its sworn officers the value of such data for workforce planning and other aspects of managing its people.

Victoria Police is undertaking a project with the Australian Research Council. This project is investigating the degree to which its relationships with culturally and linguistically diverse communities act as barriers to people from these communities seeking recruitment. It is also looking at whether its workplaces, marketing, partnering, recruiting, support and retention policies and practices might also be barriers. It expects this research to be completed by June 2008.

Victoria Police has developed an Indigenous Strategic Plan aimed at recruiting indigenous people and increasing their representation in the workforce.

Some regions conduct activities to recruit people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds represented in their local communities. Strategies include preparing brochures aimed at specific ethnic groups, visiting schools and community groups, and conducting recreational activities for youth.

### **Attracting experienced applicants**

Victoria Police is the only employer of police in Victoria and recruits mainly at the base level. Recruits are able to progress through the ranks over time.

Applicants from other policing services, whose qualifications and prior experience are recognised, may undergo a shorter recruit training period. They may also be appointed as senior constables, after graduation, and are then able to apply for any advertised vacancies at higher levels.

At the senior levels of commander and above, experienced police can gain lateral entry. This is also possible in some specialist areas, such as the Air Wing, where appointment is at an appropriate level.

In 2005, Victoria Police developed a Professional Mobility Implementation Plan, based on the Australasian Police Professional Standards Council Professional Mobility Policy. A range of issues has been identified such as the need to recognise prior policing service and the need for policies on when positions would be open to officers from other police services.

Work is progressing on these issues in conjunction with other Australian police services. Part of this work is the consideration of a national police registration board. This would improve the ability of all police services to provide for the lateral entry of experienced police and increase the size of the labour pool available to each service. Victoria Police is actively supporting this work.

Prior to the 1990s, the Police Regulation Act precluded the recruitment of trainees over 35 years of age. Since the change to this regulation, Victoria Police has sought to recruit a more diverse range of age groups. It has targeted its recruitment campaigns at older, more experienced people who have the life and work experience to deliver the intelligent, confident, community-based and partnership policing outlined in *The Way Ahead*.

A review of recruit data during the period 1999 to 2005 shows that:

- the average age of applicants increased from 26.6 to 30 years
- 33 per cent of all applicants have been over 30 years of age
- 20 applicants over 50 years of age have been recruited.

Victoria Police is also attracting people with higher educational qualifications. During 2004 and 2005 around 30 per cent of recruits had tertiary qualifications. This represents an increase in the number of recruits with tertiary qualification from 15.4 per cent in 2000 to 20.5 per cent in 2001.

#### **5.2.4 Conclusion - recruitment**

Victoria Police does not determine the number of sworn officers it requires. This is determined by the government. In the 1990s, police numbers were reduced, but since 2000 the size of the force has increased significantly.

In both examples of substantial recruitment initiatives since 1999, Victoria Police had not sought additional staff, and had to recruit large numbers of people within strict and non-negotiable time frames.

Although Victoria Police met the target set for the 1999 increase in sworn officers, and expects to meet the current target, this approach to recruitment places a significant demand on resources in Victoria Police.

This recruitment of large numbers of trainees increases workload at the operational level where large numbers of trainees require daily supervision. The quality and quantity of training that can be provided may be compromised. This approach also runs the risk of reducing the quality of recruits in order to achieve the target numbers within the required time lines.

However, Victoria Police is managing these issues and is attracting applicants capable of delivering proactive, intelligence and evidence-based policing services. The organisation is also successfully retaining more of these trainees than previously.

The issue of employing unsworn staff in Victoria Police to support and enhance the work of sworn officers is complex. The current practice of governments funding sworn officer positions directly is limiting the ability of the organisation to plan for its whole workforce.

Victoria Police has to fund unsworn positions from its own existing budget. Its capacity to increase its numbers of unsworn staff is, therefore, limited. For example, Victoria Police employs unsworn officers as intelligence officers in central work units, but does not do so in the regions. It needs to consider the benefits gained from the employment of unsworn officers as analysts in regions.

The number of unsworn positions required at any time is related to the strategic direction of the organisation. There is no set formula. As policing becomes more based on intelligence and evidence, then the number of unsworn staff may need to increase to both support sworn officers and to undertake some of the specialist work in crime investigation.

A more holistic and integrated approach to the recruitment of sworn and unsworn officers needs to be developed if Victoria Police is to remain effective in its delivery of outcomes to the community.

## **5.3 Is Victoria Police allocating its resources to ensure that it has the right people in the right places?**

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### **5.3.1 Current resource allocation**

Since 1999, Victoria Police has used its Resource Allocation Criteria and Minimum Service Delivery Standards to allocate sworn officers to police stations across the state. The standards identify the minimum number of sworn officers required to operate a police station based on different opening hours and the provision of different services, such as attending courts or supervising cells. This is a narrow approach to determining capacity. The standards do not allow for extra staff to replace sworn officers on unplanned leave or on temporary assignments to other positions.

The standards do not take into account the needs of particular areas where the population and the demand for police services are growing. For example, the cities of Kingston and Casey have about the same crime and solution rates. However, Casey has a rapidly growing population but about two-thirds the number of police as Kingston.

Specialist areas such as traffic management, crime investigation and community liaison are not covered by these standards. These areas are resourced on the basis of business cases for staffing.

### **5.3.2 Improved resourcing**

In 2002, Victoria Police established a joint working party with The Police Association of Victoria to develop criteria for the allocation of sworn officers. In January 2006, Victoria Police completed a new resourcing model, called the People Allocation Model. The Police Association also developed an allocation model. Both parties are currently engaged in discussions to align the outcomes of both models.

The People Allocation Model is aimed at addressing the issues raised in the Johnson Report regarding the need for a long term workforce framework. It is also supporting the move to intelligence-based policing outlined in Victoria Police's strategic plans.

It aims to determine the overall numbers of police required in all areas of the state. It is based on an analysis of 13 different types of geographic, social, economic and demographic data that have been shown to be linked to crime and road trauma. For example, in a particular area:

- crimes against people are linked to the number of hotels and shops, family violence reports and the percentage of people under 20 years
- crimes against property are linked to the number of restaurants and shops
- road trauma is linked to the number of shops and black spot intersections, and to population density.

The model will enable Victoria Police to place sworn officers in districts based on the profile developed through the analysis of these factors. The model considers other operational factors such as opening hours of stations, the presence of cells and involvement in major events.

The model will assist senior management to determine the total number of sworn officers required and to allocate them to districts. Adjustments to staffing levels of stations will result from staff movements across the organisation.

The People Allocation Model provides Victoria Police with a tool for allocating its sworn officer workforce, but not its unsworn officers. It is not viewed as a set formula for resource allocation. Each region, division or district must also make a business case for resources based on the expected outcomes in *The Way Ahead*.



*New police stations impact on workforce planning.*

Other factors that may arise over time are still considered in allocating resources e.g. gender, age, experience and competency. Victoria Police's Human Resource and Education departments are responsible for addressing these issues. However, their ability to do this effectively is limited by the absence of a robust human resource information system.

Victoria Police's ability to place and move its sworn officers is limited. A range of legislative, industrial and policy provisions, such as the need to staff 24-hour police stations, reduces the flexibility to move them between work locations and to allocate them to different duties and hours of work

The Human Resource Department has identified these provisions and is currently reviewing its practices. At the time of our audit, regional managers were being surveyed in order to develop an understanding of how these provisions can be used to support workforce planning and determine if changes are required.

A Rostering Reform project in 2005 identified the possibility of differing lengths of shifts. Some 8, 10 and 12-hour shifts are currently being trialled in some divisions. The review of the service delivery model is also aimed at increasing flexibility in allocating work at the operational level.

### **5.3.3 Conclusion - resource allocation**

The Resource Allocation Criteria and Minimum Service Delivery Standards are based on a narrow formula for resourcing police stations. They do not address the staffing required for a more proactive and intelligence-based policing model.

These standards are soon to be replaced by a new allocation model which is considerably more sophisticated and links directly to the changing approach to policing described in *The Way Ahead*. It has the potential to be a valuable workforce allocation tool and provides a key element of the workforce planning framework. It should also enable Victoria Police to substantiate requests for specific numbers of sworn officers.

The new model relates to sworn officers only. Victoria Police needs to consider the value of developing a similar model for determining the numbers of specialist unsworn staff required in operational areas.



## 5.4 Overall conclusion

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The trend in all Australian police services has been to increase the participation of specialist unsworn officers in core policing. The use of experts in fields such as forensic science and communications technology improves the outcomes of policing. This both supports and adds value to the work of sworn officers in preventing crime and reacting to it after it has occurred. Victoria Police identified the need for specialist and technical expertise in its strategic plan, *The Way Ahead*.

The changing nature of the specialist skills required in policing means that it is no longer possible to treat the sworn and unsworn workforces separately. Decisions to increase the number of sworn officers, without increasing the whole police workforce, reduce the benefit gained from the increased number of sworn officers.

The Victorian Government has legislative responsibility for determining the numbers of sworn officers in Victoria Police and any increase in this number. Funding for unsworn officers who work in operational areas has to be found from existing Victoria Police funds.

These separate arrangements for sworn and unsworn staff make workforce planning difficult for Victoria Police. It needs the flexibility to determine the numbers and mix of sworn and unsworn officers it requires. Without this flexibility, it cannot gain the optimum advantage from its workforce planning. Benefits can be achieved if decisions to recruit more sworn officers are linked to the need for more unsworn specialists to work with these officers.

Victoria Police needs to develop a rationale for the number of specialist unsworn officers it requires to work with sworn officers on operations. It needs to inform the government of the workforce mix it requires to effectively deliver its services to the Victorian community.

Victoria Police also needs to have increased flexibility to recruit sworn officers progressively, rather than in one-off instalments to meet funding targets. Trainees need to be recruited when they are needed and when they can be most effectively trained and integrated into the workforce.

Victoria Police's approach to recruiting will need to broaden even further in the context of the predicted labour shortages. Victoria Police will need to provide more flexible entry for experienced applicants if it is continue to be an employer of choice. Its participation in the national discussions regarding the establishment of a police registration board is timely.

## Recommendation

### 3. That Victoria Police:

- determines and advises government of the appropriate mix of sworn and unsworn officers to deliver its policing services efficiently and effectively
  - expands its recruitment approach to provide more flexibility in the recruitment of experienced applicants.
-



## **6. Is Victoria Police effectively developing its key operational capabilities?**



## 6.1 Introduction

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Better practice workforce planning suggests that an organisation adequately invests in strategies to develop its capability for key workforce segments.

To assess whether Victoria Police is effectively developing its operational capability, we examined the effectiveness of its strategies to develop capability in its key workforce segments.

This part of the report assesses Victoria Police's strategies to improve its capability in key areas of its workforce identified in *The Way Ahead: Strategic Plan 2003-2008*: intelligence analysis, crime investigation, forensic analysis and counter terrorism.

Since the development of *The Way Ahead*, the need to improve capability in dealing with family violence has also become an organisational priority.

## 6.2 Is Victoria Police improving its operational capability?

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### 6.2.1 Improving intelligence capability

Intelligent policing is one of the key areas identified in Victoria Police's strategic plan, *The Way Ahead*. Intelligence work in Victoria Police has traditionally involved the collection and analysis of information relating to crime. This analysis has then provided direction for operational activities.

*The Way Ahead* clearly identified the need to improve this intelligence capability and make it more effective in supporting the prevention of crime. The role of intelligence analyst has changed from simple collation of crime data to more complex analysis of data and identification of criminal trends.

The number of intelligence analysts in Victoria Police and the nature of their work vary across regions. In the past, analyst positions were often filled by sworn officers returning to work or moving from other areas, whether or not they had the training and experience for such work.

In 2002, Victoria Police's Corporate Committee approved the development of a Victoria Police Intelligence Model (VPIM) to improve the intelligence capability of the organisation to deliver proactive police services. The project aimed to develop intelligence capability by:

- identifying core intelligence functions such as producing strategic assessments and profiles
- changing the focus of the role to preparing strategic and tactical assessments to determine operational priorities and allocate resources
- focusing on crime trend analysis at the divisional level
- selecting and training the right people.

Project Nimbus was established in 2005 to manage the implementation of the model and to train analysts in developing the new form of strategic assessments. Most current intelligence analysts have completed primary and refresher courses.

At the time of our audit, 16 analysts had completed training in the new intelligence capability of developing strategic assessments, with another 50 to be trained in 2006. The implementation plan does not indicate that this training will be provided for all regional analysts: approximately 190 in number.

A key element of VPIM is a rigorous process for the selection of competent and experienced people. The new form of intelligence analysis requires strong analytical skills and the ability to think strategically. General competencies have been identified and include: sound knowledge of intelligence methods, the ability and confidence to produce high level reports and the ability to deliver briefings to senior managers.

The acceptance of this new more proactive role for intelligence analysts varies across the organisation. The slower uptake in some regions is a concern recognised by Victoria Police. Some regional managers recognised the value of the more strategic crime trend analysis, while others thought there was not enough quality data available to support this analysis.



*Intelligence analysts provide vital data for crime management.*

Some regional managers were concerned that heavy operational workloads would limit the time available for prevention activities that could result from the work of the analysts. However, where trained analysts were in place, regional managers indicated that their work was proving valuable in identifying local priorities and in allocating sworn officers to proactive duties.

Regional analysts have traditionally been sworn officers. While some regions considered policing experience was necessary, others considered that unsworn employees could also undertake these roles. Victoria Police's Crime Department, Covert and Intelligence Support Department and Ethical Standards Division all have unsworn employees as intelligence analysts.

Apart from allocating staff to manage the project, there has been no extra resourcing to implement the new intelligence model. Regions are expected to fill analyst positions from their existing resources, as in the past.

## **6.2.2 Regional crime investigation capability**

The reactive nature of policing, in responding to calls for assistance and to criminal activity after it has occurred, is still a major element of modern policing. In 2003, Victoria Police established Project Clarendon to review its ability to react to crime and to investigate it efficiently.

In the past, when a crime was reported, sworn officers would attend the crime scene to take the initial report, then investigators would attend the scene to interview the victims. Forensic officers would then attend to collect physical evidence such as fingerprints if required. Project Clarendon reviewed these practices and proposed a new approach to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the investigation of such crimes.

A new “crime desk” approach has been established to receive and record reports of crimes from the public. The crime desks are staffed by sworn officers trained in assessing and examining crime scenes. These crime scene officers are trained to take fingerprints, DNA swabs and photographs; to interview witnesses, victims and complainants; to identify immediate suspects; and to prepare crime reports.

This initiative has resulted in the diversion of sworn officers from general policing duties to the new specialist role. Each crime desk comprises one sergeant and 10 constables/senior constables. Regions are required to contribute one sergeant and 5 constables/senior constables from their existing complement of sworn officers for each crime desk. The other 5 constable/senior constable positions are provided as additional staff.

By August 2005, 159 positions were filled. At the time of our audit, 17 crime desks had been established, with 31 more expected to be operating in divisions across the state by August 2007.

Figure 6A shows how the crime desks are resourced.

**FIGURE 6A: PROJECT CLARENDON - RESOURCING**

Phases of implementation and year	New positions	Use of existing staff	Total crime desk staff	Total crime desks
Phase 1 – 2003-04	36	42	78	7
Phase 2 – 2004-05	37	44	81	7
Phase 3 – 2005-06 (a)	46	53	99	9
Phase 4 – 2006-07 (a)	38	41	79	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>157</b>	<b>180</b>	<b>337</b>	<b>31</b>

Source: Victoria Police.

The role is attracting quality applicants and is seen as a valuable one for career development purposes. It is also attracting women and those wanting to work part-time hours, thus supporting retention and health and wellbeing strategies.



*Crime scene officer dusting for fingerprints.*

The crime desk approach is aimed at increasing efficiency by removing the need for multiple visits to the crime scene by different officers. However, the project plan did not address the issue of evaluating the effectiveness of the approach.

Regional managers had differing views about its effectiveness. Many stated that it had freed up sworn officers for other duties, improved response times to crime, led to more successful forensic procedures and been well received by the public. Some anticipated that high quality evidence gathering at crime scenes would lead to more criminals being identified. Others thought that the benefits may be overstated, because of their view that staff would be lost from general policing duties.

### **6.2.3 Improving capability to investigate major crime**

Victoria Police's traditional approach to managing crime investigation has been to deal with major crimes, such as homicide and arson, through:

- a central department made up of specialised squads of detectives
- criminal investigation units in regions
- various task forces.

There was little communication between the different investigative units across the organisation.



In 2005, Victoria Police undertook a review of this approach. The review found that in the constantly changing criminal environment, this model was too static and not able to deal with the current and future challenges of dealing with major crime. The outcome of the review was the development of a new approach to the investigation of major crime.

The new Major Crime Management Model focuses on the prioritisation and coordination of criminal investigations across the organisation. Key aspects include the establishment of various types of major crime desks with distinct functions:

- a central 24-hour crime desk to monitor and coordinate responses
- crime desks to support investigations on specific themes
- crime desks to provide advice and analytical support to particular investigations.

The review identified the need for a mix of investigators, specialists and technology to manage major crime investigations. Specialist resources such as forensic accountants, forensic scientists, lawyers, intelligence analysts, and surveillance and covert resources are all required under this model.

The new model also requires greater flexibility in deploying both sworn and unsworn officers to investigations. It indicates that over time, the distinction between sworn and unsworn staff will become less important in building Victoria Police's capability to manage major crime.

This new way of dealing with major crime has an impact on the type of investigators Victoria Police will need in the future. The new model is based on the need for investigators to have sound general capability to investigate crime as well as areas of expertise. It also requires them to be mobile and move between squads and regional units and task forces. The recruitment, development and performance assessment of investigators are being designed to address these requirements.

At the time of our audit, the model had been approved and plans for its implementation were being developed.

## 6.2.4 Improving other operational capabilities

### Forensic capability

*The Way Ahead* indicated that developments in forensic technology and science, such as DNA testing, would significantly improve Victoria Police's ability to solve serious and high volume crimes, to identify offenders and to prevent further crimes.

A review of forensic services in 2003, *Tracing the Future*, identified the need for increased staff capacity to deliver efficient forensic services. Funding was provided to recruit 23 ongoing forensic officers with another 23 appointed on 3-year contracts to deal with the backlog of DNA testing.

The recruitment of the 23 contract staff occurred by October 2004, with the others appointed over the 2004 to 2006 period. Recruitment of officers at the base level has occurred, but the recruitment of experienced people for more senior positions has been more difficult.

The impact of the increase in capacity has been monitored, particularly in relation to the backlog DNA testing. The project is ahead of schedule, but with an increase in demand due to the effectiveness of the DNA testing completed, the expected decrease in the backlog may not be achieved.

The retention of the contract staff is an issue as they near the end of the contract period. The Forensic Department has also identified as key workforce issues the possible loss of key experienced staff through retirement and the significant time needed to train replacements.

The skills needed by forensic officers have been identified and development plans are in place to support succession planning.



*Forensic officer undertaking fingerprint analysis.*

## **Counter terrorism capability**

*The Way Ahead* identified the need for Victoria Police to build its capability to respond to potential terrorist threats.

In 2003, a Counter Terrorism Coordination Unit was established to develop policy and coordinate work in this area. The unit conducts research, advises the executive, liaises with other agencies, and would coordinate the response to any terrorism event.

The unit is responsible for integrating counter terrorism training into general training for recruits. It also provides specialised training in counter terrorism response for Victoria Police sworn officers. Approximately 8 500 sworn officers have been trained since 2003.

## **Dealing with family violence**

Family violence is now recognised as a major social issue, and one which often leads to further criminal activity. Victoria Police estimates that currently about 30 per cent of operational time is spent on family violence matters.

In 2004, as part of a whole-of-government approach to reducing family violence, Victoria Police developed a code of practice for the investigation of family violence. The code significantly increased the responsibility of police in responding to family violence. Previously, police aimed to diffuse family violence situations and refer them to other agencies. Under the code, police now initiate court intervention orders, refer families to social services and follow-up reports of violence.

Since 2004, the workload of sworn officers in dealing with family violence has increased. There have been increases in the number of incidents reported, the number of charges laid and the number of intervention orders sought by police.

The timing of family violence incidents also places another burden on Victoria Police. Most incidents usually occur outside normal hours when Victoria Police is the only agency available to deal with the incidents. Follow-up processes, such as initiating intervention orders and referrals to other agencies, are also complex and time-consuming.

In 2004-05, Victoria Police's Education Department developed family violence training resources which were first made available to divisions with the highest number of family violence reports. Since 2004, about 6 000 sworn officers have been trained in strategies for managing family violence incidents.

Victoria Police has dedicated family violence officers. Some divisions have formed domestic violence units to build the expertise of sworn officers to deal with family violence. Regional managers stated that most sworn officers have the negotiation and conflict resolution skills necessary to handle difficult family violence situations. They considered that long-serving officers usually have both experience and skill in this area.

## 6.3 Overall conclusion

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Victoria Police is attempting to build its operational capability in both existing and emerging roles to support its move towards more intelligence-based policing focused on prevention and working in partnership with the community.

The new Victorian Police Intelligence Model should improve the analytical capability of the organisation. However, the delay in its implementation and the lack of funding to support the training of all intelligence analysts, are limiting this move to a more strategic intelligence capability.

The Major Crime Management Model highlights the need for Victoria Police to have the flexibility to use unsworn staff in specialist roles in investigations. The issue of employing unsworn staff to provide specialist expertise in operations needs to be addressed by Victoria Police. Recruitment of people from outside the force to be intelligence analysts, for example, could free up sworn officers for other operational duties and provide increased flexibility in resource allocation.

It is clear that responses to incidents of family violence are a major source of work for sworn officers in police stations. It is important that sworn officers work as effectively as possible with other public sector agencies with responsibility for family violence.

The various strategies adopted by regions to improve their capability in this area need to be shared across the organisation. The compstat forum on this issue conducted in late 2005 assisted in this and identified strategies to improve performance in this area. This is sound practice.

Victoria Police is investing in a range of initiatives to improve its capability to deliver its services to the community. The support at the regional level for some of these initiatives, such as the new intelligence model and the new approach to managing crime scenes, is variable. Victoria Police needs to continually address the fact that its initiatives are not universally accepted by sworn officers. Progress has been substantial, but universal acceptance will take time.

Victoria Police needs to evaluate the impact of initiatives such as the new intelligence and crime desk strategies at various stages of their implementation. This would alleviate some of the concern expressed about the impact of the diversion of existing sworn officers from general policing duties at the operational level.

Victoria Police faces the challenge of improving its operational capability in all areas, not just in specialised segments of its workforce. It needs to continually evaluate whether it is building and sustaining its capacity and capability in general policing areas as well as in specialised operational areas.

### Recommendation

4. **That Victoria Police:**
    - **invests in ongoing training of all its regional intelligence analysts to improve their strategic analytical capability**
    - **evaluates the impact of its initiatives on its operational capability.**
-



## **7. Is Victoria Police effectively sustaining its workforce capability?**



## 7.1 Introduction

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A key success factor for workforce planning is adequate investment in initiatives to attract, recruit, develop, and retain employees with the required capability.

This part of the report considers whether Victoria Police is implementing strategies to sustain the capability of its workforce to deliver proactive policing to the Victorian community.

## 7.2 Is Victoria Police implementing strategies to retain its workforce?

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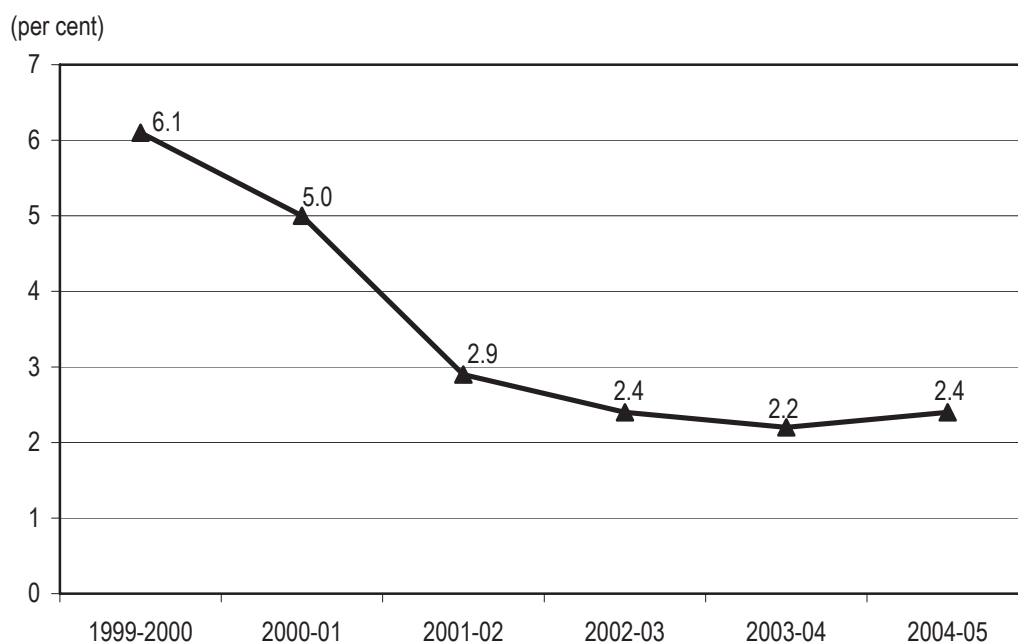
Retention of capable staff is a priority for any organisation and for Victoria Police it is crucial. A high turnover of staff is costly and the loss of knowledge and experience can affect the ability of the organisation to deliver its services effectively.

Victoria Police needs to ensure that it retains its new recruits. The recruitment of sworn officers is a significant investment both in terms of cost and time for Victoria Police. Government recruitment targets require the dedication of skilled and experienced staff to manage the extensive process and to deliver the training to the new recruits. On-the-job supervision of trainees is also significant in terms of staff time. The time for recruits to develop into capable sworn officers is also a workforce management issue.

Victoria Police also needs to ensure that it retains its older officers. The age of the sworn officer workforce will have an impact on retention in the future. In July 2005, the average age of sworn officers was 39.2 years. The average years of service was 15 years, and 11.8 per cent were aged 50 years and over and eligible for retirement.

In 2001, the Johnson Report noted that turnover of staff was an issue that Victoria Police needed to address. Given the need for Victoria Police to significantly increase its sworn officer workforce since 1999, the need to reduce its turnover has been recognised.

Figure 7A shows the rate of attrition of sworn officers between 1999-2000 and 2004-05.

**FIGURE 7A: SWORN OFFICER ATTRITION RATE**

Source: Victoria Police.

Since 1999, the attrition rate of sworn officers has decreased significantly. The current turnover of 2.4 per cent is the second lowest on record and half the average for the last 30 years. In recent times, Victoria Police has consistently had the lowest separation rate of all Australian police forces. In 2004-05 the average turnover rate of other police jurisdictions was 4.1 per cent.

The retention rate has remained relatively stable over the past 3 years. Any increase has been due to sworn officers retiring from the force. In 2004, 82 sworn officers retired and in 2005 this increased to 119.

### 7.2.1 Retaining women

Victoria Police has been proactive in developing initiatives to retain its female sworn officers. A range of strategies to support and retain female officers has been implemented. These include:

- more flexible leave and employment arrangements (part-time work) and support for women on family leave
- mentoring and leadership programs for women, including a leadership education module for women in policing
- identification of women with potential for promotion through the performance management program
- female representation on all governing committees
- establishment of a women's liaison officer position.



The attrition rate of female police and recruits has decreased from 4.9 per cent in 2000-01 to 1.9 per cent in 2004-05. The average attrition rate for female sworn officers across Australasian police forces was 3.1 per cent in 2004-05. The number of Victoria Police female sworn officers resigning was 34, or 1.7 per cent of total female sworn officers.

The promotion rate for female sworn officers is increasing. In 2002-03, the females gained only 16.2 per cent of total promotions. In 2004-05, this increased to 26.9 per cent. However, almost 86 per cent of women were at the lower ranks of constable and senior constable. Only 7 per cent of women were at the rank of sergeant and above.

### **7.2.2 Retaining older workers**

Victoria Police's Human Resource Department is undertaking a workforce flexibility project to identify more flexible employment arrangements for older sworn officers in order to retain them in the workforce. The following options are being considered:

- progressive use of leave entitlements before retirement
- availability of part-time hours before retirement
- re-employment to undertake appropriate duties, e.g. general station duties, event management, booze bus and transit duties
- re-employment to fill vacant shifts created by sworn officers on long-term leave.

In late 2005, the Human Resource Department surveyed 1 233 sworn officers over 45 years regarding their retirement intentions and expectations. The survey found that a combination of financial, job security, nature of the work and employment conditions were all factors that would retain sworn officers beyond retirement age. Other results from the survey indicated that:

- 65 per cent would consider recommencing work within Victoria Police after retirement
- 36.5 per cent would be willing to work at one rank or more lower
- 76.7 per cent would consider contract or consultancy work.

Based on these results, Victoria Police is currently identifying possible options for increasing flexibility in employment for sworn officers considering retirement. It is also considering options for re-employing retired officers in a variety of roles and under different employment arrangements.

### 7.2.3 Offering part-time employment

Victoria Police has identified the option of part-time work as a key strategy to attract and retain sworn officers, particularly women and officers eligible for retirement.

The Human Resource Department has conducted a number of research projects on part-time work, including:

- a partnership with the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT) under an Australian Research Council grant to identify any general and cultural bias and discrimination in its recruitment and retention policies and practices
- a review of its part-time employment policy through the Industrial Relations Victoria “Partners at Work “ Scheme in 2003-2004 which identified a range of more flexible work arrangements
- a study on Policing and Quality Part-time Work: Constraints and Options in partnership with RMIT, The Police Association Victoria and the Community and Public Sector Union in 2004.

However, the uptake of part-time work among sworn officers is small. In June 2005, the number of part-time sworn officers was 459, or 4.3 per cent of sworn officers, with women making up 373 (81.6 per cent) of this number. The increase since 2000 has been less than 2 per cent. Since 2003, the sworn officer workforce has increased by over 500, but the ratio of part time employment has not increased proportionately.

Figure 7B shows the relatively high percentage of females and the low percentage of males working part-time since 2003.

**FIGURE 7B: PERCENTAGE OF PART-TIME SWORN OFFICERS BY GENDER**

Year	Percentage of females	Percentage of males
2003	17.3	0.8
2004	18.2	0.8
2005	17.7	0.9

Source: Victoria Police.

### 7.2.4 Developing career paths

Victoria Police is looking at the possibility of broader career paths for sworn officers. The traditional career path has been a move from general policing into more specialised areas for periods of time, such as investigations, followed by a return to general policing duties in order to gain promotion.

Under the model of policing described in *The Way Ahead*, there are new types of work within Victoria Police which may provide different career paths and help retain capable sworn officers. The increased importance of specialist and technical staff may also broaden possibilities for different types of careers within Victoria Police.

This issue of different career paths is starting to be considered across the organisation. The new Major Crime Management Model outlines possible specialist career paths for detectives, such as in arson and homicide, and for new roles as crime managers and supervising investigators. It emphasises the need for the development of more structured career paths for detectives in order to:

- increase the attractiveness of the detective role
- retain top performers
- help prevent corruption by encouraging mobility
- improve succession planning.

An investigator mobility strategy is currently being developed to provide a more holistic approach to career development for investigators. This aims to improve the opportunities for investigators to move between crime department squads, regional response units, crime investigation units and the Ethical Standards Department. It also aims to improve the reintegration of investigators when they move between work areas.

### **7.2.5 Conclusion - retention**

Victoria Police is implementing strategies to retain its workforce. It is attempting to create a range of employment options to ensure that it retains its capable employees. The 9<sup>th</sup> National Work/Life Benchmarking Study has just ranked Victoria Police number 7 out of 410 participating agencies.

The appropriate rate of turnover of Victoria Police's sworn officers is difficult to determine. The low attrition rate achieved by Victoria Police in recent years is positive in that it is retaining its sworn officers and gaining a return on its investment in recruiting and training. This has also assisted in the achievement of the government's commitment of additional police.

However, a continued low rate of turnover can reduce the opportunity for promotion and career opportunities, resulting in bottlenecks at various levels. It can also affect the rate of cultural change needed to support the move to intelligence-based policing.

Victoria Police monitors its staff turnover rate and has an exit interview process for sworn officers leaving the organisation. However, this process is not consistently applied across the regions and there is little qualitative data produced to inform management decisions. Victoria Police needs to improve its exit interview process in order to identify the factors causing sworn officers to resign. This would then enable the organisation to develop strategies to address these issues.

The current low attrition rate may change in the future due to the increasing number of sworn officers eligible for retirement. In July 2005, 11.8 per cent of the sworn officer workforce was aged 50 years and over and eligible for retirement. This had increased from 10.5 per cent in July 2004.

The survey conducted in 2005 provided valuable information for the development of strategies to re-employ sworn officers after retirement. Victoria Police will need to address a range of issues before these options can be implemented, including changes to operational safety and tactical training and the need for a human resource information system capable of managing such flexible working arrangements.

Victoria Police is addressing the issue of creating an employment environment which will optimise the capability of its workforce. In the case of its target to increase female representation, results are already being achieved. However, the issue of increasing the number of female employees at the ranks of sergeant and above will not be achieved in the short-term. Newly appointed female officers will need time to progress through the ranks.

The challenge of significantly increasing the number of recruits from culturally and linguistically diverse and indigenous backgrounds is even greater. It will require accurate data and investment in targeted strategies, and continual organisational culture change, if progress is to be made in this area.

The availability of part-time work for sworn officers has not had a significant uptake. Victoria Police needs to address the management and workforce cultural issues that may be impacting on sworn officers accessing this form of employment.

## **7.3 Is Victoria Police developing its workforce?**

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### **7.3.1 Educational qualifications**

Since the 1990s, training for sworn officers in Victoria Police has been based on a competency-based training model, with a focus on gaining promotion. However, all royal commissions into policing have recommended that police should have higher education qualifications and that policing should be viewed as a profession.

Research indicates that higher levels of education will reduce susceptibility to corruption, reduce barriers to diversity, and ensure that sworn officers can think strategically and proactively to solve problems.

There has been a long history of trying to achieve a tertiary qualification for police. In 2005, Victoria Police refocused this approach and established its Future of Education Project to move police education into the higher education sector. This move to higher education qualifications supports Victoria Police's strategic direction of providing intelligent, confident, community-based and partnership policing.

At the time of finalising this report, the project was developing an undergraduate qualification for foundation police education in conjunction with the higher education sector.

A range of higher education qualifications such as the Diploma of Supervision, Graduate Certificate in Management, Diploma in Management, Masters in Management and the Advanced Diploma in Policing have been available to sworn officers in Victoria Police for a number of years.

Sworn officers are supported by access to up to 8 hours study leave a week. Study leave is approved at the commencement of each year and is taken into account in the development of rosters at the district level.

### **7.3.2 Training and development**

In 2005, a review of training programs was undertaken to ensure that the organisational values and behaviours were embedded in the programs to support the move towards more intelligence-based policing.

Victoria Police has traditionally provided separate training programs for sworn officers at particular ranks, such as programs for sergeants and inspectors. The review recommended that a new approach be taken to delivering programs: a move away from rank-based training programs to a “schools of practice” framework. Programs are being developed under schools of practice in critical incident and emergency management, investigation, local policing, operational safety, leadership and management development and traffic management.

Victoria Police offers a variety of training opportunities to its sworn officers, including:

- a 20-week recruit training program covering academic subjects and physical training
- a 2-year probationary constables extended training scheme
- senior management and team leadership programs conducted by the force’s Airlie Leadership Development Centre
- a Police Management Development Program conducted by the Australian Institute of Police Management.

Specific training is provided for promotion to higher ranks, such as inspector, and for investigators who must undertake a detective training program before appointment. All operational officers are required to undertake essential training, such as operational safety and tactics (OST) training, which must be completed every 6 months. Participation in this training is monitored centrally.

Figure 7C shows the number and relative percentage, by rank, of operational officers who had not undertaken this training in past years.

**FIGURE 7C: NUMBER AND RELATIVE PERCENTAGE, BY RANK, OF OPERATIONAL OFFICERS NOT QUALIFIED IN OST**

Rank	2003		2004		2005	
	(no.)	(%)	(no.)	(%)	(no.)	(%)
Senior Sergeants	9	15	24	12	42	5
Sergeants	12	20	43	21	164	18
Senior Constables	35	58	131	63	575	65
Constables	4	7	8	4	110	12
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>206</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>891</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Victoria Police Compstat Forum People Issues February 2006.

The fact that a significant number of operational police were not currently qualified in OST, and could not work operational shifts, is a concern. It has a direct impact on the capacity of Victoria Police to deliver its services and needs to be addressed.



*Officers undertaking operational safety and tactics training.*

Regional managers and training officers told us that the time available for training was limited by:

- staff shortages and operational duties
- high levels of planned and unplanned leave
- distances some training officers were required to travel
- lack of computers for online learning, particularly at more remote police stations.

Over the past 10 years, the average number of training days for a sworn officer has been 11 days a year. There is no policy across the force specifying the number of days training to be undertaken by sworn officers. This lack of an organisational benchmark relating to time allocated for training of sworn officers needs to be addressed. It can lead to inconsistency and inequity.

The management of training at the regional level varies and is dependent on regional priorities. In some regions, training officers are full-time, in others they also undertake operational duties. Although the organisation states that regional training officers should have a Certificate IV training qualification, not all have this qualification.

The turnover of training officers is of concern as it takes time for officers to become skilled and recognised throughout the region. In one region, the training officer had been in the position for a number of years resulting in a high profile for training and significant participation in training programs.

As stated earlier in this report, proposals for new projects within Victoria Police must also include training requirements and indicate the impact on capability that such training may have and how this will be managed. Both Project Clarendon (the new crime desk approach and crime scene officer role) and Project Nimbus (the improved intelligence model), have developed training programs and delivered them for sworn officers undertaking these roles.

It was not possible to determine how much training is undertaken by sworn officers across the organisation. Victoria Police does not have a human resource information system to record such data across the organisation. Some regions and some central units maintain training records manually. The introduction of electronic time sheets for sworn officers has provided more data on the training undertaken across regions.

The issue of training for unsworn officers working in operational areas is becoming more significant in the move to intelligence-based policing. The Airlie Leadership Development Centre provides management training for both sworn and unsworn staff in both operational and non-operational areas of Victoria Police.

Training in specialist skills such as in DNA testing for forensic science officers is organised within specialist work areas and provided to all staff as essential training.

As with sworn officers, Victoria Police does not have the capability of recording and maintaining training data centrally and is reliant on the specialist work areas to monitor training of their staff.



### 7.3.3 Leadership capability

Leadership has been identified as a crucial factor in achieving the outcomes of *The Way Ahead*. Victoria Police has a number of initiatives to improve its leadership capability at the senior levels.

Victoria Police has made a significant investment in leadership development through the Airlie Leadership Development Centre. A range of developmental opportunities are available to Victoria Police employees:

- work-based opportunities (including new work, upgrading, rotations, secondments, assignments and project work)
- listening to the experts (including coaching, mentoring, shadowing and seminars)
- professional development opportunities (including skills development and networking with professionals in similar areas of expertise)
- formal training programs provided by Victoria Police's Education Department, tertiary institutions and other providers.

Leadership programs are provided to both sworn and unsworn staff. There is a Senior Managers' Leadership Development Program which occurs on a regular basis. A new leadership program was provided to all staff with leadership responsibilities in 2005. More than 3 500 employees participated in this program.

A First Line Operational Leadership Program has been developed and full implementation should occur in the 2006-07 financial year. A District Management Team Leadership Program is also currently being developed.

Victoria Police provides formal mentoring and coaching programs for its senior managers. Directors and assistant commissioners act as mentors for all superintendents upon appointment. Part of this mentoring is to identify training and development needs.

The provision of on-the-job training is a key strategy for developing senior managers. As members of the Corporate Committee, senior managers are exposed to strategic level discussions and are expected to provide leadership across the organisation. Development activities are also conducted for Corporate Committee members on a regular basis. Participation in compstat forums is also a development strategy as regional or central managers are expected to be publicly accountable for their areas of responsibility.

Rotation through positions in Victoria Police is also a leadership development strategy. Assistant commissioners are moved to other positions every 2 years, so they can develop their understanding of different areas and gain broader experience. Assistant commissioner and deputy commissioner positions are left vacant at times, so that officers at lower levels can act in the positions for a period of time and gain experience at that level.

Superintendents and commanders are also developed through a job rotation program. A review is undertaken of the existing superintendent appointments each year. Those who have been in positions for 2 years or more are considered for movement. The Chief Commissioner meets with each officer considered for movement and discusses career development and personal issues. The Corporate Committee then discusses and approves the proposed changes.

In 2005, 10 senior managers were moved to new positions, and 12 new appointments were subsequently made to the vacant positions. This process of rotating senior managers through positions is now a regular occurrence. Victoria Police sees this as not only developing its leaders, but as providing the flexibility it needs to ensure that the right people are in the right places across the organisation.

There is also job rotation for inspectors in regions. They are rotated through various positions within regions but, at this stage, not across regions.

The rotation program aims to balance the rights of individuals with the needs of the organisation. It is periodically reviewed on the basis of feedback from participants.

#### **7.3.4 Succession planning**

The need to identify, develop and train a pool of future leaders is one of the major elements of Victoria Police's workforce planning approach. This requires the tracking of career progression of senior managers.

Victoria Police's current human resource information system is not able to record and track career information over time. This has to be done manually. Spreadsheets are maintained which record the qualifications, experience (positions and locations) and professional development of each of the 120 or so senior managers.

The Victoria Police performance management program includes the completion of a development plan. It is expected that career expectations and strategies to support these are identified, e.g. on and off-the-job training, formal education, secondments and upgrades. Regions are responsible for the implementation and management of this program. Interviews with regional managers indicated that the implementation of this process is variable.

In 2005, research was undertaken through Victoria Police's Team Leadership Questionnaire. Over 4 000 employees responded to the questionnaire. The results from the performance management section indicated that there were further opportunities to enhance the use of workplace assessments to:

- define organisational expectations, including the achievement of progression criteria
- provide and record feedback as recognition of achievements in the workplace.

As discussed earlier in this report, a review of the performance management program is about to be conducted.

In practice, the major form of succession planning in the regions is through assignments, also referred to as upgrades within Victoria Police. These are used to provide development opportunities. At the time of our audit, 216 sworn officers were assigned to other positions at their existing rank, with 495 sworn officers acting in higher duty positions.

Victoria Police's personnel manual provides the guidelines for these assignments on when and how positions are to be advertised. Practices vary across regions but, overall, they comply with these guidelines. Some divisions, such as the Warrnambool and the Altona North Divisions of Region 2 (West), call for expressions of interest for vacant positions. Other regions ask sworn officers to register their interest in being assigned to other positions annually and then these are filled as vacancies occur.

Region 2's Warrnambool Division, which has a formal succession planning policy, and its Altona North Division, formally assesses the performance of those assigned to these positions and identify areas for training or further development. Arrangements in other regions vary and tend to be informal.

Assignment to central projects and task-forces is not as aligned with the personnel guidelines. Some regional managers expressed concern about a lack of an open and equitable selection process for these assignments. They felt that the lack of opportunity for all sworn officers to express interest in these positions created resentment.

Regional managers we interviewed held differing views about assignments. Some promoted them as development opportunities and were prepared to deal with any reduced operational capability due to positions not being backfilled.

Regional managers also commented on the negative impact of the movement of officers. The lack of continuity and its impact on the sharing and quality of information at the operational level were seen as significant by some managers.

The issue of assignments to positions was also raised in the Major Crime Management Model. It noted the lack of a structured, formalised process for assignments and that arrangements had to be driven by individuals and relied on negotiation between managers. The report has recommended the development of a structured assignment process to enhance career prospects for investigators.

### 7.3.5 Conclusion - development

Victoria Police's proposed move to tertiary qualifications is consistent with the trend across other police services in Australia and New Zealand. In the longer-term, this should improve the capability of Victoria Police to implement its policing model. It may also change the composition of the workforce. The experience of other policing jurisdictions has demonstrated that the requirement for tertiary qualifications for entry leads to an increase in the diversity of people.

Victoria Police is changing the focus of its training programs. The shift from rank-based training to programs based on the capabilities needed for specific forms of work is more aligned with the policing model described in *The Way Ahead*. Its establishment of schools of practice should improve access to programs by sworn officers at all ranks.

Victoria Police is attempting to implement effective succession planning across the organisation. Practices such as the rotation of senior managers and assignments to organisational projects are in place, but these are not part of a documented succession planning policy. Such a policy framework would ensure transparency of decision-making and address equity issues.

The assignment to organisational projects provides sworn officers with opportunities to gain experience and build their leadership skills. However, there are problems in how candidates for assignments are selected. These need to be addressed through clearer policy statements and processes. The impact of secondments on operational areas needs to be understood and managed more effectively.

An integral part of such planning needs to be a human resource information system that can record a range of data on individuals and produce information on which decisions can be based. As noted elsewhere in this report, Victoria Police does not have a human resource information system that records the workforce data that is required for succession planning purposes and for workforce planning generally. Victoria Police needs to be able to record the competencies, qualifications and experience of its sworn officers and to track these over time.

## **7.4 Overall conclusion**

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Victoria Police is implementing sound strategies to sustain its workforce both now and in the future. It is focusing on the retention and development of its workforce to support its move to policing based on intelligence and supported by science and technology.

It is investigating options to broaden its recruitment of sworn officers and to provide more flexible recruitment and employment arrangements to both recruits and older workers. It is aware of its ageing workforce and is developing strategies to retain and use older workers in different ways.

Victoria Police is taking action on an important and longstanding educational issue: the need to professionalise the policing service. This is in line with the trend across Australasian police services.

Victoria Police needs to develop a robust and transparent succession planning framework. The appointment of sworn officers to organisational projects is providing development opportunities, but these occur in an unstructured way. More thought is needed about how to make these temporary assignments a structured part of career advancement.

Victoria Police needs to address the process by which these assignments and others in regions are made to improve perceptions of equity and transparency.

## Recommendation

### 5. That Victoria Police:

- **broadens its employment options to provide more flexibility to retain its sworn officers, particularly women and older officers**
  - **develops a clear and comprehensive framework for succession planning**
  - **invests in a robust human resource information system capable of supporting development strategies and effective succession planning.**
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2005-06

Report title	Date issued
Managing stormwater flooding risks in Melbourne (2005:8)	July 2005
Managing intellectual property in government agencies (2005:9)	July 2005
East Gippsland Shire Council: Proposed sale of Lakes Entrance property (2005:10)	July 2005
Franchising Melbourne's train and tram system (2005:11)	September 2005
Results of special reviews and other investigations (2005:12)	October 2005
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Follow-up of selected performance audits tabled in 2002 and 2003 (2005:15)	October 2005
Auditor-General's Report on the Finances of the State of Victoria, 2004-05 (2005:16)	November 2005
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