



MINISTER FOR POLICE; ROAD SAFETY; DEFENCE INDUSTRY; VETERANS ISSUES

Our Ref: 70-32293
Your Ref: A956937

Hon Peter Collier MLC
Chair
Standing Committee on Estimates and Financial Operations
Legislative Council Committee Office of Western Australia
Parliament House
4 Harvest Terrace
WEST PERTH WA 6005

Dear Hon Peter Collier

Thank you for your correspondence of 19 May 2022 regarding 2020-21 Annual Reports for the Office of State Coroner.

The Western Australia Police Force advise that there is no clear singular factor leading to the reduction in the number of completed police investigation reports to the Office of the State Coroner in the 2020-21 financial year. However, a 14% increase in reportable deaths and a 11% decrease in completed reports provides some explanation. The reduction in completed files can also be attributed to the impact of the WA Police Force in policing directions pursuant to the Emergency Management Act 2005 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

In relation to the additional questions, the WA Police Force has provided the following response:

In 2020-21, how many times were police officers required to work in their capacity as a coroner's investigator?

As the Committee points out, section 14(2) of the *Coroners Act 1996* provides every member of the WA Police Force is contemporaneously a Coroner's investigator. There is no centralised recording on how many times police officers were required to work in their capacity as a Coroner's investigator.

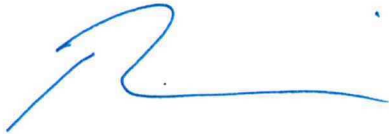
For example, in the metropolitan area the Coronial Investigation Squad handle an average of approximately 2,500 to 2,600 deaths each year between the financial years 2016-17 and 2021-22 (to date). For each death, between two and five police officers may be involved from the initial response through to the investigation and reporting to the Coroner.

Was 2020-21 a typical year from this perspective?

The financial year 2020-21 would be a typical year from that perspective.

I trust this clarifies the position the WA Police Force.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'P. Papalia', with a stylized initial 'P' and a long horizontal stroke.

**HON PAUL PAPALIA CSC MLA
MINISTER FOR POLICE**

3 JUN 2022