



## COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND JUSTICE STANDING COMMITTEE

# MEDIA RELEASE

**From:** Ms M.M. Quirk, MLA  
Chair

**To:** ALL MEDIA

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## WA Police needs better evaluation practices

THE Committee's latest inquiry report has found that there is room for improvement in the way WA Police measures its performance in relation to recruitment, training, misconduct and employment-acquired medical issues.

More data collection and analysis would enable WA Police to conduct a better assessment of what works and what doesn't work. At present there is limited data and research available to make meaningful evaluations.

Better evaluation of recruitment practices would hopefully highlight to WA Police that initiatives aimed at increasing Indigenous representation are having little impact.

WA Police should also measure the impact of campaigns to increase the ethnic diversity of the service. At present outreach to these communities is piecemeal, which means that suitable candidates are not being encouraged to apply. Having a police service that looks like the community it is policing is the best way to build trust and cooperation.

In terms of training, the Committee heard that WA Police increasingly uses a computer-based program called Blackboard to deliver courses that would ideally be delivered in person. There has been no evaluation of the effectiveness of this method of delivery.

Training courses were also often over-subscribed and inadequately resourced. Officers were also denied requests to attend training because it would remove them from the frontline, but ironically failing to complete the training could also result in them being insufficiently qualified for frontline duties.

In terms of management of misconduct, officers were most concerned about the lack of natural justice delivered by the current model for dealing with misconduct. They were also concerned that detectives were being over-burdened by internal investigations.

The Committee understands that WA Police is aware of the issues with the misconduct system and is conducting a review.

The most concerning area of management that the Committee investigated was the management of officers with post-traumatic stress disorder.

The Committee received some disturbing accounts of poor treatment of officers who had been diagnosed with psychological conditions, including lack of recognition of their illness and bullying and harassment by some supervisors. There is clearly still a need for cultural change within the service in regard to attitudes to psychological illness.

WA is the only state which does not have a compensation scheme for medically retired officers. WA Police accepts that this needs to be rectified and is hoping to negotiate a scheme that will not involve police sacrificing leave provisions.

In addition, police officers who have been removed from duty for medical reasons need to have their years of service recognised. Former officers report feeling they have been discarded and abandoned.

WA Police also needs to ensure that it has IT systems in place that are capable of tracking the incidence of post-traumatic stress disorder, in order to properly monitor the health of its staff.

The Committee made 36 findings and 13 recommendations in the report, which was the third and final in a series related to the over-arching *Inquiry into Methods of Evaluating WA Police Performance*, announced in November 2014.

The Committee identified three recurring themes which were applicable to all three focus areas of the Inquiry: limited measurement and indicators which could be used to evaluate the success of strategies and current practice; a reactive rather than proactive approach to policing; lack of resources.

It also identified an over-reliance on crime statistics to measure performance, which was evident in the amendments made by the Police Commissioner to the *Frontline 2020* operational strategy following a spike in crime.

*Copies of the report are available on the Committee's website under 'Reports' at [www.parliament.wa.gov.au/cdjsc](http://www.parliament.wa.gov.au/cdjsc)*

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