



WESTERN AUSTRALIA POLICE FORCE

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Hon Matthew Swinbourn MLC
Chair
Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs
Parliament House
4 Harvest Terrace
WEST PERTH WA 6005

Dear Mr Swinbourn

Petition No 89 — WA Police Officers

Thank you for your letter dated 21 November 2018 seeking comment in relation to the above petition.

Significant efforts are made to rehabilitate ill or injured police officers to enable them to return to work. However, due to the nature and requirements of policing, it is sometimes necessary to retire officers from service on medical grounds.

Concerns have been raised regarding the current mechanism for the Commissioner of Police to retire police officers on medical grounds. In particular, retired and serving officers and their representative organisations, including the Western Australian Police Union and the Medically Retired Police Officers Association, have raised the indignity of having their service end through the same process as is used for officers in whom the Commissioner has lost confidence.

Currently, the only option available to the Commissioner to retire an officer who is medically unfit, is through the Loss of Confidence or removal provisions, as set out under section 8 and Part IIB of the *Police Act 1892* (Police Act). These provisions expressly reference the member's integrity, honesty, competence, performance or conduct. As these provisions and associated processes are most closely identified with misconduct cases, there is a perception of impropriety when the same process is used to medically retire officers.

In 2015, to address these concerns, the now Premier, Hon Mark McGowan MLA, committed to amend the Police Act to insert a special section to detail a more dignified process whereby seriously injured or ill officers can leave the Western Australia Police Force.


The WA Police Force has conducted research into how other policing jurisdictions handle this issue. Amendments are currently being drafted in line with stakeholder expectations and in consultation with the Office of the Minister for Police.

The State Government considers addressing this issue to be a priority and has formally announced a Redress Scheme (the Scheme) for police officers who are medically retired due to a work-related illness or injury. An expert Assessment Panel has been appointed and a project team is currently working on the Scheme infrastructure.

The project team will advise eligible former members when the Scheme opens for applications. Interest by former members to submit a formal application prior to the opening of the Scheme will be included as a supplementary document and will be considered by the Assessment Panel.

It should be noted, former members may seek reimbursement for the cost of medical expenses through the current Police (Medical and Other Expenses for Former Officers) Scheme (the Police Scheme). The Police Scheme provides former police officers and Aboriginal Police Liaison Officers with support for medical expenses incurred on or after 1 July 2007, in relation to a work-related physical or psychological injury that occurred while serving with the WA Police Force. The Insurance Commission's RiskCover Division manages claims against the Police Scheme on behalf of the Commissioner of Police.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Chris Dawson', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

CHRIS DAWSON
COMMISSIONER OF POLICE

12 December 2018