

COMMUNITY SAFETY STATEMENT 2017



Aboriginal acknowledgement

The Victorian Government proudly acknowledges Victorian Aboriginal people as the first peoples and Traditional Owners and custodians of the land and water on which we rely.

We acknowledge and respect that Aboriginal communities are steeped in traditions and customs built on an incredibly disciplined social and cultural order. This social and cultural order has sustained up to 50,000 years of existence.

We acknowledge the ongoing leadership role of the Aboriginal community in addressing Aboriginal over-representation in the justice system and are joining with the Aboriginal community to drive better outcomes for Aboriginal Victorians, including through the Aboriginal Justice Agreement.

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MESSAGE FROM THE PREMIER AND THE MINISTER



All Victorians have the right to feel safe and be safe. In their homes, workplaces and businesses, on transport, in public and in their neighbourhoods, Victorians should be able to live free of violence, crime and the fear of crime. Reducing the harm the Victorian community experiences as a result of crime and improving community safety are key priorities of the Victorian Government. That is why the Government has developed this Community Safety Statement.

For the first time, the Victorian Government is setting out publicly the community safety outcomes we want to achieve, our priorities for Victoria Police and how Victoria Police will be resourced to deliver on those priorities. This document identifies five priority areas that reflect the areas the Government considers crucial to reducing the harm Victorians experience from crime and improving community safety.



The Government, Victoria Police and the Victorian community will not tolerate those who choose to break the law or make us feel unsafe. Our community is at its strongest and safest when we work together, respect each other, and are supported by a well-resourced, modern police force.

Victorians are rightfully concerned about a number of community safety issues. This includes the rising crime rate, public order issues, family violence, and serious youth offending, as well as the devastating impact of drugs such as 'ice', and the unacceptable rate of death and serious injury on our roads.

Home invasions, violent protests and assaults have no place in our community. It is unacceptable that some Victorians fear sleeping in their own homes, getting on public transport, or walking in their neighbourhoods at night. The escalating seriousness of crimes being committed by a small cohort of young, violent recidivist offenders, coupled with recent violent disturbances in youth justice centres, has also made some Victorians feel less safe.

The people who perpetrate these crimes must feel the consequences of their actions. We will ensure that victims are at the centre of our approach.

While *Ending Family Violence: Victoria's Plan for Change* sets a clear and ambitious path for creating a future in which everyone lives free from family violence, family violence remains the number one law and order issue in Victoria. In responding to the Royal Commission into Family Violence, the role of Victoria Police will be enhanced so family violence becomes a core part of police business.

Too many families and communities continue to struggle against the presence of ice, and too often police have to make that dreaded knock on someone's door as a result of speeding, drunk and drug driving and other behaviours that make our roads and communities less safe.

As the type and volume of crime in Victoria have escalated, so too must our response. It is time to draw a line in the sand. This Community Safety Statement is that line.

Investment in Victoria Police

The Government will ensure Victoria Police has the powers and resources it needs to reduce harm in the community and keep Victorians safe. Victoria Police has developed a sophisticated new Staff Allocation Model (SAM) to determine what police resources are needed across the state more accurately than ever before.

Using the SAM, Victoria Police has told us it needs 2729 new frontline resources to meet resourcing needs. The Government is delivering on that request in full. The Government is also committing to further developing the SAM so it can inform future police resourcing needs over the longer term.

This will move Victoria away from the historic 'boom/bust' cycle of investment in police resources that has seen police numbers fluctuate according to changing priorities, rather than ensuring sustainable growth over time.

As a whole, the comprehensive investment package will ensure Victoria Police is better able to work effectively with the community and other services to meet the law and order challenges facing Victoria.

In adopting this approach, the Government is building on the approaches taken by other leading jurisdictions, such as the *Statements of Intent* in New Zealand and the Mayor of London's approach to the development of its *Police and Crime Plan*. Progress will be regularly reported to the public annually, ensuring the highest level of accountability. Community consultation will be undertaken on how to implement the priorities in this Statement, and on the content of future Statements.

Victoria is the best state in Australia to live. We look forward to working with the Victorian community and the Chief Commissioner to implement the Community Safety Statement. We will deliver new police, new investment, new laws and a new approach. Together, we will turn around the crime rate, and create a safe and just Victoria.



The Hon Daniel Andrews MP
Premier of Victoria



The Hon Lisa Neville MP
Minister for Police

MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF COMMISSIONER OF POLICE



Victoria Police delivers services that make a difference to people's lives. Every day, police are working hard to keep people safe, help those who need assistance, prevent offences from occurring, and detecting and apprehending offenders.

However, policing is becoming increasingly complex as technology develops, patterns of offending change, and new challenges emerge in our security environment. Social and economic disadvantage, gender inequality, breakdown of family relationships, mental health, disengagement from education, drug and alcohol abuse, and childhood experiences of abuse and neglect, all serve as drivers for crime and challenge all government agencies as they respond. In this way, policing is one part of a much broader system across the whole of government that is working in partnership to address and prevent crime.

As such, I welcome the Victorian Government's commitment to community safety, and its investment in Victoria Police. This investment is intended to uplift many of the capabilities that Victoria Police has identified as needing enhancement. It will bolster our staffing, equipment and infrastructure, improve the skills of our people, give us a wider range of powers, and provide better access to technology to allow our policing response to better line up with what our community needs. It will also enable us to renew our focus on some key issues, including family violence, youth offending, road safety, and on the safety and wellbeing of our staff.

The platform for Victoria Police to deliver on this investment is the Victoria Police Capability Framework that I launched in October 2016. The Capability Framework offers a planned approach to allow the organisation to assess where we need to develop or mature our capabilities to meet the challenges and needs of the community. It is a roadmap to delivering on the Government's policy priorities set out in this Community Safety Statement, which align with our focus on reducing harm, working more closely with victims, and connecting with the community to ensure they are safe and they feel safe.

As Chief Commissioner, I take very seriously my responsibilities and independence under the *Victoria Police Act 2013* to implement the policing policy and priorities of the Government, while being responsible for the management and control of Victoria Police. I accept the priorities set out in this Statement and remain committed to ensuring Victoria continues to be a safe and secure place to live for everyone in our community.

Victoria Police has a long history of keeping the community safe. This investment helps police to maintain that tradition, further enhancing the capabilities of police who are on duty, 24-hours a day, every day of the year, serving the community and working to uphold the right.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Graham Ashton'. The signature is fluid and cursive, written in a professional style.

Graham Ashton AM
Chief Commissioner of Police



VISION, OUTCOMES AND PRIORITIES

To reach the Victorian Government's vision of a *safe and just Victoria*, this and future Community Safety Statements will be guided by a consistent set of outcomes – that is, the difference we want to make.

We know achieving that difference will require a whole of system response. From ensuring our children get the best start in life with high quality maternal and child health services and early years education and care, to making sure Victorians have the best education and employment opportunities and are supported by a strong health and social services system when they need it. Over time, the indicators the Government uses to track progress towards achieving these outcomes may change as we deepen our evidence base and develop a clearer picture of what matters. This Community Safety Statement sits alongside the broader outcomes work happening across government.

It is important to recognise that other government agencies and the broader justice and correctional system play a fundamental role in achieving community safety outcomes. The purpose of this Statement is to focus on the role of Victoria Police in contributing to the Government's broader community safety outcomes. It will hold Victoria Police to account for the investment it receives to deliver on the Government's priorities and keep the community safe.

The five priorities for the Victoria Government are:

1. Reducing harm.
2. Increasing connection to the community.
3. Putting victims first.
4. Holding offenders to account.
5. Improving Victoria Police capability, culture and technology.

The Statement also sets out:

- » The actions the Government and Victoria Police are taking in each priority area to contribute to the achievement of those outcomes.
- » The indicators the Government will use to track progress towards those outcomes in each priority area. These will be reported on annually and refined over time.

Having your say

Better understanding community safety needs and concerns is a critical part of shaping future priorities to make Victoria safer. The Government wants all Victorians to share their views on community safety to inform the implementation of the actions in this Statement as well as the development of future Community Safety Statements.

The Government will engage in consultation with the community throughout 2017 to help inform community safety policy, drive better engagement between communities and Victoria Police, and better understand your views, including your expectations and ideas about:

- » safety in local communities and on public transport.
- » ways of engaging with individuals and groups about community safety and crime prevention.
- » accessing information about crime, community safety and policing.
- » protecting vulnerable members of our community.

There will also be other, more targeted opportunities for Victorians to share their views face to face through local forums, including with Victoria Police and community leaders. For further details see 'Communities listened to and engaged' in *Priority 2: Increasing connection to the community*.

Victoria Police will also consult and engage with the community closely as it delivers on its contribution to the priorities and outcomes in this Statement.

These consultation processes will inform future Community Safety Statements and help shape future community safety priorities.

The table on the following page outlines the Government's vision, outcomes we want to achieve, priorities for Victoria Police, and the indicators that will be used to track progress.

THE DIFFERENCE THE GOVERNMENT WANTS TO MAKE

A safe and just Victoria

Priorities for Victoria Police

Reducing harm

Increasing connection to the community

Putting victims first

The difference we want to make

Victorians live free from crime and disorder

People are safe and feel safe in their homes, in public spaces, on public transport, in their workplaces and neighbourhoods.

Threats are identified and prevented

Police use their resources and available information to act swiftly to protect communities and respond to emerging issues.

Victorians trust that Victoria Police will keep them and their property safe

Police instil confidence in people about how their communities are policed.

Communities are listened to and involved

Police actively engage with Victorians to create safer, stronger communities.

Victoria Police has a highly visible presence in, and strong connection with, the community

Police ensure that people have confidence in them and that they will be able to access police services in the time and manner they need.

Victims and witnesses are supported

Police provide necessary protections to victims and witnesses and work with other agencies to keep them safe and link victims to the right support services.

Vulnerable children and young people are kept safe

Services work together to identify and act early including referral to appropriate support services.

Victoria's women and children live free from violence and abuse

Victoria's women and children are protected and live free from family violence.

Tracking progress

Enhanced public perceptions of safety.

Improved clearance rates for personal crime offences.

Reduction in repeat calls for attendance.

Reduction in harm on Victoria's roads including a decrease in total reported road traumas.

Increased identification and removal of high risk drivers from our roads.

Increased proportion of people who agree or strongly agree that 'police treat people fairly and equally'.

Improved community satisfaction with and confidence in police.

Increased number of frontline shifts.

Decrease in number of non-emergency calls for police made to Triple 000 (to commence in 2018).

Improved levels of victims' satisfaction with police service.

All family violence intervention order breaches will be acted on - consistent with *Ending Family Violence: Victoria's Plan for Change*.

Reduction in repeat victimisation.

<p>Holding offenders to account</p>	<p>Improving Victoria Police capability, culture and technology</p>
<p>Offenders understand the consequences of, and are held accountable for, their actions The community and those who choose to break the law, know there are consequences for criminal behaviour and these are applied by the courts.</p> <p>Serious offenders are monitored Police proactively monitor and manage the risks posed by serious offenders and Persons of Interest.</p> <p>Offenders change their behaviour Offenders work to change their behaviours, they are engaged and connected to relevant agencies.</p>	<p>Victoria has a modern police force that reflects the community The police workforce is diverse and non-discriminatory.</p> <p>Victoria’s police force has a culture of fairness and respect, is just, and calls out bad behaviour Victoria Police works to serve the needs of all Victorians equally.</p> <p>Victoria Police delivers evidence-based initiatives and interventions Police use evidence, data and technology to provide effective policing services and improve community safety.</p>
<p>Family violence recidivism will be eliminated – consistent with <i>Ending Family Violence: Victoria’s Plan for Change</i>.</p> <p>Reduction in youth recidivism.</p> <p>Reduction in offences by people on police bail.</p> <p>Increased use of legislative powers including those relating to asset confiscation, unlawful associations, unexplained wealth, and licensing.</p>	<p>Reduction in substantiated complaints against Victoria Police.</p> <p>Greater workforce diversity in gender, cultural background and disability.</p> <p>Increase in overall job satisfaction for the Victoria Police workforce.</p> <p>Increased detection of crime and recidivist offenders utilising technology.</p>

OVERVIEW

Five priorities for Victoria Police

To ensure the Chief Commissioner is able to deliver on the Government's priorities, the Government is investing more than \$2 billion to support Victoria Police across the five priority areas.

The five priorities will be delivered by Victoria Police in line with the Victoria Police Capability Plan 2016-2025, respecting the Chief Commissioner's operational independence under the *Victoria Police Act 2013*.

Five priorities for Victoria Police

1. Reducing harm
2. Increasing connection to the community
3. Putting victims first
4. Holding offenders to account
5. Improving Victoria Police capability, culture and technology

1. **Reducing harm** - Crime and other harmful behaviours must not be allowed to affect the way Victorians live their lives or their feelings of safety. Victoria Police will continue to target its efforts on preventing and detecting those crimes that cause the most harm and trauma in the community such as violent and sexual crime, family violence, terrorism, gang-related violence, public order and dangerous driving.

To support Victoria Police, the Government is:

- » Putting an additional 3135 police and 100 protective services officers on the frontline over the next five years.
- » Developing additional tools to measure crime and the harm it causes, so we can better target our response.

2. **Increasing connection to the community** – It is vital that the relationship between the community and Victoria Police is strong and enduring. Creating partnerships and engaging with the community is critical for preventing and disrupting crime, and makes for better communities and smarter policing.

So Victoria Police can deliver on this priority, the Government is:

- » Launching a Police Assistance Line and online reporting portal to ensure Victorians can contact police when and where they need so they receive an appropriate response.
- » Giving Victorians more opportunities than ever to engage with the Government and Victoria Police about the community safety issues that matter to them, including the implementation of this Statement and future Community Safety Statements.
- » Replacing more stations across the state. This includes stations at Alexandra, Altona North, Reservoir, Rutherglen, South Melbourne, Tangambalanga, Warracknabeal, Wedderburn, Wycheproof and Wyndham.
- » Recruiting 42 additional Youth Resource Officers to work in local communities and divert young people from a life of crime.

3. **Putting victims first** – Victims must be at the centre of our policing response. In the first instance, this means preventing crime from happening in the first place, listening to victims and treating them with sensitivity, dignity and respect. To achieve this, the Government will engage with victims to develop policy responses that meet their needs.

The Government is supporting Victoria Police to deliver on this priority by:

- » Establishing community safety networks across the state to prevent crime and victimisation before it occurs.
 - » Transforming the frontline response to family violence by recruiting 415 dedicated police officers, rolling out mobile devices and body-worn cameras, and establishing a Family Violence Centre of Learning.
4. **Holding offenders to account** – Holding offenders to account for their actions, particularly recidivist offenders, requires a whole justice system response including police, courts and corrections.

The Government is backing Victoria Police with the tools, powers and laws it needs to hold offenders to account and Victorians safe, including:

- » Backing Victoria Police with the powers and laws it needs to target offenders and reduce harm, such as targeting the manufacture and sale of illegal firearms and dangerous synthetic drugs, and streamlining DNA testing to solve serious and high volume crime.
- » Addressing youth crime to make sure serious young offenders face meaningful consequences.
- » Strengthening the management of serious sex and violent offenders, expanding Victoria Police's counter terrorism capability and delivering systemic reform to manage young violent offenders.
- » Banning the use of cash to pay for scrap metal to end the trade in stolen cars.
- » Investing in Automatic Number Plate Recognition technology for the Highway Patrol fleet, allowing police to detect unauthorised and dangerous drivers.

5. **Improving Victoria Police capability, culture and technology** – Just as Victoria Police keeps the community safe from harm, so too must we support police to be safe, with the right capability, culture and technology to do their jobs well.

To support Victoria Police to deliver on this priority, the Government is:

- » Providing new resources to support diversity in the workforce by enabling Victoria Police to backfill officers on parental leave and provide additional leadership capability.
- » Investing \$2 million to provide a comprehensive and integrated program of mental health literacy for Victoria Police staff. This will enable Victoria Police to build the foundations required to make future mental health initiatives effective.
- » A new operations facility for police Special Operations Group, Bomb Squad, and Critical Incident Responses Team.
- » Modernising and expanding the Victoria Police Air Wing by engaging three new helicopters and one fixed wing aircraft.

Our commitment to Victoria Police

- » 2729 new sworn police officers, including 415 specialist family violence officers to transform the way Victoria Police responds to family violence.
- » 100 new Protective Services Officers to boost mobile patrols and safety at train stations and transport hubs.
- » New measures to better understand the harm crime causes the community.
- » A new 24-hour Police Assistance Line and an online reporting portal to ensure Victorians can access Victoria Police when and how they need.
- » 4 new Aboriginal Community Liaison Officers to expand positive engagement with Aboriginal Victorians.
- » Replacing 10 police stations across the State.
- » 42 new youth specialist officers to support a renewed youth engagement framework.
- » 12 community safety networks to actively engage with the police to create safer, stronger communities.
- » New powers and laws to target recidivist offenders and those crimes that do the most harm.
- » \$32 million to reform the youth justice system.
- » \$43.8 million to roll out Automatic Number Plate Recognition technology across the highway patrol fleet.
- » Streamlined DNA testing for Victoria Police, with new powers and additional resources.
- » Banning cash for scrap metal to end the trade in stolen cars.
- » \$2 million to improve mental health literacy within Victoria Police.
- » \$27.4 million for a new dedicated training facility for specialist and critical incident police.
- » \$63.2 million for a new Air Wing, including three new helicopters and a fixed wing plane.

Improving community safety

Recent incidents of high-profile and violent crime have created community concern about how the Government and Victoria Police are working to reduce the lasting, and sometimes devastating, impact of crime. This Community Safety Statement sets out the actions the Government and Victoria Police are taking to address these concerns.

How safe we *feel* and how safe we actually *are*, are two different but important ways of thinking about crime and community safety. We know that personal experiences of crime, high-profile incidences of violent crime, terrorist threats, road trauma, and an increasing crime rate can make our communities feel less safe.

While a majority of Victorians have reported that they feel safe in their homes and within their neighbourhoods, fewer people feel safe on public transport at night. That is why having a visible police and PSO presence in the community is important for improving feelings of safety as well as preventing and detecting crime.

When we think about Victoria Police it can be easy to simply think about police catching criminals. Whilst detecting crime is a critical part of Victoria Police's mission, the work of keeping the community safe is a much broader endeavour. Preventing and disrupting crime before it happens is a central part of the work of Victoria Police. This includes initiatives aimed at improving road safety, counter terrorism activity, disrupting serious and organised crime including outlaw motorcycle gangs, monitoring convicted offenders in the community, and keeping order at major events.

It also encompasses working with local community groups and building partnerships with and between communities, business and government services. Victoria Police recognises that traditional models of policing need to evolve with the changing and complex patterns of crime and criminal behaviour we see today.

Changes in the operating environment

Changes in the operating environment require Victoria Police to be more dynamic, agile and able to tackle emerging policing challenges than ever before.

Increased reporting of family violence, the heightened threat of terrorism and risk of radicalisation, a small but concerning rise in public order issues such as violent protests, all place additional demands on Victoria Police. Community expectations about engaging with Victoria Police are also changing, with more people seeking new, contemporary ways of communicating with police.

The work of police has also grown more complex, with Victoria Police being asked to do more than ever. Police officers are expected to do much more than uphold the law, they must be able to exercise discretion, make high-pressure decisions, engage with the traumatised and distressed, face threats, and connect people into services - often all in the same day.

Recent reports such as the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission's *Independent Review into Sex Discrimination and Sexual Harassment, including Predatory Behaviour, in Victoria Police* (VEOHRC Report) and the Victoria Police Mental Health Review, illustrate some of the challenges facing police today and highlight further areas where a growth of capability is required.

For these reasons, in October 2016 the Chief Commissioner launched the first Victoria Police Capability Plan. The Capability Plan will ensure the Victoria Police has the right capability to keep Victorians safe and secure in the years to come.

The Capability Plan identifies the different capabilities Victoria Police needs to deliver responsive, agile, connected and people-focussed police services in our community. It gives a structured way to identify capabilities that need to be matured and target effort accordingly.

The success of Victoria Police relies on the skills of its people, and equipping them with appropriate equipment and technology to meet current and future challenges. The Capability Plan offers a measured, systematic approach to achieve this.

Forecasting resourcing needs

Ending the boom/bust cycle of investment in police resources is essential to enabling Victoria Police to provide a consistent and sustained level of service across the State, and to appropriately plan for and manage its workforce. A more strategic approach to resource investment and allocation will ensure Victoria Police can continue to plan for and recruit high quality candidates and deliver the right people in the right place at the right time.

To achieve this, Victoria Police has developed an innovative Staff Allocation Model in conjunction with experts in modelling and resource allocation, and in consultation with the Police Association of Victoria.

The SAM uses demand factors such as baseline staffing requirements, recorded crime, calls for police assistance and the amount of time it takes to respond to different types of crime to determine a State-wide frontline resourcing benchmark.

The SAM also has capacity to forecast frontline resourcing needs based on factors including population growth and the historic crime rate.

Using the SAM, Victoria Police has told us it needs 2729 new frontline resources to meet current and forecasted demand over the next four years and bring all Victoria Police Divisions up to the resourcing benchmark. The Government is delivering on that request in full.

Importantly, the Government is also committing to the SAM over the longer term to determine future police resourcing needs.

The crime rate

Victorians are concerned about the rising crime rate. The crime rate, that is the number of recorded offences per 100,000 Victorians, has been on an upward trend since 2011 and increased 11.2 per cent in the 12 months to 30 June 2016.

In 2014, the Victorian Ombudsman noted that increased police numbers are “likely to be a significant contributor [to the rising crime rate], as more police generally means more reported crime”. The Government recognises that the substantial investment in new frontline police and other initiatives outlined in the Statement will ensure Victoria Police is able to more effectively respond to crime in the community, and detect crime that would otherwise go unreported, leading to a rise in the crime rate.

Over time however, these and the system-wide reforms described in this statement will work together to turn the crime rate around.

For example, the roll out of Automatic Number Plate Recognition technology will enhance Victoria Police’s ability to detect crime (likely raising the crime rate), but more importantly, it will remove dangerous unauthorised drivers from our roads – significantly reducing potential harm to the community.

Similarly, just as more police are able to detect more crime, improved police visibility and an increase in frontline shifts and patrols will equally help to deter criminal and harmful behaviour, preventing crime from happening in the first place. This significant investment in resources will also allow Victoria Police to be more active in and engaged with communities in local crime prevention partnerships.

Providing Victoria Police with the technology to do their jobs effectively and efficiently, the Police Assistance Line, online reporting, mobile devices and body worn cameras will also free up resources to focus on crime prevention and disruption.

A rising crime rate

Recent statistics show that much of the increase in the crime rate is a result of an increase in high volume crime, such as theft and breach of bail conditions.

Changes to legislation and policy also affect the crime rate. For example, justice procedure offences, including failing to stop for police, rose sharply in the year to June 2016 due to recording requirements under the changed pursuit policy.

Further, breach of order offences rose by 12.2 per cent over the year to June 2016, in a large part because of amendments to family violence legislation resulting in the creation of new offences.

The average male prisoner

- » 35.5 years old
- » Born in Australia
- » Did not complete high school
- » A history of alcohol and drug abuse
- » Single and unemployed at the time he entered prison system
- » Sentence of three years in a medium security prison
- » More likely than not to have been imprisoned previously.

Services working together

The causes of crime are well known and services must work together to address them.

Recent studies in Victoria have shown 63 per cent of children and young people in youth justice had been a victim of trauma, abuse or neglect. There is a large body of evidence showing that disengagement with education, employment and the community is associated with an increased risk that young people will engage in criminal conduct. Our systems must do more for vulnerable children to provide them with positive pathways and address the causes of crime.

A 2015 report from the Victorian Ombudsman found that the average male prisoner in Victoria did not complete high school, had a history of alcohol and drug abuse and was unemployed at the time he entered the prison system. The Ombudsman also found that 40 per cent of the Victorian prison population (male and female) has been assessed as having a mental health condition, ranging from psychotic disorders to depression and anxiety.

While the focus of this Community Safety Statement is on the critical role Victoria Police plays in contributing to community safety by preventing, disrupting and detecting crime, the Government recognises that Victoria Police cannot do it alone.

Addressing the underlying causes of crime requires a sustained whole of system, whole of community response.

We need our education, health, justice, children and family services, housing and other social services to work together in a holistic way so they are aligned, integrated and achieve a stronger, safer community. This is why, to ensure the whole system is working towards improving community safety:

- » the Victorian Secretaries Board will report to the Premier annually on whole of government progress towards improved community safety, and
- » other Victorian Government outcome frameworks will capture how other parts of Government contribute to improving community safety.

The reform agenda

The Government is taking action in a number of key areas that will contribute to the achievement of our long-term community safety outcomes. Together these reforms will result in more resilient individuals, a more inclusive community, greater opportunities for Victorians to reach their full potential and lead positive lives. At the same time we will make sure that offenders who cause harm are punished and held to account - this is critical in reducing crime and improving community safety.

Key causes of crime and harm will be addressed through the *Roadmap for Reform* and *Education State reform* agendas. An unsafe and unstable home is a critical risk factor for young people entering the criminal justice system and the *Roadmap for Reform* will ensure all Victorian families are as safe as possible and vulnerable families and children are fully supported. Young people will be provided with access to educational opportunities that reduce the long term impact of disadvantage, and provide important economic and social protection factors from potential criminal behaviour.

Access to high quality vocational training in particular has been linked to a reduction in crime (see breakout box). The Government is ensuring that Victorians of all ages have access to high quality vocational training, having invested \$436 million to date in our TAFEs. This investment will ensure Victorians have the opportunity to gain skilled employment, reducing the risk of them turning to crime.

Ending Family Violence: Victoria's Plan for Change outlines how the Government will build a future where all Victorians live free from family violence. This reform agenda commits the Government to a decade long program of action and investment that will transform Victoria's social service and justice system to keep women and children safe from harm. Victoria's first ever *Gender Equality Strategy* will also increase women's safety, security and wellbeing by encouraging a society based on respect.

Providing an appropriate response to Victorians with mental illness is a key focus and challenge for Victoria Police. Victoria's 10-year mental health plan sets an ambitious, long-term vision for mental health and wellbeing. It will guide investment and drive better outcomes for Victorians.

The over representation of Aboriginal people in the adult and youth justice systems is linked to a long history of wrongful treatment and trauma. While Victoria has one of the lowest rates of Aboriginal imprisonment and supervision by community corrections in Australia, more can be done to close the gap in justice outcomes.

The Government has commenced conversations with Aboriginal Victorians about self-determination and Treaty. These discussions seek to empower Aboriginal people to make decisions on matters that affect their communities and will underpin and inform the next stage of a range of Aboriginal strategies including the next Aboriginal Justice Agreement.

An overview of the Government's reforms which will contribute to improved community safety outcomes is set out at Appendix A.

Education and crime

A 2016 study from the University of Melbourne looked at how Vocational Education and Training (VET) participation may impact on the crime rate.

By comparing Victoria and NSW, the study estimates that the 75 per cent increase in the number of students participating in VET in Victoria between 2010 and 2013 is associated with a reduction in the projected crime rate across the same period of:

- » 4.5 per cent for crimes against the person
- » 11.3 per cent for property crime, and
- » 12.8 per cent for drug crimes.

The study found these positive effects were greatest among people aged 26 to 44, and among women.

Young people

The Government's reform agenda is about making sure that Victoria's children and young people get the best start in life. We know that investing in services that support children and young people is the single best investment the Government can make to improve community safety.

Preventing people from starting down the path of crime is crucial to ensuring the safety of our communities. That means addressing the root causes of crime, such as family violence and mental health, to enable a meaningful pathway to education and employment, and a commitment to diversion programs such as the Youth Support Service and Koori Youth Justice Programs.

While Victoria has its lowest youth crime rate in five years, those young people that are committing crimes are doing so with more frequency and severity than Victoria has experienced in recent years. The harm resulting from the types of serious violent crimes being committed by young offenders is profound and must be addressed as a priority.

The Government is taking action to respond to the unacceptable increase in young recidivist offenders committing serious violent crimes, including longer maximum sentences in the Children's Court and stronger and more intensive measures to supervise and monitor young people in the community. Further responses to dealing with youth offenders are set out at *Priority 4: Holding offenders to account*.

Counting crime and quantifying harm

In order to appropriately respond to crime in Victoria, the Government, Victoria Police and the community need to have a greater understanding of the crime that is occurring and what harmful behaviour we should be targeting.

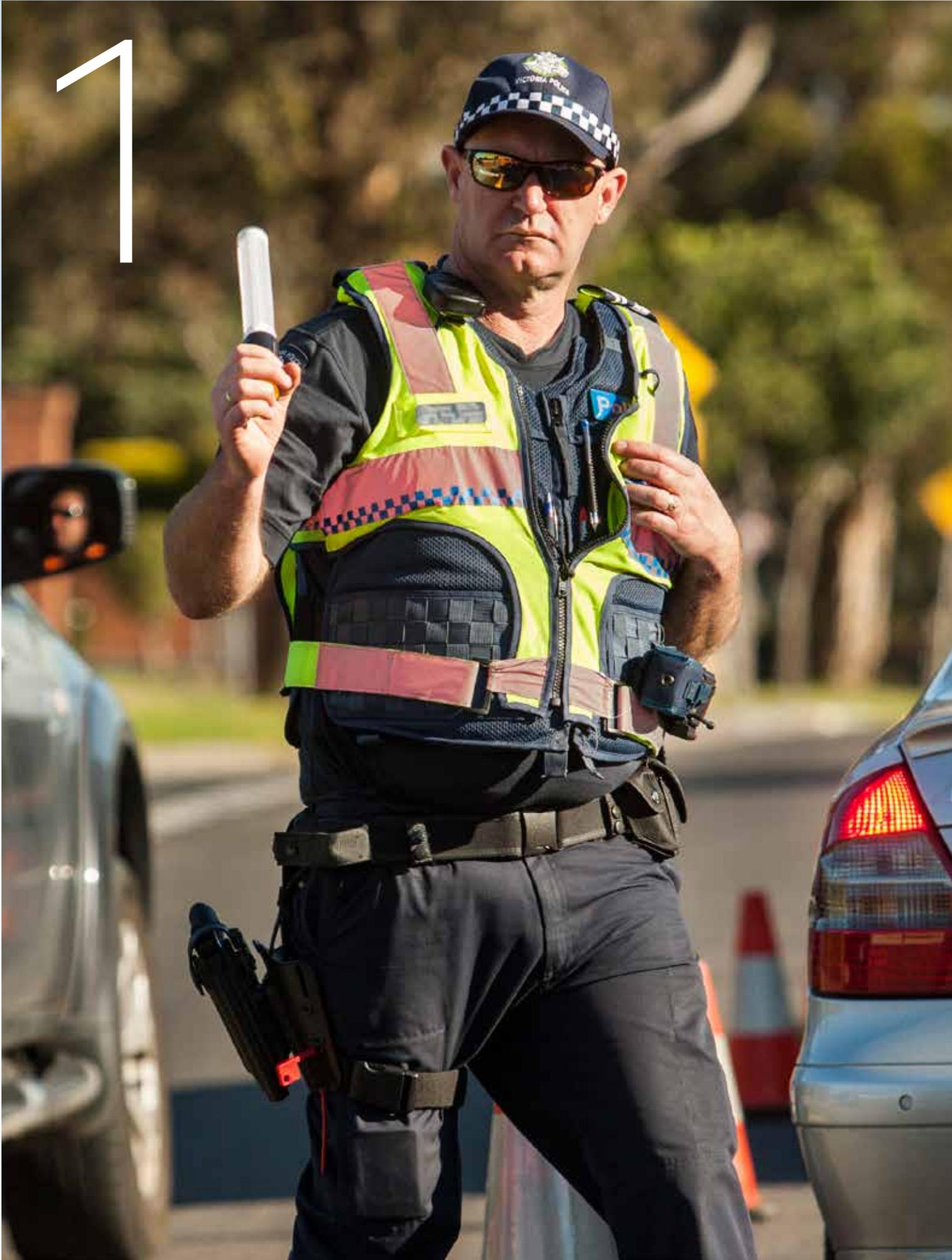
As part of *Priority 1: Reducing harm*, the Government will build on existing ways of counting crime to provide additional ways of understanding crime experienced in Victoria and the harm it causes. These will complement existing crime statistics and consultation with the community by Victoria Police. The Victorian Crime Statistics Agency is developing:

- » a measure of recorded criminal incidents (e.g. a single crime event) to add to the existing counts of offences (the many offences that make up that event), and
- » a measure of the seriousness or harm caused by crime, as a way of determining the severity of crime.

These additional ways of measuring crime are discussed further in *Priority 1: Reducing harm*.



1





Priority 1:

REDUCING HARM

The harm associated with crime can be experienced in many ways. It can range from inconvenience and economic loss, to physical and psychological injury and distress, to trauma and grief. Harm can be experienced directly, by victims of crime and their families. It can also be experienced indirectly by creating fear and decreasing feelings of safety and trust within the community.

Community safety is about more than just crime. For example, we all recognise the devastating impact that road trauma and the road toll has on Victorian families. While some road incidents and trauma are related to criminal behaviour, others are simply tragic mistakes. What is clear is that the impact on victims and their families is the same.

That is why the full breadth of activities undertaken by Victoria Police contributes to improving community safety, from roadside alcohol and drug testing, to monitoring Persons of Interest, patrols, undertaking counter terrorism exercises, and maintaining public order.

We know, for example, that too many families and communities are struggling to deal with the effects of destructive drugs like ice. Violence, paranoia and deception are common behaviours that families cope with when someone is using ice. The Government's Ice Action Plan, released in 2015, sets out a comprehensive approach to reducing the level of harm Ice is causing the community.

Keeping people safe from harm is the Government's first priority for Victoria Police.

What does harm look like?

Given the various ways harm can manifest, and the many different elements that influence community safety other than crime, understanding harm to the community can be difficult. Harm arising from criminal acts can involve a direct impact on an individual, impacts on families and communities, as well as system and opportunity costs in responding to harm.

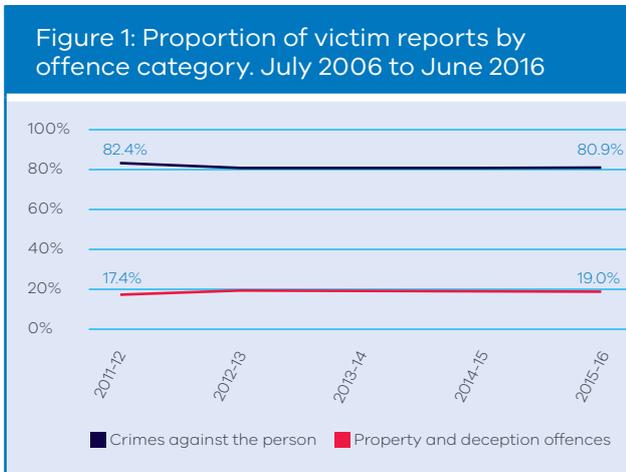
At its simplest and most direct, information about people who have experienced a criminal event could provide an indication of the impact of crime caused in our community. In Victoria's recorded crime data, for example, we have measures of the number of people who have had a victim report recorded by Victoria Police and the type of criminal acts they have experienced.

The Victorian Crime Statistics Agency uses 'unique victim' counts to produce a victimisation rate for Victoria. Victim reports are created when an individual, business or organisation reports that they have been a victim of one or more criminal offences to Victoria Police. The person victimisation rate is the number of victim reports by people (as opposed to businesses or other entities) per 100,000 population.

In the five years to 30 June 2016, the person victimisation rate rose by 4.8 per cent to 3,341.3 reports per 100,000 (from 3,187.5 in the year ending 30 June 2011).

Given these data include only crime that comes to the attention of police, they are likely to underestimate the overall level of victimisation in the community. They also do not tell us much about how much harm is experienced by Victorians as a result of crimes occurring within our state.

Figure 1 shows that the vast majority of victim reports (including businesses and other entities) relate to property offences such as theft and criminal damage and that this has remained steady over time. Police should be giving priority to targeting the crimes that cause the greatest amount of harm to Victorians. With a more nuanced measurement of harm, we can target our law enforcement and crime prevention actions to have the greatest impact on making Victoria safer.



The difference the Government wants to make

Every part of the justice and social service system must work together to deliver long-term improvements in community safety. The outcomes the Government wants to achieve by investing in Victoria Police are:

- » **Victorians live free from crime and disorder** – People are safe and feel safe in their homes, in public spaces, on public transport, in their workplaces and neighbourhoods.
- » **Threats are identified and prevented** – Police use their resources and available information to act swiftly to protect communities and respond to emerging issues.

A safe and just Victoria

Priority for Victoria Police

Reducing harm

The difference we want to make

Victorians live free from crime and disorder

People are safe and feel safe in their homes, in public spaces, on public transport, in their workplaces and neighbourhoods.

Threats are identified and prevented

Police use their resources and available information to act swiftly to protect communities and respond to emerging issues.

Tracking progress

Enhanced public perceptions of safety.

Improved clearance rates for personal crime offences.

Reduction in repeat calls for attendance.

Reduction in harm on Victoria's roads including a decrease in total reported road traumas.

Increased identification and removal of high risk drivers from our roads.

What the Government is doing

Giving police the frontline resources they need

The Government is making a record investment to ensure that Victoria Police has the resources it needs to keep Victorians safe. Using the evidence-based SAM to determine frontline demand, this historic investment of 2729 new police over the next four years will mean more officers on the frontline to keep our streets and suburbs safe and to respond to critical issues such as family violence, public order, and youth offending. It will also improve Victoria Police capability and organisational culture.

This investment builds on the 1156 police personnel already funded by this Government over the past two years, which includes:

- » 530 sworn frontline and specialist officers to respond to local crime issues, gang-related and gun crime, terrorist threats and demand for police in growth areas
- » 400 Police Custody Officers (PCOs) to free up sworn officers so they can get back on the streets and engage with local communities
- » 109 Protective Services Officers (PSOs) to keep our transport network safe, and
- » 117 specialist staff including intelligence analysts and forensic officers.

The Government has also introduced new offences to target harmful crimes such as the manufacture and sale of dangerous synthetic drugs (these are set out at *Priority 4: Holding offenders to account*).

Making our public transport system safer

The Government is investing \$62.3 million to recruit an additional 100 PSOs to boost Victoria Police's ability to flexibly meet the community safety needs of commuters on the rail network.

PSOs play a critical role in keeping commuters safe at train stations at night. Evidence shows commuters feel safer knowing PSOs are patrolling the platforms. Complementing the regular presence of PSOs at train stations at night, transit police undertake proactive work to detect crime and investigate offending across the whole transport network at all times of the day.

Recently the Government commissioned former South Australian Police Commissioner Malcolm Hyde to review transport security. The Hyde Review suggested that combining mobile patrols by both police and PSOs alongside a fixed PSO presence at train stations would deliver improved community safety outcomes on public transport.

The Government will maintain the PSO security arrangements on the public transport network that Victorians have come to rely on. The Government is determined to build on this model and improve safety on public transport through implementation of an integrated transport security model for the public transport network. The additional investment in PSOs in this Statement will allow for mobile PSO teams with greater flexibility to tackle hotspots across the public transport network, as well as boost capacity at train stations and other public transport hubs during busy times such as major events. These mobile patrols will be determined based on Victoria Police's intelligence about the time, location and types of crime and anti-social behaviour across the network.

This will deliver a coordinated, strategic transport security response through capable and flexible PSO and police deployment.

Additional ways to measure crime and the harm from crime

The Government is enhancing its picture of crime by introducing two additional ways of counting crime and the harm it causes. This will also increase accountability for its investment in Victoria Police, and in other important services that contribute to community safety such as education and training.

Victoria's crime statistics already provide us with a suite of ways to understand the crime occurring in Victoria, including victim reports, offender incidents and overall offence counts. However, when we refer to crime statistics most people usually mean 'offence counts' that is, the number of offences recorded by police.

This measure provides an important picture of police activity, and can be useful for understanding how crime is trending over time. However, it counts all crime equally, regardless of severity. For example, in our total crime figures, one offence of murder is counted as one, and one offence of minor theft is also counted as one, even though their impact on victims and the community may be very different.

To enhance the understanding of crime in Victoria, the Government has commissioned the Victorian Crime Statistics Agency to develop the following additional measures:

- » **Incident reporting** – Published quarterly, this method will provide a picture of each recorded *incident of crime*, to complement the existing count of each offence which makes up that incident. This approach will provide the community with a clearer view of the criminal events being experienced by Victorians and will be established by September 2017.
- » **A measure of harm** – A sophisticated measure of the *severity of crime and the harm it causes*. Several jurisdictions including Canada, New Zealand and some local areas in the UK have adopted similar approaches, which are based on the idea that while all crimes remain criminal acts, the harm they cause victims can vary, and therefore statistical measures should reflect these differences in seriousness. It is anticipated that this additional measure will be developed by end of 2017 and reported against annually.

Consultation with the community about what matters to them and their safety priorities will complement these measures.

What Victoria Police is doing

In order to reduce crime, and the social and economic harm from crime, Victoria Police will have a particular focus on:

1. More **effectively planning police resources** through the new SAM. This model will enable Victoria Police to more accurately identify its future resourcing needs and enable Government to make better decisions about those resources now and in the future.
2. Having a **proactive and local approach to policing** by maintaining a commitment to highly visible police in the regions, increasing frontline shifts and being engaged in the community.
3. **Maintaining public order** through a visible and active presence in the community including through more marked vehicle patrols, the introduction of greater response capacity, new tactical equipment and specialised training.
4. Ensuring that Victoria is appropriately prepared for the risk posed by **terrorism**, through identifying and responding to emerging threats and focusing on community engagement and **countering violent extremism** activities.
5. Continuing to **keep our roads safe** by implementing *Towards Zero, Victoria's Road Safety and Strategy Action Plan 2016-2020*, including operations targeting speeding, drug and drunk driving, and high-risk drivers.

How will we track progress?

Key Indicators	Source
Enhanced public perceptions of safety.	National Survey of Community Satisfaction with police and additional data
Improved clearance rates for personal crime offences.	Victoria Police
Reduction in repeat calls for attendance.	Victoria Police
Reduction in harm on Victoria's roads including a decrease in total reported road traumas.	Victoria Police
Increased identification and removal of high risk drivers from our roads.	Victoria Police

2



Priority 2:

INCREASING CONNECTION TO THE COMMUNITY

Visible and active policing

The Government and Victoria Police recognise that Victorians expect their police force to be visible, responsive, accessible and have a strong local presence. Getting the service mix right can be hard, but the expectations of the community are clear: if you need help, you want to know you are going to get it.

Having and seeing police on the streets is an important factor in improving feelings of safety and in improving partnerships between police, communities and other agencies. A visible presence also reminds people to do the right thing and not take risks or actions that may harm others. Road safety operations, including highway patrol vehicles, speeding blitzes and road side drug and alcohol testing, are clear examples of how a visible presence can influence behaviour change and prevent crime and harm before they happen.

The unprecedented investments we are making will allow police to deliver the response communities expect. Key priorities for the Government include ensuring 24-hour police stations are active 24-hours a day, that counter services are maintained, greater visibility of police in the community, and that rural and regional Victorians have a visible and local police presence. This includes single-person rural stations, which we know are valued by their communities.

The Government recognises the operational independence of the Chief Commissioner when it comes to the deployment of police. Victoria Police must also continue to engage closely with communities on decisions about local police services, activities and issues. Decisions about these matters should be informed by detailed analysis, evidence and consultation with the community about what will improve safety. Connection to community is a key feature of the Victoria police Capability Plan and strong community engagement to address public safety concerns will remain important.

The Government's investment will also help ensure that Victoria Police's ability to connect with rural and regional communities is not unduly constrained by resourcing pressures.

Partnerships with the community

Creating partnerships and engaging with the community is a core function of Victoria Police. It is critical for preventing and disrupting crime, and makes for better communities and smarter policing.

Victorians already have high levels of satisfaction with police (78 per cent of the community reported they were satisfied with policing services in 2014-15). This is a strong foundation on which Victoria Police can build to ensure that every Victorian feels safe and confident in approaching and dealing with Victoria Police. We understand that as the community grows and changes, Victoria Police must remain attuned to the needs of many diverse groups, some of which have stronger existing connections with Victoria Police than others.

Preventing crime requires a multi-faceted approach that recognises the impact of poverty and inequity in relation to education, healthcare and access to employment. Partnerships with other sectors and agencies, community groups, businesses and industry provide Victoria Police an opportunity to explore different kinds of innovative and modern policing approaches. They also enable police to improve their relationship with the community, and to share their community safety expertise.

Technology also presents an opportunity to engage with, and be more accessible to, the community. Social media and other internet-based interactive platforms provide avenues to promote positive relationships with the community and to share information to support community safety.

The difference the Government wants to make

A focus on Victoria Police's connection to the community will contribute to long-term achievement of the following outcomes:

- » **Victorians trust that Victoria Police will keep them and their property safe** – Police instil confidence in people about how their communities are policed.
- » **Communities are listened to and involved** – Police actively engage with Victorians to create safer, stronger communities.
- » **Victoria Police has a highly visible presence in, and strong connection with, the community** – Police ensure that people have confidence in them and that they will be able to access police services in the time and manner they need.

A safe and just Victoria

Priority for Victoria Police

Increasing connection to the community

The difference we want to make

Victorians trust that Victoria Police will keep them and their property safe

Police instil confidence in people about how their communities are policed.

Communities are listened to and involved

Police actively engage with Victorians to create safer, stronger communities.

Victoria Police has a highly visible presence in, and strong connection with, the community

Police ensure that people have confidence in them and that they will be able to access police services in the time and manner they need.

Tracking progress

Increased proportion of people who agree or strongly agree that 'police treat people fairly and equally'.

Improved community satisfaction with and confidence in police.

Increased number of frontline shifts.

Decrease in number of non-emergency calls for police made to Triple 000 (to commence in 2018).

What the Government is doing

Responsive and connected

The Government and Victoria Police are committed to ensuring that communities get the help they need, around the clock. This means that, consistent with community expectations:

- » 24-hour police stations will be open all hours.
- » A new 24-hour non-emergency Police Assistance Line will be established to enable people to contact Victoria Police in non-emergency situations, such as reporting a crime or suspected criminal activity, and make general enquiries.
- » An online police reporting portal will be created for reporting crime and obtaining information and other assistance.

Proactive engagement with young people

Kopkoda is an initiative delivered by Victoria Police, in partnership with corporate partners and the Victorian Government. It gives young people from different backgrounds and life stories the opportunity to engage with police and their peers in a challenging yet uniquely Australian context.

The young people who participate in Kopkoda train with police and each other, learn from each other, and share with each other the special experience of walking the Kokoda Track. The experience builds relationships between and among young people and police. In 2016 young people from diverse cultural backgrounds participated in the program.

Future Kopkoda programs will continue to engage with these cohorts of young people, but also work to identify young people who are at risk of entering the criminal justice system and who would benefit from this life-changing experience.

Communities listened to and involved

In addition to state-wide consultation on this Statement to be undertaken in 2017, the Government is supporting communities with targeted consultations to actively engage with Victoria Police to create safer, stronger communities by:

- » Supporting local initiatives where police and local people can discuss local crime and community safety issues and provide information about existing and planned community safety activities.
- » Supporting new or existing local community safety groups with funding for crime prevention activities with progressive roll out across Victoria.
- » Supporting locally based crime prevention campaigns to share information between police and the community on local issues. This will include additional funding for Neighbourhood Watch and targeted campaigns in local areas by Crime Stoppers.
- » Four new Aboriginal Community Liaison Officers to increase the capacity of regions to engage in a proactive community policing approach to respond to Aboriginal policing issues. These officers will expand existing resources from nine to 13.

Local presence

Police stations are important centres in communities, small and large, throughout Victoria. Having a variety of services that match the needs of the community is essential to effective and efficient policing.

While Victoria Police classifies police stations as either 24-hour or non-24-hour stations to reflect the shifts staffed at a station, the Government recognises that it is police officers, not stations, that provide these services and that they are typically carried out in the community through proactive campaigns, patrols or responding to calls. Ensuring that every person in Victoria receives a 24-hour police service no matter where they live is therefore essential. In recent times Victoria Police has taken steps to free up as many police officers as possible to provide a visible and responsive local presence, including adjusting counter hours to reflect demand and cluster rostering of neighbouring police stations.

Using Victoria Police's SAM, the Government is providing 2729 new police to enable all Victoria Police divisions to meet demand, maintain counter services and provide greater visibility of police in the community.

The SAM allows Victoria Police to identify where the need for police service is greatest and the Government's investment responds to that need. Having more police on the streets and on the roads will improve community safety, providing an active presence to deter, detect and respond to crime and reduce harm in the community.

The Government is also replacing 10 stations across the State. This includes stations in Alexandra, Altona North, Reservoir, Rutherglen, South Melbourne, Tangambalanga, Warracknabeal, Wedderburn, Wycheproof and Wyndham.

This builds on the Government's previous investment in ensuring police have appropriate local facilities by building, replacing and upgrading local police stations around the state including:

- » A new station at Mernda, and replacing stations at Bright, Colac, Corryong, Cowes, Mallacoota, Murtoa, and Warburton
- » Refurbishing stations at Bacchus Marsh, Bairnsdale, Benalla, Churchill, Cobden, Geelong, Lakes Entrance, Maffra, Moe, Mount Buller, Portland, Rosebud, Sorrento, Warragul and Warrnambool, and
- » Replacing and refurbishing a further 10 police residences across Victoria.

Engagement with young people

Research has shown that 88.7 per cent of young people 10 to 17 years old that come to the attention of police and the youth justice system in Victoria have only low-level contact and are able to mature out of crime through addressing the causes of their behaviour. Engaging with young people to get them into education, work or training is essential to achieving this.

The Government is providing \$8.5 million in Youth Crime Prevention grants in 2016-2017 to focus on positive initiatives that engage with young Victorians in preventing crime and criminal behaviour.

42 new specialist youth positions will support a renewed police youth framework that builds on proven models of engagement, adapts to social and technological change, targets areas of greatest need and serves as the key interface between police, young people, and justice and social services.

The new positions will build on the work done by the 93 existing police Youth Resource Officers in working with local communities to engage young people in before they enter the criminal justice system. This work will be supported by the Youth Crime Prevention Grants, providing further opportunity to work closely with young people at risk of entering the criminal justice system.

The grants aim to address offending behaviour and recidivism by young people aged between 10 and 24 who have had contact with, or are at risk of involvement with, the criminal justice system. The program will provide funding to build partnerships between agencies and organisations, and to develop and deliver evidence-based and effective youth crime prevention strategies in areas experiencing high crime and disadvantage.

A further \$1.5 million will be available for Koori Youth Crime Prevention Grants to prevent young people aged eight to 17 from coming into contact with the criminal justice system, providing early intervention for young people at risk and a pre-charge diversion option for police and court.

Of course, serious and violent offending by young people must be met with the appropriate consequences in order to keep the community safe. These are discussed further in *Priority 3: Holding offenders to account*.

The Chief Commissioner is committed to further strengthening the way Victoria Police engages with young people and manages the possible escalation into more serious crime. This is why Victoria Police hosted the first ever Youth Voices Forum in July 2016, to speak directly to young people about what matters to them. The Chief Commissioner's Youth Summit, also held in July 2016, brought together a range of community groups and service providers to consider the best interventions and supports for young people. In response to the Summit, the Government is progressing a number of actions, including:

- » strengthening supervision of young people on bail
- » considering better supports for young people leaving out-of-home care, and
- » determining ways to address school exclusion and disengagement with education, as part of the Government's Education State reform agenda.

What Victoria Police is doing

To maintain and, where necessary, strengthen connections with the Victorian community, Victoria Police will:

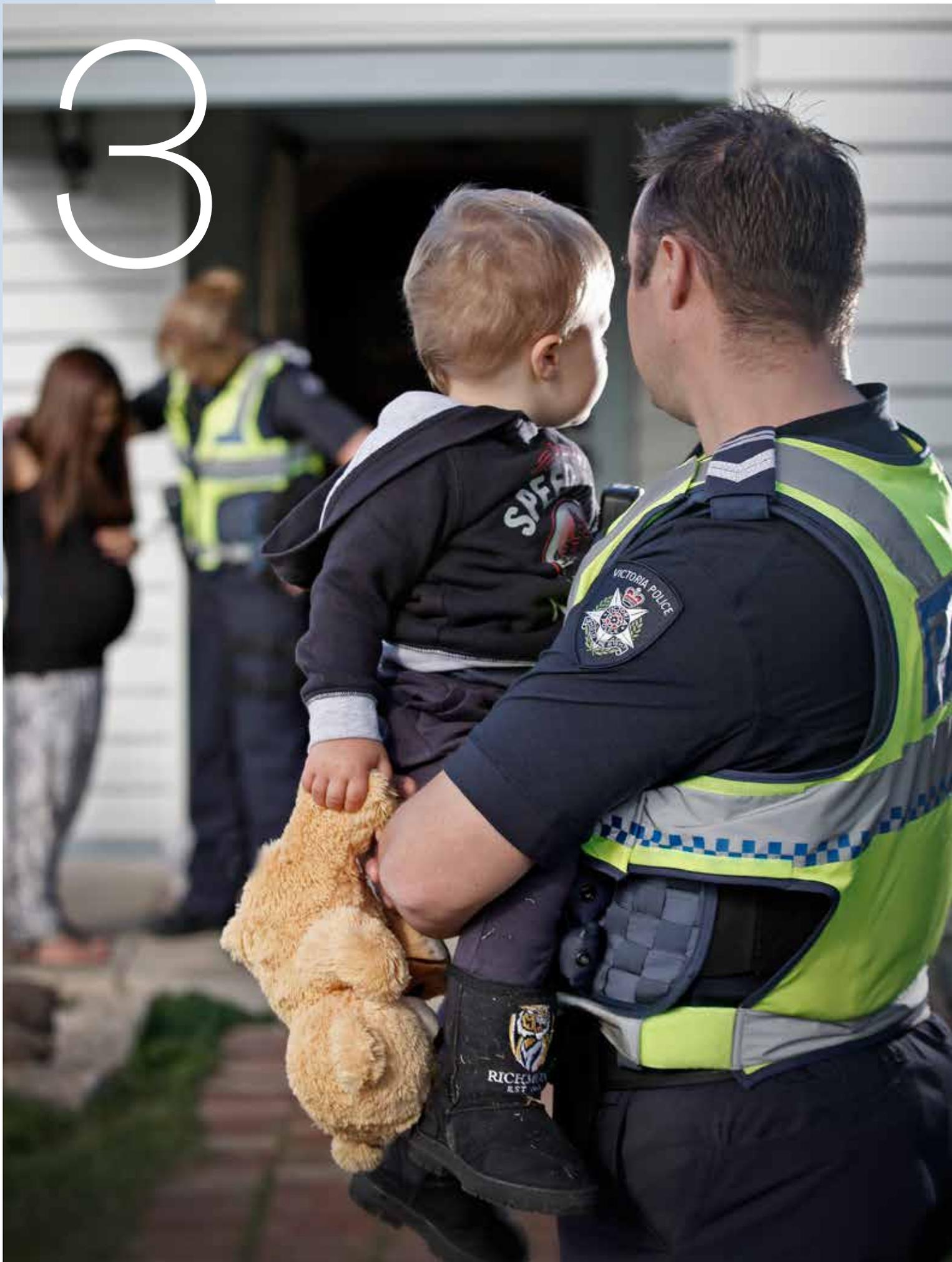
1. Have a **visible and accessible presence in local communities** through active policing such as more marked vehicle patrols, a commitment to maintaining local police services (including single-person rural stations), and being available to the community in the way they need by maximising the use of technology such as online reporting, the Police Assistance Line and social media channels, such as local EyeWatch pages.
2. Build strong relationships with local communities through **enhancing consultation and co-design** processes. Victoria Police will continue the work outlined in its Community Engagement Strategy to ensure the community is engaged on local decisions, including development of local crime and community safety responses.
3. **Engage with young people** including working with other agencies to identify young people vulnerable to criminality and divert them from becoming involved in criminal activities.
4. **Further develop organisation and frontline relationships with Victoria's diverse communities**, including Aboriginal, multicultural and multi-faith communities, LGBTI, young Victorians and people with a mental illness or disability.

This will enhance trust and confidence in Victoria Police and also improve the policing outcomes for communities who are over or under represented in their contact with police.

How will we track progress?

Key Indicators	Source
Increase the proportion of people who agree or strongly agree that 'police treat people fairly and equally'.	National Survey of Community Satisfaction with Police
Improved community satisfaction with and confidence in police.	National Survey of Community Satisfaction with Police
Increased number of frontline shifts.	Victoria Police
Decrease in number of non-emergency calls for police made to Triple 000 (to commence in 2018).	Emergency Services Telecommunication Authority

3



Priority 3:

PUTTING VICTIMS FIRST

Protecting and supporting victims must be at the centre of our policing response.

Historically, the justice system has been all about criminals and the voice of the victim was lost. Over several years, Victoria Police has enhanced its approach to victims by focusing on preventing victimisation in the first place, and preventing further victimisation after a crime. This has been most recently demonstrated by the release of the Chief Commissioner's Future Directions for Victim-Centric Policing, a strategy designed to ensure that Victoria Police puts victims first.

Victoria Police will work closely with internal and external stakeholders to ensure the best outcomes for victims and those in need of assistance. Victoria Police will build on current capability to reduce victimisation and improve service delivery. This means continuing to engage with key stakeholders, including across government, to identify opportunities for collaboration on strategies to prevent and reduce crime. Vulnerable groups within the community will be engaged, including people with disabilities, youth, LGBTI people, Aboriginal Victorians and Culturally and Linguistically Diverse communities.

What are victim centred responses?

This involves treating victims with sensitivity, dignity and respect through an empathetic approach that provides support to victims from the initial point of contact to the conclusion of their matter.

Preventing victimisation

The most effective way of reducing the harm and distress experienced by victims of crime and their families is to prevent crime from happening in the first place. Empowering communities to tackle crime at a local level and giving councils the necessary funding for making local environments safer are key components of the Government's approach to preventing crime. The Government has already invested \$19.4 million in the Community Crime Prevention Program which includes:

- » Grants of up to \$250,000 under the Public Safety Infrastructure Fund for councils to install CCTV, lighting and strengthen urban design to improve community safety.
- » New grants to assist communities to target the underlying causes of crime and address new and emerging crime trends.
- » Expanding the evidence-based Communities That Care program, and providing resources to help engage communities in education programs.
- » Extending the Community Safety Fund grants program, with up to \$10,000 available to councils and community groups for initiatives.

These local initiatives are supported by having a strong police and PSO presence so that people who feel they are in danger of becoming a victim of crime, or are otherwise feeling threatened, are able to raise their concerns directly.

Supporting victims

The Government is committed to supporting all victims to recover and thrive. Victoria Police plays a critical role in helping victims in recovery and getting their life back, and recognises that it must continually evolve to meet the diverse needs of victims.

Person-to-person interactions play an important role in the overall public perception of Victoria Police and their willingness of victims to report crime and participate in the criminal justice system. It is particularly important in the case of crimes which are substantially under-reported (such as sexual offences) that Victorians are confident they will receive an appropriate, professional and compassionate response.

This approach is used in the four multi-disciplinary centres (MDCs) operating across Victoria which bring together Victoria Police, child protection and sexual assault counselling services at the one, secure and private site. MDCs provide a victim-centric environment to deliver integrated support for adults and children who have experienced sexual assault (see breakout box).

Further, Victoria's Victims of Crime Commissioner is an independent and central point of contact for victims of violent crime who have experienced difficulties or confusion in their dealings with the justice system and government agencies. The Victims of Crime Consultative Committee also plays a significant role in identifying ways in which the justice system can better support victims.

Victoria's comprehensive suite of victims of crime support and information service is coordinated through the Victims Support Agency, part of the Department of Justice and Regulation (DJR). Services include:

- » **Victims of Crime helpline** – A free state-wide service providing information about rights, advice about reporting a crime, information about the legal process, help applying for compensation and financial assistance and connections to other support services.
- » **Victims Assistance Program (VAP)** – The program provides flexible, face-to-face case management services including the delivery of practical support and brokerage, advocacy, court support, referral for therapeutic interventions including counselling and other specialist services.
- » **Child Witness Service** – A specialist service prepares children for the role of being a witness, familiarises them with the court process and personnel, supports them and their family throughout the criminal proceedings.

Further, the Office of Public Prosecutions supports adult witnesses through the Witness Assistance Service (WAS). WAS provides information and support to adult victims and witnesses of serious crime, prioritising assistance and support to families who have lost loved ones, victims and witnesses in sexual assault and family violence matters; and vulnerable victims.

In partnership with the Victims Support Agency, Victoria Police has continued the introduction of VAP workers at 25 designated police stations around the state as a co-location initiative to support victims of crime in a coordinated and collaborative manner. This program has enhanced communication between stakeholders, and aims to achieve more efficient referral pathways between police and victims services, providing earliest possible access to support for victims of crime.

In addition, the Victims of Crime Assistance Tribunal (VOCAT), part of the Magistrates' Court of Victoria, provides financial assistance to victims of violent crime committed in Victoria for expenses incurred, or reasonably likely to be incurred, as a direct result of the crime.

Multi-disciplinary centres: A case study

A very distressed woman and her children visit the Centre Against Sexual Assault (CASA) at 9am to report ongoing sexual abuse. Without the multi-disciplinary centres (MDC) the whole family could endure a lengthy wait for CASA to get all relevant agencies in to interview and develop a support plan for this family. Where the family can visit an MDC, all the relevant agencies are on-site and can be called quickly to discuss and prepare a support plan. The facilities provided are appropriate and comfortable for adults and children. The facilities are designed to support victims needs and to reduce trauma at this time of distress.

Lessons from the Royal Commission into Family Violence

Through the Royal Commission into Family Violence, the Government heard that feeling listened to and receiving a compassionate, understanding approach from police officers when reporting family violence is central to improving the experiences of victims, including children. This message is consistent with what the Government has heard previously from the Victorian Law Reform Commission, Victoria's Sexual Assault Reform Strategy and the Victims of Crime Consultative Committee.

As part of the response to the Royal Commission, the Department of Justice and Regulation is consulting with victims' representatives and experts in restorative justice to develop a framework and pilot program for the delivery of restorative justice options for victims of family violence.

The Royal Commission highlighted the need for a victim centred approach in addressing family violence in Victoria. It recommended an individualised approach to ensure agencies and services can nimbly respond to the diverse experiences of family violence.

The Royal Commission noted that this will require Victoria Police to further develop and embed family violence knowledge, skills and expertise at all levels of the organisation. Part of putting victims first is making sure police officers have the training and capability to understand and respond to the complex dynamics of victimisation, particularly when it occurs in a family violence context. More broadly, we know that services must reorient themselves around victims, for example by supporting women and children to stay in their own home where it is safe to do so and placing the onus for behaviour change on the offender.

The Government and Victoria Police will also work with the Victims Survivors' Advisory Council (VSAC) to ensure that the voices and experiences of victim survivors directly inform developments in family violence policing. A Family Violence Advisory Reference Group will be established with the VSAC to ensure that there is a victim centred response in all of the Victoria Police family violence reforms, including at the Victoria Police Family Violence Centre of Learning. The Government is committed to identifying further opportunities to draw on the experience of victims of crime in other contexts.

Preventing family violence victimisation requires a particular and concerted response. That is why the Government is also developing Australia's first dedicated, funded and enduring primary prevention plan to end family violence. Victoria's Primary Prevention Strategy (to be released in 2017) will outline the Government's renewed focus on preventing family violence from occurring in the first place through education, community awareness and targeted programs.

The difference the Government wants to make

The Government is committed to ensuring that:

- » **Victims and witnesses are supported** – Police provide necessary protections to victims and witnesses and work with other agencies to keep them safe and link victims to the right support services.
- » **Vulnerable children and young people are kept safe** – Services work together to identify and act early including referral to appropriate support services.
- » **Victoria's women and children live free from violence and abuse** – Victoria's women and children are protected and live free from family violence.

A safe and just Victoria

Priority for Victoria Police

Putting victims first

The difference we want to make

Victims and witnesses are supported

Police provide necessary protections to victims and witnesses and work with other agencies to keep them safe and link victims to the right support services.

Vulnerable children and young people are kept safe

Services work together to identify and act early including referral to appropriate support services.

Victoria's women and children live free from violence and abuse

Victoria's women and children are protected and live free from family violence.

Tracking progress

Improved levels of victims' satisfaction with police service.

All family violence intervention order breaches will be acted on - consistent with *Ending Family Violence: Victoria's Plan for Change*.

Reduction in repeat victimisation.

What the Government is doing

Incidents of family violence are a major driver of demand on police services. Importantly, the first response sets the scene both for victims receiving support and for perpetrators being held to account.

A victim receiving the right response when they first report to police is critical. General duties police provide this immediate first response, and family violence specific roles (including family violence teams) provide a secondary, specialist response.

The Royal Commission identified a range of areas for urgent attention across Victoria Police. The Government is investing in 415 sworn police to deliver on Royal Commission recommendations and transform how Victoria Police responds to family violence.

The investment provides additional police as well as family violence specialists and ensures that Victoria Police is able provide the comprehensive and consistent response expected by the community and explicitly required by the Royal Commission into Family Violence.

The Government will engage with victims to develop policy responses that meet their needs, including through consultation with the Victims of Crime Commissioner and the VSAC. New mechanisms will be developed to facilitate close engagement with victims in all contexts.

The Government is providing \$5.6 million to establish community safety networks across local police areas which will bring together police, community members and local businesses to prevent crime and victimisation before it occurs.

The Government is also providing victims of crime with better access to legal information online via an upgrade to the VOCAT website, which now has the highest level of accessibility to ensure it is able to be used by people with disabilities, such as visual and physical impairments. Victims are now able to access and submit forms online, and can access information in languages other than English.

The Government has also invested in police technology which is critical to increasing the capacity of our police officers and achieving a more effective police response to victims. This includes:

- » **Mobile devices for each of our frontline officers**
 - This will save officers valuable time in the field, and ensure that risk assessment and information sharing can be contemporaneous, accurate and comprehensive.
- » **State-wide roll out of body worn cameras**
 - This will allow police to capture video evidence and save time for police.

The Government has also committed to establishing a Victoria Police Family Violence Centre of Learning. The Centre of Learning will provide training in family violence to police that is tailored to their rank, role and career stage. Victoria Police identified this investment as a priority that will underpin a range of other reforms.

As a result, police officers will have an increased awareness of the multifaceted nature and drivers of family violence, and improved capability to deal with the complexity and volume of family violence cases. Police will be able to accurately identify the primary aggressor, understand and respond to risk, and treat victims with dignity and respect.

In response to the Royal Commission's recommendations, there will also be increased family violence specialisation in Victoria Police, with a clear career pathway for those with specialist capability. Investigative and intelligence units will have a stronger focus on family violence, and increased resources so that the best investigative response is provided and victims can feel confident that police officers are doing all they can to keep them safe.

The Government is also delivering on all of the recommendations of the comprehensive review of Victoria's witness protection scheme conducted by the Honourable Frank Vincent AO QC. These changes will strengthen the existing processes and legislation, including new offences and penalties for those that seek to intimidate or interfere with people participating in the justice system.

What Victoria Police is doing

To further improve its approach to putting victims first, Victoria Police will:

1. Continue implementing the **Future Directions for Victim-Centric Policing** (2015) strategy. This will include development of victim-centric policing principles of practice and establishing additional referral pathways for victims into early intervention and support services.

The strategy will also involve embedding victim-centric practice into organisational planning, education and training programs. Continued monitoring and evaluation processes will ensure that changing demographics of the community are considered in implementing this approach and new reporting mechanisms will strengthen accountability.

2. **Actively listen to and engage with victims** when developing strategies to address crime, including implementing the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Family Violence through a process of co-design and consultation with victim survivors.
3. **Improve the frontline police response to family violence** by deploying additional dedicated and specialist family violence police resources, rolling out new technology (such as body worn cameras), delivering specialist family violence training for police, an increase in family violence positions for investigations, and working with other agencies to improve information management systems to ensure victim safety.
4. Embed **appropriate and culturally sensitive responses to victims** as part of the Future Directions for Victim-Centric Policing strategy.

How will we track progress?

Key Indicators	Source
Improved levels of victims' satisfaction with police service.	Survey
All family violence intervention order breaches will be acted on - consistent with Ending Family Violence: Victoria's Plan for Change.	Victoria Police
Reduction in repeat victimisation.	Crime Statistics Agency

4



Priority 4:

HOLDING OFFENDERS TO ACCOUNT

Criminal behaviour has no place in our society. Regardless of the circumstances, the choice to offend and cause harm to others is not acceptable. Holding offenders to account for their actions is a function of the whole justice system, and requires Victoria Police, youth justice, courts and the corrections system to each fulfil their respective.

From monitoring Persons of Interest to gathering intelligence and evidence through investigations, every part of police practice is about ensuring that those who choose to break the law are held to account. The Government is backing Victoria Police with the powers and laws it needs to target offenders, particularly serious recidivist offenders, and keep Victorians safe.

The Government has not hesitated to introduce new offences and tough penalties for those crimes which cause the most harm to the community including home invasions, carjacking, firearms, road safety and drug offences.

While holding offenders to account keeps victims and their families safe, it also provides the broader community with confidence in the criminal justice system and can improve feelings of community safety. In the case of family violence in particular, holding offenders to account helps remove the burden on victims to manage their safety and risk.

The difference the Government wants to make

Holding offenders to account will contribute to the long-term achievement of the following outcomes:

- » **Offenders understand the consequences of, and are held accountable for, their actions** – The community and those who choose to break the law, know there are consequences for criminal behaviour and these are applied by the courts.
- » **Serious offenders are monitored** – Police proactively monitor and manage the risks posed by serious offenders and Persons of Interest.
- » **Offenders change their behaviour** – Offenders work to change their behaviours, they are engaged and connected to relevant agencies.

What the Government is doing

Police powers and new laws to target crime

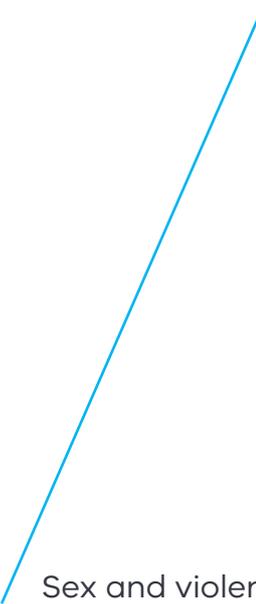
The Government has sent a clear message to those who break the law by setting out tough penalties for offending, including minimum prison sentences for our worst offenders. The Government has established a presumption against bail for individuals charged with terrorism offences, and will also apply the presumption to new offences of aggravated carjacking, home invasion and aggravated home invasion.

The Government is also ensuring that sentencing is better aligned with community expectations, and that those convicted of the most serious criminal offences go to prison. This includes establishing a clear set of standard sentences to ensure that courts are imposing sentences for sexual and other serious offences that meet the expectations of the Government and the community. The Government has also ensured that courts will also no longer be able to impose community-based sentences (Community Corrections Orders) for the most serious crimes such as rape and murder.

A safe and just Victoria
Priority for Victoria Police
Holding offenders to account
The difference we want to make
<p>Offenders understand the consequences of, and are held accountable for, their actions The community and those that choose to break the law, know there are consequences for criminal behaviour and these are applied by the courts.</p> <p>Serious offenders are monitored Police proactively monitor and manage the risks posed by serious offenders and Persons of Interest.</p> <p>Offenders change their behaviour Offenders work to change their behaviours, they are engaged and connected to relevant agencies.</p>
Tracking progress
<p>Family violence recidivism will be eliminated – consistent with <i>Ending Family Violence: Victoria's Plan for Change</i>.</p> <p>Reduction in youth recidivism.</p> <p>Reduction in offences by people on police bail.</p> <p>Increased use of legislative powers including those relating to asset confiscation, unlawful associations, unexplained wealth, and licensing.</p>

In the past two years, the Government has introduced new offences to target criminal behaviour, and strengthened laws against those crimes that cause the greatest harm. This includes:

- » **Firearms** - The Government has strengthened laws to prevent the trafficking, manufacturing and selling of illegal firearms, and is introducing new offences of firing at a house, building or stationary vehicle, or endangering a person with a firearm to target drive by shootings.
- » **Serious and violent offending** - The Government has introduced new offences targeting carjacking and home invasion, as well as new measures to manage serious sex and violent offenders.
- » **Road safety** - The Government is introducing new offences for refusing a roadside drug test, strengthening penalties for drug driving, drink driving and introducing interlocks for more offences. The Government is also improving penalties for unlicensed driving to better reflect potential harm, and is broadening police powers to immobilise vehicles in police pursuits.
- » **Drugs** - The Government has introduced specific offences for ice dealers that endanger our school children, and is lowering the threshold test for trafficking a commercial quantity of methylamphetamine such as speed or ice. The Government will also ban the manufacture and sale of dangerous synthetic drugs.
- » **Protecting the public** - The Government has banned dangerous monkey bikes from our roads, given police the power to ban criminal organisations such as outlaw motorcycle gangs and improved the ability to confiscate assets.



Sex and violent offenders

Since the murder of Masa Vukotic in March 2015, the Government has taken decisive action to protect Victorians by significantly strengthening the oversight and management of serious sex offenders on supervision orders in the community. This has included:

- » making community safety the paramount consideration of the courts and the Adult Parole Board in decisions about the supervision and management of offenders on supervision orders
- » providing Victoria Police with increased powers to check an offender's compliance with a supervision order
- » establishing the Specialist Response Unit, a joint unit comprising senior Corrections Victoria staff and Victoria Police detectives and intelligence analysts to strengthen oversight and monitoring of the risks posed by offenders on a supervision order
- » introducing a minimum term of 12 months' imprisonment for breaches of certain supervision order conditions
- » creating a presumption against bail if an offender on a supervision order is charged with an indictable offence
- » funding a new 20-bed secure facility to deal with the most serious offenders who cannot be managed in the community
- » broadening the conditions of supervision orders to prohibit violent offending and conduct, and
- » extending police powers to hold serious sex offenders without charge from 10 hours to 72 hours.

The Government is working to implement all 35 recommendations of the Harper Review into the management of serious sex offenders.

Monitoring offenders on the Sex Offender Register is a key function of Victoria Police. Since 2004 more than 6000 offenders have been added to Victoria's Sex Offender Register. The Register is a crucial component of the risk management strategy for serious offenders and Victoria Police play a vital role in ensuring that Victorians are safe from those who have a history of violence or sexual offending.

Serious and high-risk offenders

There are a range of Persons of Interest who pose a risk to community safety. Victoria Police has arrangements in place to monitor high-risk Persons of Interest across a range of areas including serious and organised crime, outlaw motorcycle gangs, terrorism and registered sex offenders. This activity can be both visible and unseen and is essential to disrupting crime and preventing harm.

In 2015, Victoria Police established a Counter Terrorism Command, which has increased organisational capabilities to investigate and respond to terrorism threats. This includes having skilled investigators and analysts in place to assess the threat environment and being able to work with community partners and other law enforcement agencies to prevent, disrupt and respond to incidents.

Victoria Police also established the Proactive Illicit Firearms Investigation Team to investigate and identify links between firearm thefts and organised crime groups, with the aim of targeting these groups and disrupting their activities.

In response to an increase in offences involving illegal firearms, including military grade weapons a number of areas of vulnerability were identified and the legislative reform required to address these. In addition, Victoria Police has been instrumental in establishing foundations for a National Illicit Firearms Strategic Advisory Group to bring together law enforcement agencies across Australia with a view to coordinating the investigation of organised firearms crime and cross border activity.

Victoria Police's specialist Echo Taskforce conducts proactive and reactive investigations involving outlaw motorcycle gangs, and targeted investigations into identified organised crime groups. Activities targeted include drug and firearm trafficking, extortion, serious assaults and infiltration into legitimate industries such as security, liquor licensing and heavy haulage.

Youth offenders

There has been a concerning increase in recidivist and serious offending by children and young people. The nature and frequency of offending and re-offending by young people is changing, with an increase in violent offending such as carjackings and home invasions.

Research shows that a small group of young people are responsible for a large proportion of crime, and the problem is getting worse. The Crime Statistics Agency has identified that 1.6 per cent of youth offenders, which is a group of 182 people, are responsible for 23.6 per cent of youth offences.

Serious recidivist youth offenders

An analysis of young people born between April 1996 and March 1998 across the first 8 years of their offending recorded by Victoria Police, showed just 1.6 per cent of offenders aged 10-17 years were responsible for 23.6 per cent of all offences.

The data tells us this group commenced offending early and continued to offend at a high frequency, peaking at age 15.

We need to take action to address the issue of high risk young offenders and work collaboratively with police, custodial facilities, courts and services to find effective solutions.

- » To support the new offences and tougher penalties for carjacking and home invasion, the Government has undertaken a series of actions to ensure **young high-risk offenders are held to account**, including:
- » longer maximum sentences in the Children's Court
- » creating a new offence for encouraging a minor to commit a crime
- » consideration of increased consequences for assaults on youth justice staff
- » legislative guidance to the Children's Court regarding when a young person should be tried in an adult court
- » mandatory notification of a young person's involvement in incidents in custody to the Youth Parole Board, and
- » requiring the Youth Parole Board to notify Victoria Police when a violent young offender is on parole.

We are making our **youth detention facilities more secure and safe** for young people and youth justice custodial staff. Recent events at the Parkville Youth Justice Centre have highlighted the current design does not provide the flexibility we require to manage young people with complex and challenging behaviours. To make our facilities secure the Government is taking the following actions:

- » temporary arrangement to use a secure unit in Barwon Prison as a youth justice facility to manage young people and prevent future disturbances
- » considering options for the future of youth justice infrastructure in Victoria, including the possible redevelopment of the Parkville Youth Justice Centre
- » an investment of \$10.4 million over two years to create 41 new staff positions to improve safety and manage behavioural risks at all youth detention facilities, and
- » more training and effective supervision for the additional 60 new staff expected to commence work in youth justice facilities by the end of 2016.

When sentenced detention is not considered appropriate, we need **stronger and more intensive measures to supervise and monitor young people in the community** to effectively deescalate behaviour. The Government has committed \$32 million under the Youth Justice Reform Package to deliver these measures.

This reform package introduces an Intensive Monitoring and Control Bail Supervision Scheme to provide stronger assurance that young people will comply with their bail conditions to remain in school, work or training.

In addition, a new intensive sentencing option, the Youth Control Order (YCO), will require young people to comply with a targeted education, training or employment plan. Young people may also be required to report regularly to the Department of Health and Human Services, comply with a curfew, and may have restrictions on the places they can visit, and who they can associate with. Parental involvement in the control scheme will also be an option available to the Children's Court. Taking a problem-solving approach, including greater involvement by the judicial officer, will increase oversight of compliance with terms of the YCO by the Children's Court.

The Youth Justice Reform Package will also:

- » introduce an expanded bail supervision program to support more young people across the state when directed by the Children's Court
- » provide funding to enhance the Central After-Hours Assessment and Bail Placement Service, and
- » introduce a new offence, targeted specifically at those who encourage young persons to commit serious crimes in order to protect children and young people from the influence of serious and organised crime.

It is also essential that we engage these young people in education, training or work. The Department of Education and Training is reviewing the current suspension and expulsion policy and practice. This includes consideration of alternative processes for managing challenging behaviour and better transition processes between schools when the relationship between a student and a school has broken down irreconcilably.

To support immediate action with long term reform the Minister for Families and Children is developing **a new Youth Justice Strategy** which will build on Victoria's best-practice diversionary approach and take account of this emerging new offender cohort. The new strategy will be formulated from the review underway into youth justice to support the development of a contemporary youth justice program and accompanying service delivery model.

High-volume crime

We know that high-volume crime, such as theft from cars and theft of cars, causes harm to many Victorians. While we all have a role to play in minimising the opportunities for crime to occur, these crimes harm the community by undermining feelings of safety, and can also divert police resources away from preventing and detecting more serious crime.

Supporting Victoria Police to respond efficiently to high-volume crime, particularly recidivist offending, is critical to ensuring police have the capacity to focus on those crimes that cause the community the most harm and distress.

The Victorian Government is introducing several initiatives to address high-volume crime, including:

- » **Automatic Number Plate Recognition technology (ANPR)** – rolling out this technology across all 220 Victoria Police Highway Patrol vehicles will enable Victoria Police to identify unregistered vehicles and vehicles with outstanding warrants. Importantly, this will also allow Victoria Police to detect and remove dangerous unauthorised drivers from our roads. In 2016, at least 19 per cent of fatal collisions in Victoria were caused by unauthorised drivers.
- » **Streamlined DNA testing** – Victoria Police will no longer be required to obtain a court issued warrant to take a DNA sample from a person aged 15 years or more who is suspected of committing an indictable offence. Victoria Police will still be required to destroy the sample should the individual not be charged or found not guilty of committing an offence. This will enhance Victoria Police's ability to identify criminals, particularly serious recidivist offenders, reduce the administrative burden on police and courts, and help solve serious and high volume crime.

- » **Banning cash for scrap metal** – Victoria Police and the Victoria Law Reform Commission have both identified the lawful scrap metal industry as being highly susceptible to infiltration by organised crime. Cash-based transactions for scrap metal can be used to conceal unlawful dealings, and incentivise motor vehicle theft. Banning cash for scrap will reduce the risk of offending.
- » **Number plate theft reduction** - Working with partner organisations, the Government will trial a series of number plate theft reduction initiatives to determine those that best reduce this high-volume crime.

High-volume crimes

In the 12 months to July 2016 there were:

- » 62,423 thefts *from* a motor vehicle (including number plate theft)
- » 21,929 thefts *of* motor vehicles.

Theft from a vehicle accounted for 11.6 per cent of all recorded offences, and 34.5 per cent of all theft offences.

Theft of a vehicle accounted for 4.1 per cent of all recorded offences and 12.1 per cent of all theft offences.

Together, these accounted for 16 per cent of all recorded offences and 47.0 per cent of all theft offences.

What Victoria Police is doing

To ensure offenders are held to account, Victoria Police will continue to focus on:

1. Decreasing the number of **young people** in the criminal justice system. Police will ensure youth offending is dealt with swiftly, and will continue to support the use of appropriate alternative actions. Police and community groups will continue to work closely with at-risk youth.
2. **Reducing gun crime** by working with state, territory, federal and international police agencies to identify networks and pathways for gun trafficking, targeting areas of high gun crime and implementing the national gun amnesty.
3. **Disrupting serious and organised crime** in multiple ways including through a focus on the distribution of illegal substances, access and availability of illegal firearms, and money laundering.

How will we track progress?

Key Indicators	Source
Family violence recidivism will be eliminated – consistent with <i>Ending Family Violence: Victoria's Plan for Change</i> .	Crime Statistics Agency
Reduction in youth recidivism.	Crime Statistics Agency
Reduction in offences by people on police bail.	Crime Statistics Agency
Increased use of legislative powers including those relating to asset confiscation, unlawful associations, unexplained wealth, and licensing.	Victoria Police

5



Priority 5:

IMPROVING VICTORIA POLICE CAPABILITY, CULTURE & TECHNOLOGY

Supporting our police

Policing is a tough, challenging and rewarding job. Victoria Police officers and PSOs put their own lives on the line every day in order to protect our community. Police officers often encounter Victorians on the worst day of their lives. Over time, many officers develop attitudes and behaviours to defend themselves against the emotional and physical toll their job takes. In devoting themselves to their jobs, many officers also miss personal events or family milestones - all of which can impact on their health and wellbeing.

The recent Mental Health Review found that police officers experience higher levels of recurrent exposure to potentially traumatic events compared with any other industry. The cumulative impact of operational experiences over time increases the risk of mental illness such as anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

Improving Victoria Police's efforts to raise awareness and increase prevention, early identification, and mental health and wellbeing supports, is a key priority of the Chief Commissioner, who has committed to implementing all 39 recommendations of the Review.

The Government is committed to supporting current and former Victoria Police officers to ensure that they are safe and healthy, both at work and at home. As Victoria Police officers and staff have a responsibility to help Victorians when they need it, the Government has a responsibility to support Victoria Police.

Victoria Police equipt app

Victoria Police personnel now have access to on-the-spot mental health and wellbeing services in the palm of their hand via a new mobile phone app equipt.

The app is based on advice and strategies from renowned US behavioural scientist Dr Kevin Gilmartin, who has worked closely with Victoria Police personnel and The Police Association.

It is free to download, completely confidential, and features tools and support for all current and former police officers, PSOs, police employees and their families. The app can also be used to plan and implement a healthier, more balanced lifestyle.

Equipt was developed after a \$300,000 joint investment from the Victorian Government, Victoria Police and The Police Association.

Culture and integrity

As with many police agencies around the world, Victoria Police has traditionally had a highly masculine culture. This meant that being tough and assertive was historically seen as essential in order to cope with day-to-day police work. Victoria Police recognises that the cultural attitudes and behaviours of some staff are out of sync with modern community expectations. The Victorian Equal Opportunity and Equal Rights Commission (VEOHRC) Report into sex discrimination and sexual harassment, including predatory behaviour in Victoria Police found that the workplace culture within Victoria Police has reinforced gender stereotypes. This includes sometimes limited tolerance for those who do not fit the traditional male stereotype. While improvements in workplace behaviour, tolerance and diversity have occurred over time, Victoria Police is now leading a program of step-change to ensure its entire workforce is safe at work.

Maintaining high standards of ethical behaviour, integrity, professional standards and respect for human rights continues to be a key focus for Victoria Police. Challenges in this space have been revealed in recent investigations by the Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission (IBAC). Victoria Police is clear that it has a zero-tolerance approach to corruption and police misconduct, and this is being supported by the Government's comprehensive integrity reform program.

Technology

As described earlier, a modern police force must be able to respond to the changing nature of crime, including increases in online offending, and changing community expectations about how they engage with police. Leveraging technology is a key way to ensure Victoria Police remains at the cutting edge of policing, and can deliver efficient and effective police services.

Mobile devices and body-worn cameras will improve frontline responsiveness, accountability and efficiency by ensuring information can be captured and shared quickly. Improved systems for synthesising intelligence will also drive substantial efficiencies and enable enhanced approaches to disrupting crime.

ANPR will deliver operational efficiencies by enabling Victoria Police to identify, in real-time, dangerous unauthorised drivers and vehicles related to Persons of Interest.

What does the Victoria Police workforce look like?

In 2015-2016 Victoria Police had a workforce of 17,670 FTE.

Comprised of 14,948 sworn officers, and 3,198 public service staff.

The workforce gender breakdown is below:

Men	12,265 (Total)	11,141 (Sworn)
Women	5,881 (Total)	3,807 (Sworn)

The difference the Government wants to make

- » **Victoria has a modern police force that reflects the community** – The police workforce is diverse and non-discriminatory.
- » **Victoria's police force has a culture of fairness and respect, is just, and calls out bad behaviour** – Victoria Police works to serve the needs of all Victorians equally.
- » **Victoria Police delivers evidence-based initiatives and interventions** – Police use evidence, data and technology to provide effective policing services and improve community safety.

A safe and just Victoria

Priority for Victoria Police

Improving Victoria Police capability, culture and technology

The difference we want to make

Victoria has a modern police force that reflects the community

The police workforce is diverse and non-discriminatory.

Victoria's police force has a culture of fairness and respect, is just, and calls out bad behaviour

Victoria Police works to serve the needs of all Victorians equally.

Victoria Police delivers evidence-based initiatives and interventions

Police use evidence, data and technology to provide effective policing services and improve community safety.

Tracking progress

Reduction in substantiated complaints against Victoria Police.

Greater workforce diversity in gender, cultural background and disability.

Increase in overall job satisfaction for the Victoria Police workforce.

Increased detection of crime and recidivist offenders utilising technology.

What the Government is doing

The Government is providing Victoria Police with a comprehensive investment package to boost its capacity and capability in a range of priority areas. This investment recognises the breadth of critical services provided and activities undertaken by Victoria Police to ensure Victorians are safe from harm.

The Government is providing additional resources to **ensure Victoria Police is able to backfill officers on parental leave** and improve leadership capability. This is a high priority investment for Victoria Police as it will contribute to improved gender equality in the organisation.

The Mental Health Review identified a lack of awareness around mental health that feeds stigma and undermines the ability of Victoria Police employees to seek the help they need. Without a foundation of good mental health literacy amongst employees, opportunities for prevention and early intervention are lost and cultural barriers and stigmas will remain. The Government is supporting Victoria Police employees by providing \$2.0 million **to develop a comprehensive and integrated program of mental health literacy**. This will enable Victoria Police to build the foundations required to make future mental health initiatives effective

The Government is **building Victoria Police's critical specialist and high risk capability** by funding a dedicated new training facility for Victoria's elite Special Operations Group, Critical Incident Response Team and Bomb Response Unit to ensure Victoria can respond to terrorist and critical high risk events. A new Air Wing fleet, including three helicopters and a fixed wing plane will also enhance Victoria Police's air capability and capacity.

To complement these initiatives **roadside drug testing will be expanded** to strengthen road policing capabilities and reduce road trauma.

The Government is **freeing up police** by examining capacity to further expand the functions of PSOs, PCOs and other specialist support staff to optimise safety outcomes and release sworn police back to the frontline. This includes consideration of the recommendations of the Hyde Review about more flexible use of PSOs to target crime on and across the transport network.

This package builds on the significant investment the Government has already made to enhance police capability, including:

- » **Establishment of a 24/7 real time Monitoring and Assessment centre** which will mean police can monitor and assess information immediately and quickly respond to major incidents.
- » **A new police intelligence system** which will enable police to identify links between people, events, vehicles and properties. It will enable investigations into organised crime, gangs and other plans for violence and disruption.
- » **Specialist equipment** to enable swift and effective responses to high risk incidents and keep police safe in their workplace, including a heavy armoured vehicle and three bulletproof vehicles for Victoria Police's specialist units, new bomb robots, night vision, camera equipment for specialist units and anti-ballistic vests.
- » **Two new regional forensic hubs** to increase Victoria Police's forensic capacity in regional Victoria.
- » **Mental health support** to create a website, accessible to serving and former police officers, with mental health and wellbeing resources to complement the *Equipt* smart phone application.
- » **New booze buses** to enable Victoria Police to make sure more Victorians are safe on the road.

What Victoria Police is doing

Victoria Police will continue to develop its capability, improve its culture and use of technology by:

1. **Ensuring that police are on the frontline** including by leveraging PSOs, PCOs and public service staff to undertake support and customer service roles to free up frontline police resources.
2. **Embedding the Cultural, Community and Diversity Education Strategy**, arising from the *Equality is Not the Same Report* to engage with community stakeholders.
3. **Implementing the recommendations of the VEOHRC Report and the Mental Health Review** - including developing a Mental Health Strategy - to increase diversity and tolerance within the police force, improve mental health literacy and ensure that all staff are supported in dealing with the traumatic effects of their work.
4. **Continuing to roll-out the Zero Harm Strategy** so that internal processes ensure healthy and safe workplace behaviours are known and practiced across Victoria Police.
5. **Acting with and ensuring integrity** through implementing changes to training and systems to ensure staff and process support proper conduct, integrity and professional standards.
6. **Further developing information-sharing, intelligence and leadership capabilities** as priorities in the Capability Plan so that senior officers and managers understand their responsibilities in employee welfare and are able to set an example for those coming up through the ranks.
7. **Promoting a culture of confident humility**, focusing on leadership capability at all levels but particularly at the critical Senior Sergeant (middle management) level to ensure cultural change across the organisation.
8. **Continuing to hold themselves to account** through rigorous, transparent and consistent training, supervision, and effective performance management at all levels of Victoria Police.
9. **Implementing government investment** including rolling out new technology and equipment, and deploying PCOs.

How will we track progress?

Key Indicators	Source
Reduction in substantiated complaints against Victoria Police.	Victoria Police
Greater workforce diversity in gender, cultural background and disability.	Victoria Police
Increase in overall job satisfaction for the Victoria Police workforce.	Victoria Police
Increased detection of crime and recidivist offenders utilising technology.	Victoria Police

APPENDIX A

Working together to improve community safety

The Government, Victoria Police and various government agencies are working together to combat the complex causes of crime. Improving community safety requires a whole of government approach whereby multiple organisations and agencies work in partnership to address and prevent crime.

Victoria Police plays a key role in improving community safety and will respond and work with partners across Government to achieve a safer community. The below diagram sets out the range of reforms in progress that also contribute to improving community safety outcomes.





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