

Role of Police

A Review into the Role of Police in Tasmania



ANZPAA

Australia New Zealand Policing Advisory Agency

The review was funded by Tasmania Police.

This review was conducted independently, by the Australia New Zealand Policing Advisory Agency (ANZPAA) from June 2024 to October 2025. The findings and recommendations within the review are based on data collected and received by ANZPAA. They do not represent any official position of Tasmania Police.



Acknowledgments

ANZPAA acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders are Australia's first peoples and the traditional owners and custodians of the land on which we work. ANZPAA is committed to fulfilling the principles of New Zealand's founding document The Treaty of Waitangi (Te Tiriti o Waitangi).

Central to the principles is a common understanding that all parties will relate and participate with each other in good faith with mutual respect, co-operation and trust.

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ANZPAA

The report also received input and support from a number of ANZPAA staff whose contributions were integral to its development and finalisation.

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Sincere thanks are extended to all participants who shared their time, knowledge, and ideas. The report aims to present the breadth of perspectives within

Tasmania Police, capturing both current challenges and the positive aspects and opportunities that define frontline policing. The hope is that these insights, together with the recommendations, will support Tasmania Police to continue improving its services for the benefit of the public.

Policing is fundamentally difficult but essential work; the Tasmanian community relies on police for public safety every day, and officers often risk their own wellbeing in service of others. Members of Tasmania Police consistently demonstrate extraordinary dedication to keeping the community safe.

Executive summary

Introduction

The world is changing at an accelerated rate, and with it, the demands on police are also changing.

A decade ago, local policing was not faced with the same high numbers of family violence or mental health calls. Police are now expected to maintain public safety and uphold the law in both the physical and digital world, amidst increasing globalisation and technological advances. All public sector agencies are under funding constraints in a challenging economy. It is within this context that Tasmania Police commissioned ANZPAA to conduct the Role of Police review.

The review aimed to holistically map out the current role and scope of police work at Tasmania's 24-7 stations. It focused on the daily realities, challenges, and opportunities for improvement. The review is the first full-scale holistic review of frontline policing in Tasmania, capturing the perspectives and experiences of around 200 officers and policing partners in interviews and surveys, alongside detailed analysis of incident and dispatch data.

This report describes the findings of the review, along with recommendations that will address the challenges and needs of frontline policing in Tasmania, aiming to help build a resilient police response for the future.

The picture of frontline demand

In 2023–24, Tasmania saw over 138,000 operational dispatch incidents, a 40,000 increase from a decade ago, with mental health and family violence (FV) incidents more than doubling.



This increase matches trends in other states and countries, where police are facing similar challenges. The review drew lessons and innovative practices from the UK, Canada, New Zealand, USA and other Australian states.

Staffing levels and demand within 24-7 stations fluctuate considerably, creating a challenge in managing demand, especially at peak times (afternoons and weekends). Officers at some stations reported feeling understaffed, while others noted that better systems and a different approach to mental health calls could alleviate pressure. There is evidence that some stations require increased officer numbers at peak times.

There is a widespread call for increased police numbers on the frontline. However, analysis shows this is not necessarily required across all stations. The solution to much of the demand challenges is in ensuring that sworn officers are not performing tasks that state service staff and non-sworn officers can attend to, redesigning processes to be more streamlined and leveraging technological solutions. There are opportunities for managing volume demand more centrally, using a central command centre which hosts functions such as video response, closed circuit TV (CCTV) and automated number plate recognition (ANPR) monitoring and investigative capabilities. This would be a valuable chance to embed multi-agency triage and collaboration, as well as enabling officers on restricted duties to fulfil an active frontline role. If done successfully, it may significantly reduce the burden at stations, and free up officers for investigation, proactive policing and community policing.

Mental health

The increasing demand for police involvement in mental health cases is a growing concern.



Officers reported being called to manage mental health crises where they lacked the necessary expertise and skill, and their presence often led to escalating violence and distress. Police powers under the *Mental Health Act 2013* mean they frequently act as first responders. A clearer, more defined role for police in mental health related incidents is needed. The review proposes that following on from initial call triage, the police role in mental health should be limited to three categories:

- where a crime is occurring or has occurred,
- where there is risk of serious physical harm or risk to life of an individual (including the risk of harm to other practitioners such as healthcare professionals),
- where police powers are required to make an arrest into protective custody, or any other required police power.

International models, like the Right Care Right Person (RCRP) approach, redirect non-urgent mental health incidents to appropriate services and have shown to be successful in significantly reducing police involvement. Tasmania Police's PACER (Police, Ambulance and Clinical Early Response) model has shown positive results in driving down repeat callers. Expanding PACER to all districts and increasing units in the south will assist multi-agency collaboration and better information sharing in the short term. An integrated multi-agency triage model would be a significant step to reducing unnecessary police involvement and improving outcomes and care for public.

Family violence (FV)

Over the past decade, FV incidents have grown by over 250%, from 1,582 in 2013–14 to 5,856 in 2023–24.



Most incidents require at least two hours response time, and it is not uncommon for the more complex cases to take eight hours response time. The high-risk and complex nature of FV cases means there is a lengthier administrative process, along with a greater burden of accountability and consequence on the officers involved. Officers reported feeling fatigued and overwhelmed by FV cases.

Officers expressed frustration over an uneven distribution of workload, with uniformed officers carrying much of the investigative and administrative burden while the specialist Family Violence (FV) Command focuses on victim and offender aftercare. There is a desire for clearer role definition and earlier involvement from FV specialists in investigations.

The review recommends a Rapid Video Response (RVR) model be implemented, which has been evidenced to be effective in responding to demand and increasing victim satisfaction rates (see Appendix B). Additionally, a co-response model involving both police and support workers like Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVAs) could improve collaboration and victim-centred care.

Systems, technology, and data

The lack of data integration of 28 individual systems results in duplication and data inaccuracies.



Officers reported the Atlas system to be particularly problematic, citing poor usability and inadequate training, which in some cases leads to incorrect data input. Effective response and investigation are reliant on good quality data; without it there will inevitably be an impact on decision-making and outcomes. This presents a risk for Tasmania Police.

The frontline workforce is increasingly digitally literate, especially amongst younger recruits who are likely to be more confident in the digital space. There is also an expectation from most that technology is agile and allows easy connectivity with colleagues. Officers reported current laptops being cumbersome and difficult to use outside the station. Failure to provide mobile technology (e.g. mobile phones and tablets) with good usability and secure messaging platforms may drive poor behaviours around recording and messaging. This is already being seen in the widespread use of personal WhatsApp messaging, which may present a risk to data security. A rollout of mobile devices with integrated reporting functions will facilitate a more accurate picture of demand, especially with activities not currently recorded such as walk-ins.

Positive steps to address some challenges and leverage new technologies are already in motion; Project Unify aims to unify systems for improved data quality usability and Axon's Draft One is being piloted with the goal of reducing administrative burden and increasing reporting quality. Continued technological advances such as AI bring more opportunities to free up officer time, however, further and more widespread use of both predictive and generative AI will require better data quality and careful evaluation of risks, including privacy and bias.

Emergency service and partnership working

Public sector agencies are under considerable financial strain, which can lead to greater demand on police, who are often the default service.



Officers are regularly tasked with welfare checks, ambulance assists, and child safety issues including requests to respond to incidents that occur within the Ashley Youth Detention Centre (AYDC), much of which is not within their primary remit. Officers reported that in many of these types of taskings, their presence was unnecessary or another agency should have been the lead responder. Ambulance delays and waiting times to handover protective custody responsibilities in hospital contribute to police feeling strained.

Collaboration with partners is crucial but often challenging due to limited out-of-hours availability, misaligned responsibilities, and resource constraints on both sides. Officers and Child Safety Services (CSS) staff reported tension towards each other over the division of labour and communication. Relationships with other partners, including ambulance, are largely positive despite frustrations. Increased collaboration (e.g. shared triage systems and co-location pilots), better communication, and information exchange will be vital to addressing current challenges and educating both police and partners about their roles and limitations.

Recruitment and retention

Tasmania Police, like most police organisations in Australia and other parts of the world, currently face significant challenges in recruiting and retaining an experienced frontline workforce.



Recruitment struggles stem from factors like public perception and competition for talent. Officers expressed concerns about the preparedness and life experience of new recruits, and experienced officers reported feeling weighed down by mentoring new recruits alongside managing a more junior workforce. While resignation rates are relatively low, there is a growing sense of frustration with a perceived lack of focus on career development and retention of the workforce in general, as well as retaining officers in frontline positions. Increased communication to frontline staff around recruitment and retention strategies, as well as better support for supervisors would be beneficial.

Officer training

Officers raised concerns about the quality and consistency of some training (e.g. mental health), especially practical, scenario-based skills.



Most officers were generally satisfied with academy training as a first step, although felt they lacked preparedness in areas like bail processes, system use, and report writing. The Radio Dispatch Services (RDS) program was praised by all officers who took part; it was seen as a valuable practical insight. Post-academy mentoring was inconsistent, where some recruits felt they received inadequate guidance and reported damaged confidence, where others saw it as the most beneficial part of training. Addressing the inconsistency with the mentoring programme is needed to ensure that all recruits and early career officers are prepared for the challenges that come with the policing role.

There was considerable motivation for the frontline workforce to develop and practice skills with more refresher training and better use of training days.

Officer safety and wellbeing

A rise in armed incidents, assaults on officers, and mental health-related incidents has heightened risks for police, and consequently, impacted safety concerns among officers.



Alongside this, increases in challenging and repetitive incident types such as mental health, FV and youth related offending have anecdotally increased fatigue and burnout. There are mixed feelings about organisational support, with some officers expressing dissatisfaction with mental health services, particularly for newer recruits. Recently, morale has been affected by rostering disputes and perceived lack of training and development opportunities.

Community perceptions

Public trust and confidence are foundational to the Peelian model of policing. It enables cooperation, intelligence sharing and crime prevention.



Australian data on trust and confidence levels are inconsistent, yet global trends show declining trust in recent years. Officers in Tasmania generally believe trust is stable, though some feel public perceptions have declined. To ensure police in Tasmania are constantly able to rise to the growing challenge of sustaining and achieving public safety in an increasing divided world, measuring trust and confidence levels and mapping out public priorities is crucial. Stronger community dialogue, better sentiment tracking and clearer expectations of policing are essential to maintaining trust.

Conclusion

Despite growing pressures, Tasmania's frontline officers continue to manage the core role of maintaining order, investigating crime, and protecting the public.

Increased reporting of mental health and FV incidents, ineffective management of youth-related incidents by the broader system, and a greater expectation by other agencies to assist have expanded their workload. Many of these matters sit more appropriately with other agencies, and failure to address this will affect the ability of Tasmania Police to fulfil their core role in the long term.

The review found officers often felt overwhelmed by complex systems, slow processes, and the emotional toll of repeated high-impact incidents.

Although data did not show an overworked workforce and widespread understaffing, some stations struggled to manage demand at peak times, and this had a flow-on impact in managing case load and officers feeling overwhelmed. Meeting policing demand requires smarter solutions than simply extra police numbers. It requires strategic staffing (e.g. use of state service and unsworn officers), better data and technology, simpler and streamlined processes, and stronger inter-agency collaboration. This will ensure resources meet fluctuating needs and build a resilient police service for future challenges.

Summary of recommendations

Recommended for priority action

Frontline demand

1. Evaluate current shift coverage at Glenorchy to identify the need for extra support during peak times.
2. Report the impact of recent roster changes on staffing and response capabilities across all 24-7 stations.
3. The Roster Reform Working Group to communicate the work they are doing to identify suitable rosters for 24/7 stations.
4. Explore the feasibility of implementing a new multi-agency crime or command centre to provide immediate support and investigation capabilities to the frontline, using both operational and restricted duty officers.
5. Implement a targeted communication strategy related to the introduction of new teams/taskforces, with regular updates and feedback opportunities for frontline staff.
6. Enhance reporting protocols in ESCAD to capture activities not currently captured, such as walk-ins, and integrating incident logs to ensure comprehensive demand visibility.
7. Consider a pilot Police Community Support/ auxiliary officer initiative at select 24-7 stations, focusing on non-core duties and community engagement.

Mental health

8. Define and communicate specific criteria for police involvement in mental health incidents (including concern for welfare) incorporating multi-agency triage. This could include the implementation of a triage model similar to that of South Australia Police.
9. Expand the PACER co-responder model to provide Statewide coverage, with ongoing evaluation against demand and outcomes.
10. Review feasibility of increasing the PACER to two teams in the South District.
11. Review information recording practices for mental health to enable clearer data on police versus health system responsibilities including information on risk, activity and outcome.
12. Explore the feasibility of embedding a mental health practitioner in Radio Dispatch Services for improved triage.

Recommended for priority action

Family violence

13. Consider the feasibility of a Rapid Video Response model to address some mid-level family violence.
14. Outline distinct responsibilities between uniform and specialist Family Violence teams, including incident triage processes and collaborative investigations.
15. Pilot co-response units for family violence, evaluating collaboration between police and support workers for victim-centred outcomes.

Systems, technology, and data

16. Implement, embed and expand usage of online reporting (Project Link) for eligible low-level offences.
17. Practical refresher training should be given on Atlas, for current and future iterations of the system.
18. Generate a unified system unique identifier field for each individual police interact with. This can be undertaken as part of Project Unify.
19. Conduct an operational trial with secure mobile devices and in-car tablets at pilot stations, evaluate impact, and iterate deployment plans. This could include the creation of an interface for frontline activity to submit street checks and intelligence.
20. Identify and implement a secure messaging platform for work devices, with direct integration to official reporting and intelligence systems.
21. Model future major technology upgrades after the TasGRN. Use staged consultative rollouts for all major technology upgrades, defining metrics for user benefit and frontline efficiency.
22. Prioritise ongoing design and frontline user testing for Project Unify.
23. Seek a Treasurer's Exemption to allow Tasmania Police to undertake collaborative purchasing of specialised police equipment.

Summary of recommendations cont.

Recommended for priority action

Emergency service and partnership working

- 24. Develop statewide interagency protocols with Ambulance Tasmania to define when police attendance is essential and formalise rapid handover processes at hospitals.
- 25. Establish shared triage protocols or co-location pilots between Tasmania Police and Child Safety Services for high-risk welfare reports.

Recruitment and retention

- 26. Increase communications to Tasmania Police staff regarding current recruitment practices including level of vetting for readiness and real-world experience.
- 27. Establish early support and mentoring programs for new officers and formalise structure mentoring for new supervisors.
- 28. Develop a dedicated retention and development strategy for mid-career officers, incorporating flexible pathways and formalised succession planning.
- 29. Consider minimum service requirements for appointment to acting and substantive supervisory roles.

Officer training

30. Review consistency and depth of training for bail, systems, and report writing, expand opportunities for recruits to train on systems both at outstations and using practice platforms.
31. Consider expanding the Radio Dispatch Services program to more recruits as part of probation or initial academy training.
32. Establish structured mentoring and professional development programs, with recognition for mentor roles as career advancement steps and/or consider a Leading Senior Constable position when mentoring, which is financially rewarding.
33. Review communications around the benefits and opportunities within the University of Tasmania model in relation to both initial training and promotion.
34. Discuss with the University of Tasmania the nature and suitability of assessment models.
35. Review possible vocational and accessible opportunities for career progression outside of university-based progression.
36. Review use of training days and consider implanting a continual development program focused on practical skills, scenario-based learning, and new technologies.

Officer safety and wellbeing

37. Continue and expand the Wellbeing Support Officer / Peer Support network, ensuring all stations and teams have ready access to confidential support.
38. Monitor impacts of rostering reform and physical health initiatives with regular feedback loops to staff and review groups.

Community perceptions

39. Explore feasibility of holding regular community policing forums within each district. The focus should be on community safety issues, public priorities and addressing issues affecting trust and confidence.

Introduction

This review was conducted by the Australia New Zealand Policing Advisory Agency (ANZPAA) from June 2024 to October 2025. In 2022, ANZPAA released the Role of Police Report which defined the core role of policing as matters solely for police response.

Following this, Tasmania Police Commissioner Donna Adams commissioned this review. The purpose of this review was to provide a comprehensive account of the realities, challenges, and prospects inherent in frontline policing across the state's 24-7 stations. The project's primary goal was to illuminate the variety of activities undertaken by police, articulate current challenges, and identify opportunities for positive change.

The review aimed to:



Profile the role and scope of frontline policing at 24-7 stations



Examine the daily realities and challenges faced by uniformed officers



Explore opportunities for improved practice, systems, and workforce support



Deliver recommendations to inform organisational strategy and future planning

Our approach

Policing typically judges its performance on the few empirical measures that are easily accessible: number of jobs attended, average response times, number of arrests and charges, and rates of crime solved.

In the wider criminal justice system, this extends to court outcomes such as convictions and custodial sentences. However, little else is used to assess the actual demands upon police, the nature of their work and how capable and equipped the police are to respond to the tasks they are required to perform. Much of what the police do in the 21st century does not slot neatly into these historic measures of success, and as such, a great deal is at risk of being missed.

In designing the methodologies used within the review, it was understood from initial scoping that the systems used by Tasmania Police were not designed to capture the full breadth of the current demand of policing and these measures alone would not determine the current picture of policing on the frontline. Furthermore, it was flagged from the outset that there were concerns with the quality of the data held within those systems. This was borne out within the review, which will be discussed later in this report.

The ethos from the beginning was that uniform police on the frontline hold the knowledge and insights vital to illustrate the current picture, along with some of the solutions to the challenges they face. Consequently, much of the review focused on gathering knowledge, experience and ideas to present along with quantitative data. To ANZPAA's best knowledge, this is the first time that a holistic and officer perspective focused approach has been used in a major review of policing within Australia.

The review specifically focused on the frontline response units at the seven 24-hour stations across Tasmania (Bellerive, Bridgewater, Burnie, Devonport, Glenorchy, Hobart and Launceston).

The review used four methodologies to provide a picture of policing demand. Using multiple methodologies reduced the risk of missing important information and context, however, each methodology comes with its own limitations.

The four methods of data collection were:

-  Officer perspective survey
-  Interviews
-  Data collection periods
-  Case studies








Officer perspective survey

The officer perspective survey took place over 18 days in August and September 2024 and was available on the Conexus site, as well as emailed to all uniform constables and sergeants in the 24-7 stations. In total there were 187 responses, which was a response rate of 42%. Bridgewater was an outlier with only 3 responses (see *Table 1*).

There were 12 questions in the survey that aimed to gather perspectives on daily activities, workload, challenges and opportunities for change.

The responses were analysed, including thematic analysis. The results were used to inform the design of further research activities, such as interviews.

Table 1: Breakdown of responses to the officer perspective survey

Location	No. of responses	No. of officers staffed per location	% of response per staffing numbers
 Bellerive	22	50	44%
 Bridgewater	3	50	6%
 Burnie	37	48	77%
 Devonport	40	48	83%
 Glenorchy	27	58	47%
 Hobart	18	86	21%
 Launceston	39	105	37%
Total	187	445	42%

Interviews








Semi-structured interviews were conducted between September 2024 and February 2025. The interviews typically lasted between 45–60 minutes and covered multiple themes, including response to crime and non-crime demand, systems, technology, training, staffing levels and wellbeing.

46 officers, at the ranks of constable and sergeant, were interviewed. A further five interviews were conducted with representatives from the Police Association of Tasmania, Police Ambulance and

Clinician Early Response (PACER), Ambulance Tasmania, Tasmania Child Safety Services and Project Link/Unify. These interviews provided further context to some of the challenges raised by officers at the 24-7 stations.

Interviews were coded and thematically analysed using NVivo software. The findings were then reviewed in combination with findings from each of the other research activities.

Table 2 : Breakdown of responses to the semi-structured interviews.

Station	Constable	Sergeant	State Service	Total
 Bellerive	6	1		7
 Bridgewater	4	1		5
 Burnie	6	1		7
 Devonport	5	1		6
 Glenorchy	4	1		5
 Hobart	6	1		7
 Launceston	6	1		7
Radio Dispatch Services	1	1	2	4
Total	38	8	2	48

Data collection periods

Frontline officer activity is predominantly recorded by Radio Dispatch Services (RDS) using the Emergency Services Computer Aided Dispatch (ESCAD) application. Scoping discussions uncovered gaps in the data collected. For example, it was known that walk-ins were recorded inconsistently, if at all, and breaks were not always recorded if an officer was already at the station. The accuracy of times recorded was also a concern, as it was reported that officers did not always update RDS in a timely fashion if they were changing activity or location outside of an initial incident response.

Consequently, ANZPAA worked with the Inspectors and RDS to develop an activity logging survey that could be used alongside ESCAD data and would assist in building the picture of demand and deployment. There were six survey periods that covered morning, day and night shifts. They took place in September, November and December across mid-week and weekends. The times and dates were chosen to account for differences in demand across the week and seasonally, where possible.

In conjunction, Tasmania Police provided consistent messaging to encourage frontline officers to update RDS in a timely and accurate manner during the six survey periods. This communication campaign was an attempt to improve accuracy of the data. Whilst there was some resultant increased reporting, it was limited and variable.

Tasmania Police provided Resource Status ESCAD data and Dispatch Officer Assignments ESCAD data. For trend analysis, a one-year period from 1 February 2024–31 January 2025 was used. A set of ESCAD data collection periods were also separately analysed; these were aligned with the activity logging survey periods. These periods were September (2022, 2023, and 2024), November (2022, 2023, and 2024), and January (2023, 2024, and 2025). The use of multiple data sets assisted in checking data collected within survey periods was representative of an average shift, as much as possible, given the changeability of policing demand. It also improved reliability and enabled some comparisons.

The averages for incidents (split by shift, station or incident type when required) provided in this report were calculated using simple linear regression. The coefficient was used as the effect estimate and the 95% confidence interval used to assess precision and significance.

Case studies

Five cases were provided by Tasmania Police across three incident types. The case studies illustrate the typical steps and touchpoints of an incident from call to outcome. The criteria for each incident and investigation were that they:

- occurred between January 2024 to January 2025, and
- had been closed, having reached a resolution.

The information provided for each case, where available and appropriate, was the ESCAD data, offence report, body worn camera footage and any other relevant reports.

Each case was reviewed and a summary, timeline and set of key details was extracted to illustrate the time taken on each incident, including work in following shifts and court related activities that involved frontline officer time. The cases were:

- complex family violence (FV) incident with multiple specialist teams and services engaged.
- less serious/complex FV incident – illustrative of high demand calls received.
- concern for welfare and mental health related call with no involvement from PACER.
- youth related offence by a younger person who has previous offending history.

The integrated methods aimed to capture both the complexity and day-to-day realities of policing at Tasmania's busiest stations, triangulating officer experience, activity data, and system intelligence to inform recommendations grounded in operational reality.

Front-line Demand



Frontline Demand

An initial picture of frontline demand

This section outlines the statewide demand facing Tasmania Police and focuses on the seven 24-7 stations. The analysis identifies key areas of operational challenge: mental health, FV, youth related crime, and acquisitive crime¹, all of which consume significant frontline resources. Mental health, FV and stealing/theft incidents were identified by the ESCAD system data, interviews and survey as taking up the highest proportion of day-to-day resources on the frontline. Concern for welfare is considered under the broader title of mental health.

The other two issues that were reported to consume significant resources were youth related crime and assists to ambulance. Youth related crime was defined as any crime where the offender is 17 years old and under and typically referred to theft and anti-social behaviour incidents. A small number of re-offenders appeared to contribute to everyday frustrations amongst most uniform officers. Discussions on ambulance and partnerships with other agencies and services will be discussed in the section

Demand overview

In 2023-24 there were 138,756 operational dispatch incidents in Tasmania, an increase of over 40,000 from the previous ten years.² In that ten-year period, all dispatch incidents have increased, with both safety dispatch (which includes mental health), and family-related dispatch more than doubling. In the same year there was a 10% increase in recorded offences, the fourth consecutive year-on-year increase, returning offence levels to 2006–07 figures after nearly a decade of decline.³ A recent community survey demonstrated the public's concern over a perceived sense of increasing crime, where 69% thought that crime had increased in 2023.⁴ While the number of police officers has increased over the last ten years, it has not done so in direct proportion to the increase in reporting and other associated new taskings for officers. With higher levels of accountability for all taskings the 'time on task'

for each job an increased significantly over the past 10 years.

Tasmania is not alone in seeing large increases of reported incidents, particularly related to incidents involving mental health and FV. Services across Australia, New Zealand, Canada and the UK have reported dramatic increases in demand, especially regarding time taken by officers dealing with the complexity of such incidents.

Queensland Police Service (QPS) reported handling around 51,000 mental health calls in 2023–24. Each call took an average of 4.6 officer hours, adding up to the equivalent of 146 full-time police staff for the year.⁵ In 2023, the London Metropolitan Police reported nearly a million hours spent escorting people to hospitals.⁶ Police in Western Australia (WAPF) have renegotiated and reviewed their response to ambulance assist and mental health calls, reportedly resulting in a 40% reduction in demand for these incidents. New Zealand Police (NZPOL) and South Australia Police (SAPOL) have also announced a renewed approach to incidents related to mental health.

It is beyond the scope of this review to interrogate reasons for the increase in demand in Tasmania. However, to frame the issue, changes in population and economy can influence changes to crime and police demand. It is therefore prudent to note that the population of Tasmania grew by 0.28 per cent in 2024 and currently sits at 575,800. This is projected to grow to 600,000 by 2032.⁷ The median age is

¹ Acquisitive crime is any crime where the offender's objective is to gain material benefit without consent. This includes theft [stealing], burglary, and robbery.

² Tasmania Police Other Statistics by State to 31/01/2025. Provided by Reporting Services (DPFEM) in February 2025.

³ 2023-24 Crime Statistics Supplement. Tasmanian Department of Police, Fire and Emergency Management. [Crime-Statistics-Supplement-2023-24](#)

⁴ Department of Police, Fire and Emergency Management Community Sentiment Survey Report, 2023.

⁵ Commissioner's 100-Day Review of the Queensland Police Service -Final Report, 2025. Available at: police.qld.gov.au.

⁶ ANZPAA Emerging Issues Brief (20 June 2023 edition).

⁷ TasPOPP 2024. Tasmanian and Local Government Area Population Projections, 2023–2053. <https://www.treasury.tas.gov.au/economy/population-projections>

Frontline Demand

expected to increase by approximately seven years by 2053, resulting in a reduced proportion of the population who are workers and waged taxpayers. Following COVID-19, Tasmania went through a strong period of growth, and the economy continued to grow moderately since the 2022-23 period. However, Tasmania has experienced high inflation and interest rates which has resulted in a decrease of household consumption and private investment. It is expected that Tasmania's economy would not have grown significantly in the 2024-25 period. Meanwhile the labour market continues to prevail with an unemployment rate of 4%, the lowest in Australia. This has remained relatively unchanged since June 2022.⁸








The future will likely bring further strain on resources requiring Tasmania Police to work more efficiently with the resources available, whilst also future proofing the service for a changing society.

Resourcing allocation and staffing across 24-7 stations

As of December 2025 there are 1,522 sworn police officers in Tasmania Police. There are 2.64 officers per 1,000 people in the state's population, similar to South Australia who has 2.53 officers per 1,000 people and Western Australia with 2.38 officers per 1,000 people.⁹

A large proportion of the demand is initially responded to by the 445¹⁰ uniform police officers at the seven 24-7 stations across the Southern, Northern and Western districts (see Table 3). There were 82,072 primary incidents that required some level of response from 24-7 stations between 1 February 2024 to 31 January 2025. From currently available ESCAD data, those 445 uniform police officers spent 190,638 hours responding to all incidents in this one-year period.¹¹

Table 3: Breakdown of all sworn-police officers working in frontline response across Tasmania. Number provided by Tasmania Police in November 2024 during data collection for the review. These totals may include those on leave and secondments.

	Constables	Sergeants	Total
Southern District			244
 Bellerive	44	6	50
 Bridgewater	44	6	50
 Glenorchy	52	6	58
 Hobart	74	12	86
Northern District			105
 Launceston	93	12	105
Western District			96
 Burnie	42	6	48
 Devonport	42	6	48
Total	391	54	445

⁸ Tasmania State Budget 2025-26. Department of Treasury and Finance. [2025-26-tasmanian-budget](#). Labour Force (ABS Cat No 6202.0). (n.d.). Department of Treasury and Finance. [Labour-Force](#).

⁹ Number of sworn police officers extracted from ANZPAA Workforce Demographics Report 2023–2024, National, state and territory population [December 2024]. Australian Bureau of Statistics.

¹⁰ This is the total number, it includes all those on long- and short-term leave, as well as those on restricted duty.

Frontline Demand

There is often a call for more police numbers in the context of growing demand; a rhetoric that is heard globally. The analysis of staffing versus demand did show that some stations are struggling to meet peak demand more than others. While there may be a case for increases in officer numbers at some stations, putting the right person into the job (e.g. unsworn staff rather than sworn officers), leveraging technological advances, and changing processes can often be more beneficial in the long term than just increasing staff levels.

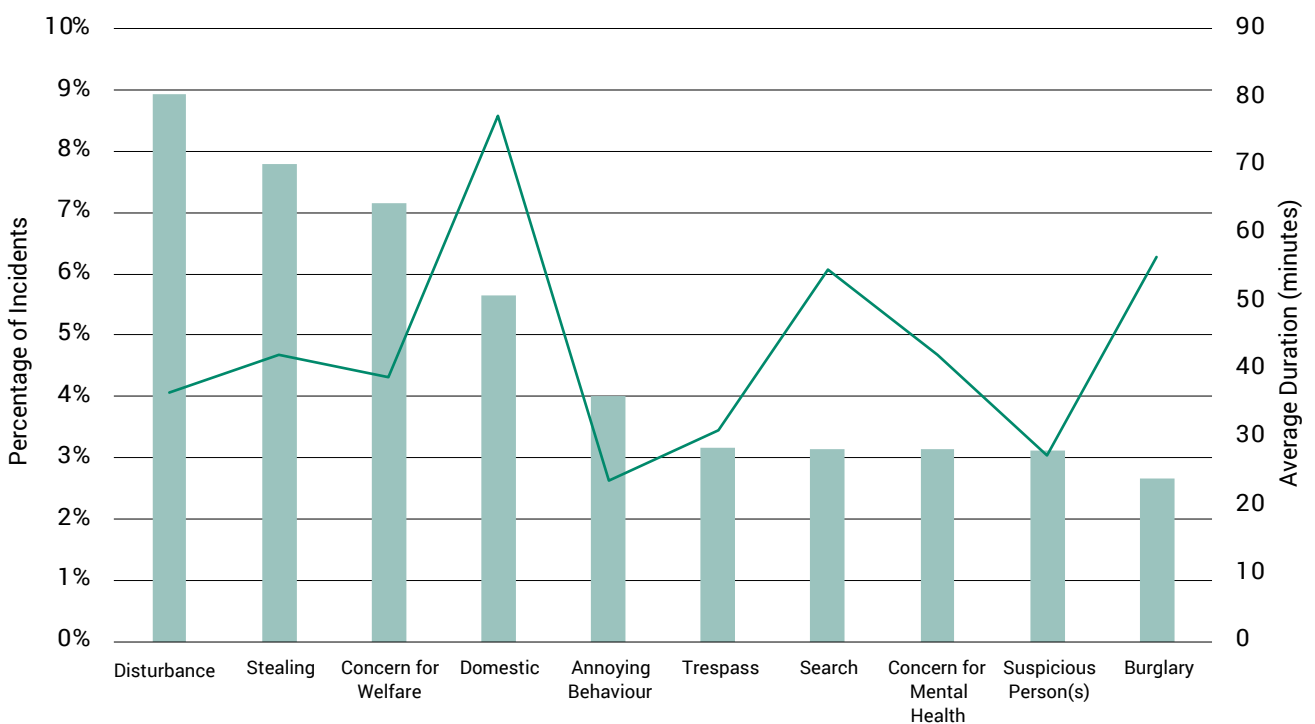
Peak periods and incident types

On average, officers spent 44 minutes responding to each incident over the one-year period. This is defined as their initial response time and does not include investigation and follow up post the initial call for service. At an incident level, the average duration varied by incident type and complexity as seen in *Figure 1*. Average incident duration varied across the 24-7 stations, likely due to differences

in demand, staffing, and officer skills or experience (see *Table 4*). Overall, Launceston spent considerably more time responding to each incident than Glenorchy. This difference may be a result of officers feeling pressured to spend less time on incidents to attend more calls. However, it is difficult to isolate the cause of this difference, without detailed observation of each team and station.








What can be said is that, when looking at overall incident demand and staffing numbers, Glenorchy responds to 25% fewer primary incidents than Launceston and has around 50% less staff. It is important to note that Launceston has a larger geographical area to cover out of hours, and it should not be measured on a like-for-like basis given differences in local needs. However, there is a disparity between the number of officers available across stations in relation to demand, which may be impacting how officers respond to incidents.

Figure 1: Top 10 incident types and their average duration time for Tasmanian 24–7 police stations from 1 February 2024–31 January 2025. This excludes training type incidents.



Frontline Demand

Table 4: Number of primary incidents and average duration per incident for each Tasmanian 24–7 station from 1 February 2024–31 January 2025.








Location	Primary Incidents	Average Duration (minutes)
 Bellerive	9,637	44
 Bridgewater	8,165	44
 Burnie	6,968	45
 Devonport	8,366	41
 Glenorchy	14,176	38
 Hobart	19,595	40
 Launceston	19,647	51

The interviews found that some officers, although not all, felt that they were understaffed. Most notably, many officers interviewed at Bellerive, Burnie and Bridgewater felt they were not understaffed. Whilst some interviewed expressed a desire for more officers, when questioned it became apparent that they could manage much of the workload without more staff if there were changes. These included improvements to systems to reduce time spent on reporting, less assistance to other agencies, and a different approach to mental health related calls. Several people talked about the

variation in demand, where there could be very quiet days where they didn't have a lot to do, and other days where it was too busy and they were unable to get to everything.

The data collection (surveying periods) illustrated the level of variability in demand between stations across the year as seen in *Table 5*. These numbers reflect resourcing in relation to demand; it does not reflect which stations had the most incident numbers overall. It must also be noted that certain incidents had longer duration than others, which would impact the number of jobs attended per shift.

Table 5: Average number of incidents attended per callsign (usually accounting for two officers) for each Tasmanian 24-7 station for each analysis period.

Location	Average Period			Year
	DC Sep	DC Nov	DC Jan	
 Bellerive	5.3	5.9	8.3	4.9
 Bridgewater	6.3	7.9	6.0	5.9
 Burnie	5.4	6.7	4.8	4.9
 Devonport	5.1	5.1	7.9	5.8
 Glenorchy	7.6	5.3	8.9	5.0
 Hobart	7.5	5.6	7.6	3.1
 Launceston	9.7	8.0	8.8	6.1

Frontline Demand

ESCAD data for 2024-25 shows that Hobart-based officers frequently assisted at incidents in Glenorchy, mostly due to staffing levels during peak times (see Table 6). Similarly, Hobart and Bridgewater frequently assisted Bellerive. In part, the higher instances of officers attending on behalf of other stations in the South is due to closer proximity of Southern 24-7 stations. Even so, there are clearly instances where some stations rely heavily on assistance from others, and there may be times

of the day or week when certain stations are not adequately resourced. It is important to note that leave (long and short-term), along with infrequent or unusual events may affect this, making it hard to judge how consistent the issue is without fuller data. It is also worth noting that since July 2025, the change in rosters across all stations will have a considerable impact on staffing numbers per shift, with more staff per shift.

Table 6: Incidents officers attended from their base station for other Tasmania 24-7 stations from 1 February 2024–31 January 2025. These include secondary responses.

	Officer Base Station						
	Bellerive	Bridgewater	Burnie	Devonport	Glenorchy	Hobart	Launceston
Bellerive		2035			612	1829	8
Bridgewater	266		4	6	1139	447	13
Burnie				152	2	4	148
Devonport	1	2	391		1	4	98
Glenorchy	340	952		6		2200	29
Hobart	394	538	4	6	917		35
Launceston	2	4		3	9	4	



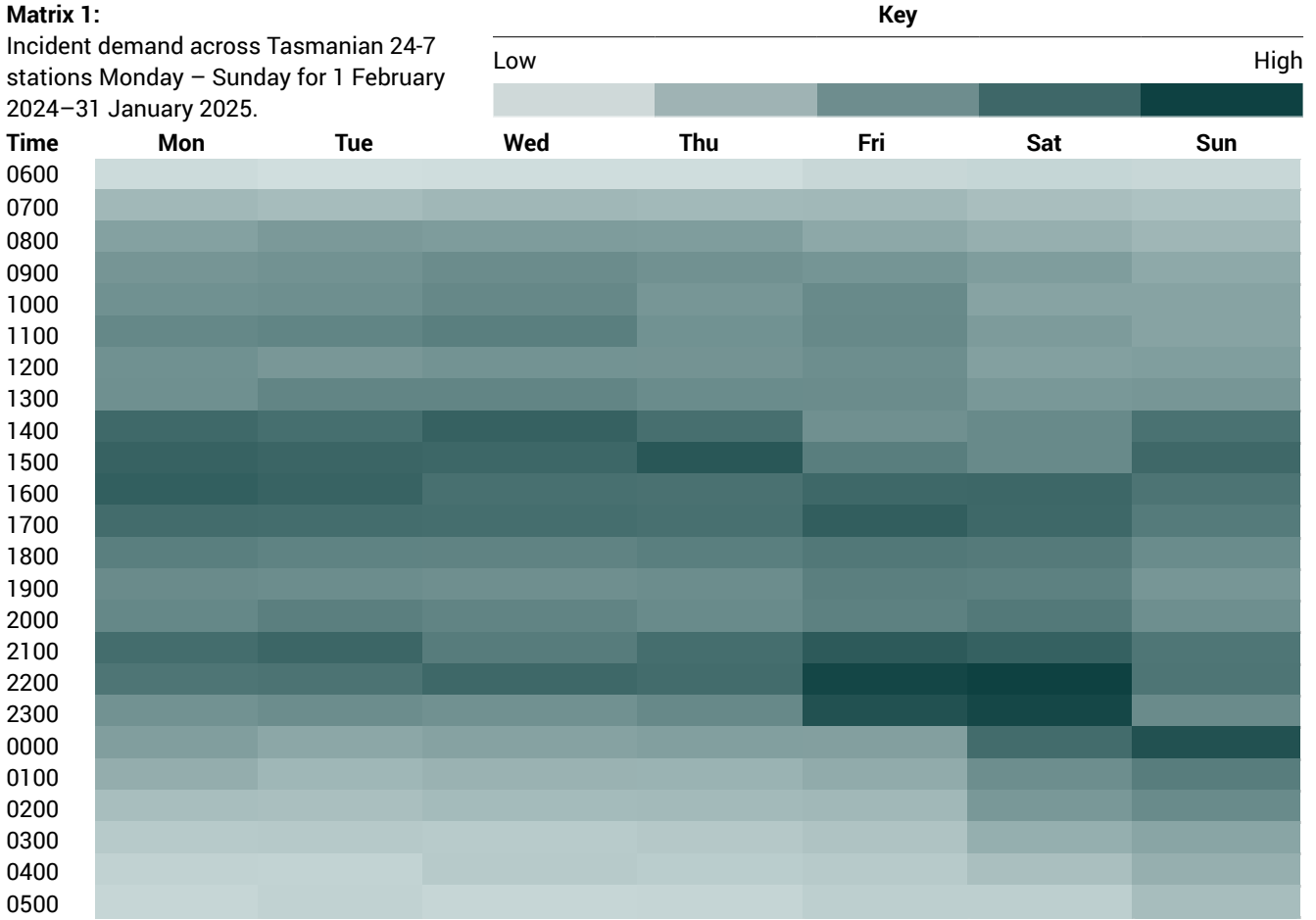
Prevalent incident types and deployment needs

Generally, the busiest periods across Tasmania 24-7 stations were from 1300 hours to the early hours of the morning; these are primarily during the afternoon or night shift hours. The busiest days of the week were Fridays and Saturdays. Refer to *Matrix 1*.

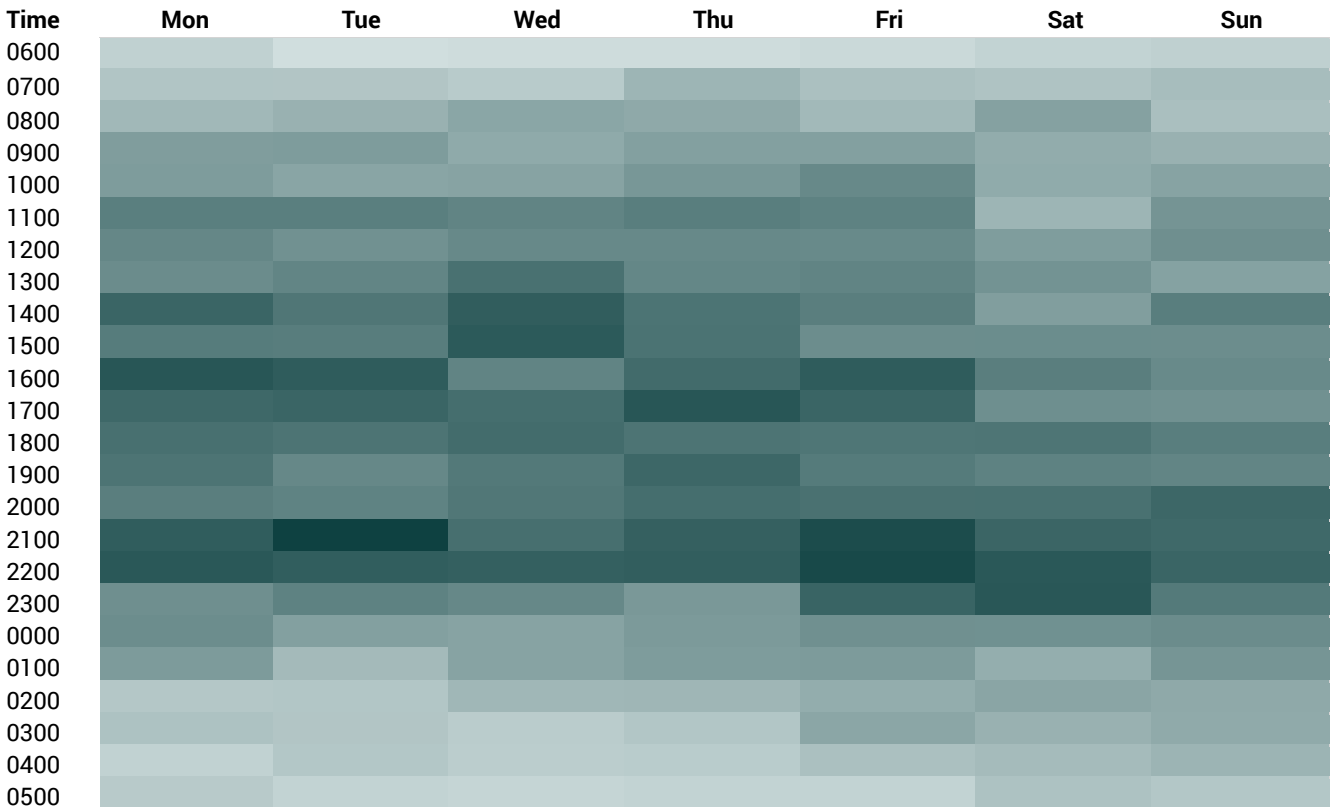
The most frequently occurring incidents, which are broadly similar across all districts and 24-7 stations, were disturbance, stealing, concern for welfare and FV. The latter two were the most time consuming of all the frequently occurring incidents, with more than 50% of incidents taking an hour or more to respond to. There were some incidents, such as sudden death and suicide, which took significantly longer on average, but these did not occur as frequently.

Frontline Demand

Matrix 1:
Incident demand across Tasmanian 24-7 stations Monday – Sunday for 1 February 2024–31 January 2025.



Matrix 2:
Mental health incident demand across Tasmanian 24-7 stations Monday – Sunday for 1 February 2024–31 January 2025.

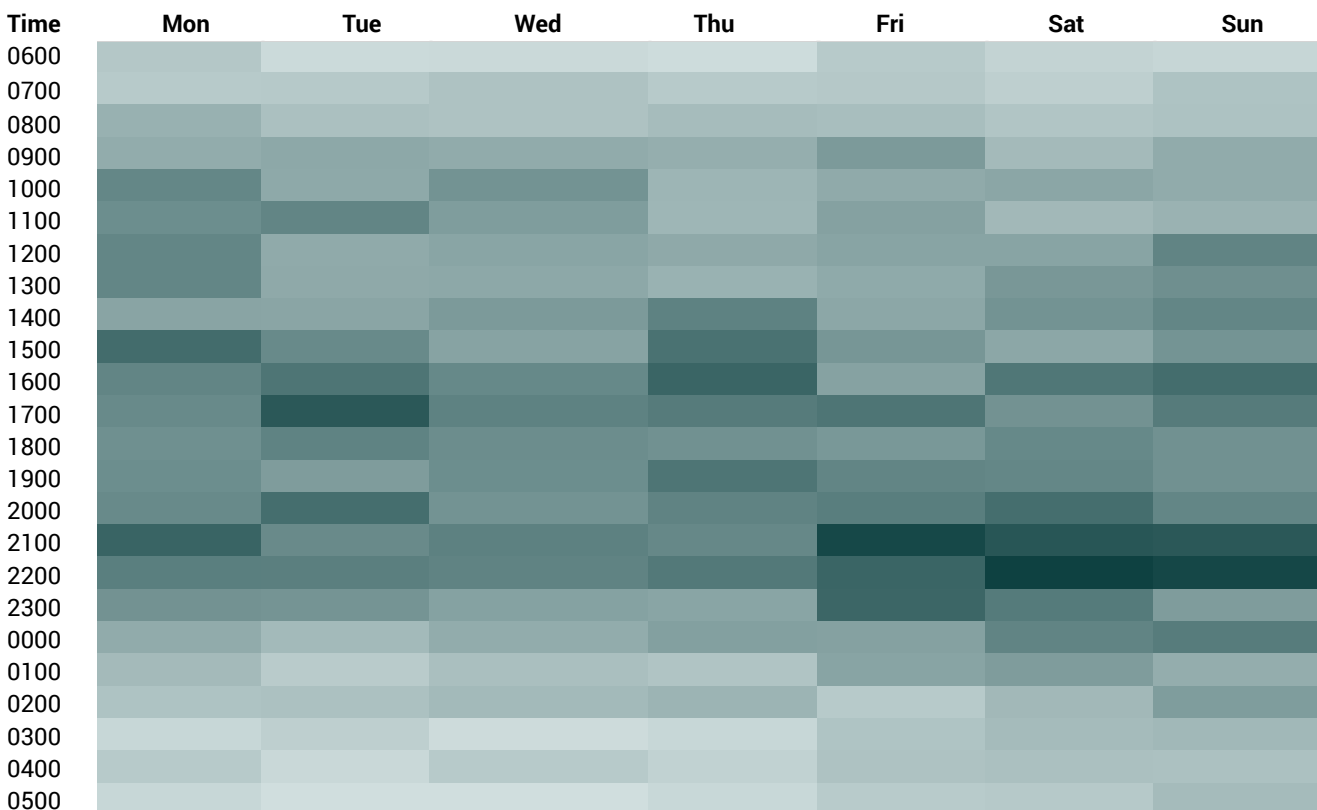


Frontline Demand

Mental health incidents similarly increased from mid-afternoon (1400 hours) until late evening (2300 hours) (Refer to *Matrix 2*). Incident peaks occurred not just on Friday nights, but also on Monday and Tuesday nights, breaking from the usual trend. As 50% of concern for welfare (typically falling under mental health) incidents take 42 minutes or more, it is evident that the afternoon and late evening shifts on Monday, Tuesday and Friday will potentially see more pressure on resourcing demand for mental health.

FV incidents also increased from mid-afternoon (1400 hours) until late evening (2300 hours) (Refer to *Matrix 3*). The busiest days were Friday, Saturday, and Sunday; again, two of these days anecdotally known as the most common days for anti-social behaviour. Similar to mental health and concern for welfare incidents, half of FV incidents take 60 minutes or more to respond to. This, on top of mental health and trends around theft and anti-social behaviour, shows that the afternoon and evening periods at the end of the week are more likely than not to present a challenge in resourcing demand.

Matrix 3:
FV incident demand across Tasmanian 24-7 stations Monday – Sunday for 1 February 2024–31 January 2025.



Overall, 24-7 stations encounter increasing and variable demand. Afternoon and weekend periods present pronounced resourcing challenges, particularly in Glenorchy. Recommendations focus on a targeted staffing review, improved data capture, and streamlined reporting for high-frequency incident types.

Frontline Demand

Recommendation 1

Evaluate current shift coverage at Glenorchy to identify the need for extra support during peak times.

Recommendation 2

Report the impact of recent roster changes on staffing and response capabilities across all 24-7 stations.

↓ Priority Action

Recommendation 3

The Roster Reform Working Group to communicate the work they are doing to identify suitable rosters for 24/7 stations.

Away from the frontline: leave, promotions, and opportunities

From 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024, Tasmania Police had an unscheduled absence rate of 9.08% for officers ranked as recruits, constables, and senior constables and a rate of 11.77% for officers ranked as sergeants and senior sergeants.¹² This indicates a moderate impact on workforce capability. These are higher rates than those compared to SAPOL and WAPF which was 5% for recruits, constables, and senior constables and 6% for sergeants and senior sergeants.¹³

Additionally, for the same period, Tasmania Police had an 'hours lost' frequency rate of 3.24% for officers ranked as recruits, constables, and senior constables and a rate of 4.12% for officers ranked as sergeants and senior sergeants.¹⁴ This is combined for both work-related physical injuries and work-related psychological injuries.

Sick leave is clearly a contributing factor in not always being able to manage the demand with available resources. Establishing rosters and minimum staffing levels to meet demand is challenging when workforce levels will inevitably

be compromised by leave taken for personal circumstances and illness or injury. As exact levels of leave are not reliable, overstaffing may be a consequence when leave is considered in planning staffing levels. Overstaffing may sound like a positive, however, this can lead to negative consequences of increased internal demand or self-generated demand.

At the same time, officers reported feeling frustrated that they cannot easily leverage opportunities provided for secondments due to staffing challenges. There was a sense that those on leave complicated staffing numbers on the frontline, making stations appear to be more staffed than the reality.



The current roster is only unachievable because there are so many people off sick, on secondment and training, all of that is important but with the way TasPol do it, by numbers, on the books we're fuller but in reality we're not."

– Constable

The issue of sick leave is a contentious one. Most feel sympathetic to those on sick leave and understand supporting those on sick leave is important. However, the day-to-day impact on those working a shift with reduced staffing numbers can increase tension and stress around managing workloads. This can be cyclical, with reduced staffing numbers leading to more sick leave. The WLF report into Safe Staffing noted that under the Commissioner's Instruction, members are much more likely to take sick leave knowing they would be replaced in their shift. This was noted as a positive to support member well-being but also noted as a key driver of the high levels of sick leave taken. To provide further clarity on the potential impact of sick leave on the frontline, it would be prudent (if not already done) to implement ongoing analysis on unit workload versus sick leave and the demand patterns (e.g. types of incidents) against the reason for absence. Not only would this increase understanding of staffing, but it would also assist in directing appropriate support for staff.

¹² Data extracted from the ANZPAA Workforce Demographics Report 2023–2024 Rank groups are preset in the Workforce Demographics Report data.

¹³ Although SAPOL and WAPF have larger workforces and different structures compared to Tasmania Police, they have similar officer per capita rates and would be the most comparable jurisdictions in Australia.

¹⁴ Data extracted from the ANZPAA Workforce Demographics Report 2023–2024 Rank groups are preset in the Workforce Demographics Report data.

Frontline Demand

The number of officers on long term workers compensation absence is having a direct impact on front line staffing. On average Tasmania Police has between 5-6% of its workforce unable to work. Some of these staff are attached to frontline stations and contribute to the reduction in staffing numbers.

Those on restricted duties who are returning to work following sickness and/or injury, whilst not being able to attend an incident, are a valuable resource in response and investigation. One constable interviewed who was on restricted duties described his work as being “desk-based investigation” and to “follow up on incidents that other officers from the station were attending.” Placing officers on restricted duty further upstream in the response may help to address some of the demand that does not require an in-person presence. Examples from the UK and US indicate that redeploying officers on limited duties to special response teams or video triage units can improve efficiency and resilience. For example, Derbyshire Constabulary in the UK has a Crime Resolution Investigation Management Team that deals with over 4,000 calls per month through remote attendance and Gloucestershire Constabulary’s Triage Team provide expertise in the call centre to help manage demand during peak hours.¹⁵

In the United States, 150 police agencies have adopted the use of real time crime centres, designed to provide immediate support to frontline officers.¹⁶ A 2024 real time crime centre preliminary report by Fairfax County Police Department stated it would reduce the time it takes to arrest dangerous offenders, while providing clearer insight into critical incidents and increasing officer safety.¹⁷ Closer to home, Western Australia Police Force (WAPF) introduced their new real time State Operations Command Centre (SOCC) in 2024, which centralises police technology and data but also includes personnel from other state departments such as Corrections, Communities, and Education, in addition to mental health co-response staff to enable greater collaboration and information sharing.¹⁸ A crime or command centre is staffed 24-7 and uses automated number plate recognition (ANPR) data, body worn camera footage, community camera feeds, in addition

to CAD systems and other accessible databases. A similar model in Tasmania Police would not only assist in enhancing their response capabilities, and supporting operational staff in decision-making, but would also provide further opportunities to utilise non-operational staff. Over time, if suitable, this could evolve to include personnel from other relevant departments in Tasmania.

Recommendation 4

Explore the feasibility of implementing a new multi-agency crime or command centre to provide immediate support and investigation capabilities to the frontline, using both operational and restricted duty officers.

New teams and taskforces

Recent creation of specialist units (e.g. Launceston Family Violence focus group, High Risk Offenders Taskforce, Saturate Taskforce) sparked concerns about redistribution of resources. General duties officers value their impact on service and victim care, but highlighted frustrations related to perceived loss of investigation capacity at the frontline. These officers felt that investigation work remained mostly with them and that in some cases the Family Violence unit did not work collaboratively with frontline officers to investigate. Ultimately, they felt that the specialist units were taking officers away from the frontline but not necessarily taking work away. They did not see the benefit to them, even if they acknowledged a benefit to the service.

Similarly, the Saturate Taskforce was mentioned as another example where the frontline had a reduction in staff numbers to facilitate a function that did not directly, at least in the short term, appear to reduce their workload. However, the Saturate Taskforce was mentioned by staff as being a positive initiative that had value. Communication to the frontline around the short- and long-term benefits of new taskforces and units to frontline policing and Tasmania Police would be beneficial, as well as clarifying roles and

15 UK Home Office. 2023. The Policing Productivity Review: Improving outcomes for the public. [gov.uk/government/publications/policing-productivity-review](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/policing-productivity-review) [Accessed July 2024].

16 centers (2024). IT Professionals NZ. [online] IT Professionals NZ.

17 Davis, K. (2024). Fairfax County Police Department Technology in Policing. [online] Available at: <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/boardofsupervisors/sites/boardofsupervisors/files/Assets/FCPD-Technology-in-Policing.pdf>.

18 Western Australian Government. (2024). New WA Police Force State Operations Command Centre now active. Western Australian Government. [online] Available at: <https://www.wa.gov.au/government/media-statements/Cook%20Labor%20Government/New-WA-Police-Force-State-Operations-Command-Centre-now-active-20240222>.

Frontline Demand

remits of teams and taskforces to reduce confusion, and in some cases, tension.

Recommendation 5

Implement a targeted communication strategy related to the introduction of new teams/ taskforces, with regular updates and feedback opportunities for frontline staff.

Recording walk-ins and other minor interactions

Walk-ins to police stations represent a significant proportion of officer time but are inconsistently recorded in ESCAD, limiting analysis and management of demand. Within one 24-hour shift pattern in January 2025, 85 officers reported spending 15 minutes or more attending to walk-ins. For example, in the January weekend collection period, three officers in Burnie responded to walk-ins and one unit reported spending more than three hours tasked on the walk-in. In case study three (a FV incident) the initial method of reporting was through a front counter walk in. In this case, the officer spent around 45 minutes with a member of the public listening to the issue and giving advice on how to proceed. As it was not a dispatched incident and the officer was at the station, this was not reported at the time within the system.

It would be near impossible to account for every minute of officer time in a day. Additionally, assessing real time demand of walk-ins using current recording practices in ESCAD is not currently possible. Understanding this type of demand requires an amalgamation of data on multiple systems and, even then, it may include incorrect information. Increased use of mobile technology, such as mobile phones with ESCAD functionality, would allow officers to capture activities as they are happening without reliance on RDS.

Recommendation 6

Enhance reporting protocols in ESCAD to capture activities not currently captured, such as walk-ins, and integrating incident logs to ensure comprehensive demand visibility.

Use and benefits of supplementary police

Supplementary police such as Police Community Support Officers¹⁹ (PCSOs) are often introduced into police services to provide a visible presence in the community and deal with minor issues to bring additional capacity to resource stretched frontline policing. Visible policing through PCSOs can increase confidence in law enforcement and help to ease any public fear of crime and disorder. The role tends to include targeted foot or cycle patrols, anti-social behaviour and low-level crime, community engagement and identifying victims and vulnerable people. Having that extra capability gives sworn officers increased capacity to focus on serious crime and disorder.

In Australia, several jurisdictions use supplementary police to fulfil specific roles within the policing remit. The Northern Territory started their auxiliary policing scheme in 1992 and now cover communications, watch house and front counter duties. Similarly, Western Australia introduced auxiliary officers in 2009 to cover administrative roles and custody support such as staffing the watch house. Other jurisdictions have similar roles like Protective Services Officers (PSOs), who are mostly used to for transport and security arrangements, rather than general neighbourhood and community policing.

Supplementary police or auxiliary support officer programs are achieved through specific government funding or enabling Commissioners the flexibility to allocate budgets in line with demand for core or support services.

Recommendation 7

Consider a pilot Police Community Support/ auxiliary officer initiative at select 24-7 stations, focusing on non-core duties and community engagement.

¹⁹ In other jurisdictions, these may be referred to as Public Support Officers, Protective Service Officers (PSOs) or auxiliary officers.

Mental Health



Mental Health

Mental health

The role of police in mental health demand

The National Health Survey (2022) estimated that 22% of the Australian population aged 16–85 experienced a mental disorder over the previous 12 months, and 43% experienced a mental disorder during their life.

The average mental health score of Australians has been on a steep decline since 2014, for those aged 15-35 it has declined at a much faster rate.²⁰ Within the 2021 census, 11% of the population in Tasmania stated they had a diagnosed mental health condition, the highest prevalence was in females. The number of people experiencing a mental health condition is likely to be a lot larger. Loneliness and life satisfaction are identified as key determinants of mental ill health. Technology and social media are thought to be considerable drivers of loneliness and decreased life satisfaction, particularly for the younger generations.²¹ For the police, that means the upward trend in mental health and concern for welfare calls are likely to continue and a plan of action on how to address this is vital.

The role of police in relation to mental health demand is a much-debated issue. Both police and healthcare professionals alike recognise that the police are not diagnosticians and do not have the requisite skills and knowledge to effectively address the needs of those in a mental health crisis. However, police are the only agency which has the power to use force and enact protective custody under the [Tasmania] *Mental Health Act 2013* which results in them often being called to respond. Where uniform police are called, they are frequently transporting people in mental distress to the hospital or a mental health outreach centre.

Evidence shows that police being the first responders – or responding at all – to people who are experiencing mental distress can escalate the situation and cause trauma.²² Furthermore, people with mental health conditions who encounter police are more likely to be fearful and distrustful of police as a result.²³

Reviews of mental health demand have been conducted by police services across the globe with various outcomes. Many have clearly defined the role of police in mental health response. Most make clear that, following initial call taking and triage, the police role in mental health response should be limited to three categories:

- where a crime is occurring or has occurred
- where there is risk of serious physical harm or risk to life of an individual (including the risk of harm to other practitioners such as healthcare professionals)
- where police powers are required to make an arrest into protective custody, or any other required police power.

A broad spectrum of situations can be covered within these categories and many of the incidents that Tasmania Police respond to will undoubtedly fall into one or more of these. However, there are many instances where police go outside these parameters to deliver a service that they are not and should not be responsible for. Some examples observed first-hand or reported to the review team included police acting as hospital security guards to move a distressed person off the premises, transporting those with mental ill health to community outreach units and helping care home staff calm down a distressed older resident.

Ensuring that police operate within a clearly and appropriately defined role in mental health incidents requires the wider public health system to fill the response gap. This is by no means an easy negotiation and would require careful collaboration and planning.

²⁰ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. Prevalence and impact of mental illness data. Updated May 2025 and accessed July 2025. aihw.gov.au/mental-health/overview/prevalence-and-impact-of-mental-illness.

²¹ Sapient Labs. 2025. Mental State of the World in 2024: the Global Mind Project. Pp16-17.

²² Randall, R., Kennedy, H., Karanikolas, P., Bashfield, L., Rayner, A., Nguyen, F., Wu, L., Martin, R., Thomas, S., Maylea, C. and Been Apprehended and Leadership Group, 2025. 'I was having an anxiety attack and they pepper sprayed me': police apprehension in mental health contexts in Australia. *Policing and Society*, 35(1), pp.85-100.

²³ Watson, A.C., Angell, B., Morabito, M.S. and Robinson, N., 2008. Defying negative expectations: Dimensions of fair and respectful treatment by police officers as perceived by people with mental illness. *Administration and policy in mental health and mental health services research*, 35(6), pp.449-457.

Mental Health

Resource and demand across the public system

Limited public resources and a reportedly under resourced healthcare system means that police are often a catch all for the increasing mental health demand. As police are often the only responders who have the power to detain and use force, they are sometimes called even when they are not identified as being the most appropriate first responders. In some cases when an ambulance is tasked to attend, uniform police may still be required to attend if there is a genuine and immediate risk to ambulance crew. There was considerable contention around ambulance assist jobs that were raised in both the survey and interviews, which will be addressed further in [Emergency service and partnership working](#). However, it is worth noting that one of the key issues raised was that police were often the first on the scene and due to an unavailable ambulance crew, uniform police became the primary responder in situations where they do not have the skills or knowledge to address the individual's needs. Officers noted, in both interviews and surveys, that this lack of expertise and clinical knowledge can lead to stress for both police and patients, and potential escalation. Officers also raised that increased distress and escalation were especially likely where individuals had prior history with police.

International models attempting to address this include policies such as Right Care, Right Person (RCRP) which use multi-agency triage and thresholds to redirect non-urgent or non-criminal health-related incidents away from police and toward relevant services (see [Appendix A](#) for more detail). The RCRP model has demonstrated an 80% reduction in police deployments for mental health, leading to a saving of roughly 1,441 officer hours in Humberside UK.²⁴ This model is now being rolled out nationally in the UK, and evidence suggests that it can result in more mature and collaborative relationships across healthcare and the wider public health system. It is a challenging model to introduce, taking several years to fully realise, however, given the proven success, it is worth consideration as a way forward.

New Zealand Police and several Australian jurisdictions²⁵ are working towards similar models to properly identify improved responses to mental health incidents. South Australia Police has recently introduced a radio dispatch triage framework which may be worth exploring its applicability in Tasmania.

Recommendation 8

Define and communicate specific criteria for police involvement in mental health incidents, including the incorporation of multi-agency triage.

Information sharing and data quality

Throughout the review, a recurrent challenge has been the quality, coverage and clarity of recorded mental health data. The current ESCAD system does not adequately distinguish between health-related jobs that genuinely require police intervention, and those that reflect system resource shortfalls elsewhere. This limits Tasmania Police's ability to track, analyse, and respond strategically to mental health demand, and hinders efforts to demonstrate or evaluate whether police are exceeding their intended remit. Enhanced data capture and improved system integration are needed to illuminate the real frontline mental health caseload and ensure appropriate response allocation.

Officers repeatedly reported that a lack of information-sharing between health and law enforcement agencies hampered their ability to make safe, efficient decisions on mental health calls. Inadequate knowledge of a person's use of mental health services or suicide risk could delay or complicate responses. In contrast, those operating within the newly implemented PACER model cited better access to cross-agency data and systems as a major operational advantage for triage and tailored response. Expanded, reliable and appropriately privacy-protected information-sharing should be explored as a key means to further support effective frontline responses.

²⁴ Evaluation into RCRP, led by UK Home Office, 2024.

²⁵ This includes New South Wales Police Force, Western Australia Police Force, and South Australia Police.

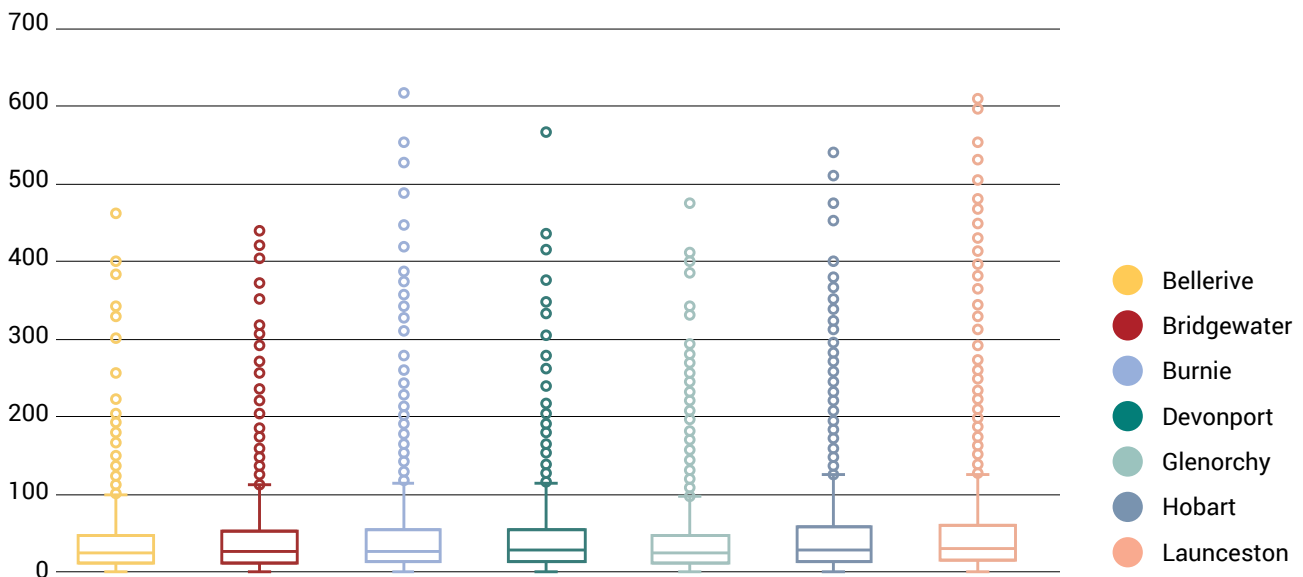
Mental Health

Table 7: Average time spent (in minutes) on Mental Health Incidents (Concern for Mental Health, Concern for Welfare, and Mentally Disturbed Person) at Tasmanian 24-7 stations per shift from 1 February 2024–31 January 2025.

Location	Day	Afternoon	Night
Bellerive	39	37	33
Bridgewater	42	39	42
Burnie	39	43	45
Devonport	46	39	40
Glenorchy	38	32	34
Hobart	44	40	35
Launceston	51	45	42

Figure 2: Total duration in minutes spent on Concern for Mental Health, Concern for Welfare, and Mentally Disturbed Person jobs across all Tasmanian 24-7 stations. The chart shows the medium duration spent on each shift during the initial call. This does not include follow up and paperwork, however, it will include time spent waiting in hospital.

Mental Health Incident Duration in minutes



Time spent on mental health incidents

Analysis of data collection periods showed an average of 40 minutes per shift was spent on mental health jobs, with the longest being 640 minutes. This does not include any post incident follow up work but does include hospital or other waiting time. Within the

same period officers reported²⁶ an average time spent on mental health jobs as two hours, and a maximum time of seven hours. This aligned with the full year’s ESCAD data set that indicated an average incident duration of 63 minutes (see *Table 7* and *Figure 2* for 24-7 station breakdown and range), and where 25% were less than 19 minutes and 25% were between

²⁶ In the end of shift survey, officers were asked of all the mental health related incident they responded to in that shift, how long was their longest job. They were asked to give an estimate that included all statements, waiting in the emergency room or for ambulance, travel time, paperwork / reporting and follow-up within a single shift.

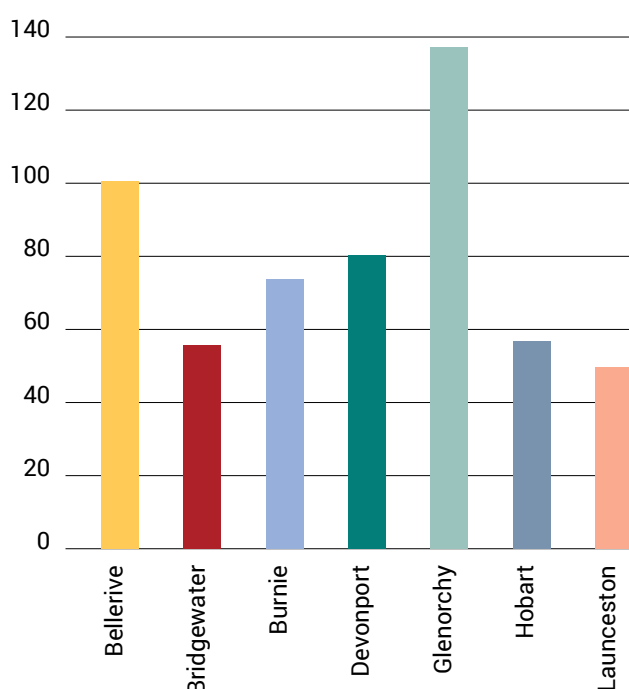
Mental Health

80 and 171 minutes (2.85 hours). There were a small number of outliers that were considerably longer, with some taking five hours or more.

From officer interviews and the perspective survey, 19% of incidents taking over an hour were attributed to delays waiting for hospital staff to accept patients in protective custody (Refer to *Figure 3* for the average maximum time spent on mental health incidents reported by officers in the end of shift survey). The Tasmanian *Mental Health Act 2013* requires police to hand over individuals to a Mental Health Officer at hospital, but in practice, hospital resource constraints often extended police presence in the Emergency Department. Officers voiced that poor hospital resourcing, unclear room allocations, and lack of streamlined procedures contributed to inefficiencies and operational frustration. Evidence from the case study (see *Case Study 1*), highlight some of these challenges. In the case study, the police unit showed themselves to be proactive in trying to move the process forward. Despite this, two officers remained in the Emergency Department with a person who presented no obvious risk to others.

Figure 3: Average maximum time spent on mental health incidents (including reporting, paperwork and follow up work). Taken from the end-of-shift survey during data collection periods.

Shift Survey: Maximum Time Spent on Mental Health Incidents



This case study was selected as representative of mental health calls and was not an 'outlier' in relation to duration on the job.

As is the nature of some types of mental ill health, behaviour of the individual can at times be erratic and disruptive and this was reported as being a secondary problem to uniform officers waiting in the emergency department. Officers reported being in the waiting area for up to four hours (the upper limitation on Section 17 of the *Mental Health Act*) with individuals who were volatile and disruptive. Officers also exhibited compassion for those who may be waiting whilst also experiencing distress of their own that was further impacted by a more disruptive environment. They described feeling helpless to act in these circumstances as they were at the mercy of resourcing issues faced by the healthcare system. Some officers mentioned that the hospital should have a room specifically for police to wait, and while other officers reported this was already available, all stated that they had never used it. Within the case study, officers requested access to the room, although this was not provided.



Police in hospital isn't working well. Sometimes hospitals don't assist us. There should be more communication at the top around beds and places to be [specifically for police waiting in hospital] ...Police would be more proactive and helpful [for mental health incidents] if they know that it would be quicker and they wouldn't have to wait."

– Constable

It is apparent from conversations over the course of the review that Senior Leadership within Tasmania Police have worked consistently with the Department of Health to improve the challenges with waiting in hospital and policy has adapted to address this. Ongoing cross-agency policy and infrastructure work is happening, but the issue remains a persistent resource drain and a challenge faced by police across Australia. Further system investment, clearer protocols, and reduced reliance on protective custody presentations are desperately needed to alleviate police-health gridlocks.

Mental Health

Tasmania Police are clearly trying to address these challenges and one approach frequently referred to was the Police, Ambulance and Clinical Early Response teams (PACER) which aims to bring an improved multi-agency response to mental health incidents and to reduce the number of protective custody arrests.

PACER

PACER in the Southern District, was raised as an effective innovative practice by nine officers who were interviewed. All were positive about the co-response model having made a difference. An evaluation into the service²⁷ revealed a decline of 363 emergency department presentations in a two-year period. PACER practitioners reported that if a business-as-usual response was given instead of PACER, 420 occasions in 2022 would have resulted in enacting the *Mental Health Act*, whereas with PACER, those people remained in the community. The evaluation and monthly reporting suggest that around 74% of consumers remain in the community as an outcome of PACER.²⁸

The interviews with PACER practitioners and officers reflected findings from the evaluation that PACER was seen as a positive working culture and allowed for deeper understanding of the roles of each agency involved and the limitations and challenges each face. PACER practitioners reported a clear understanding of their role in each consumer interaction, which made for a more effective and positive working relationship and reduced tensions between agencies, which can be seen in a business-as-usual response. It was also perceived by officers as a positive opportunity to upskill and increase knowledge on mental health, leading to increased confidence in responding to mental health jobs.

There were some frustrations expressed by officers, mainly that there was still a large proportion of jobs that uniform members were responding to, either being the first on the scene or being the sole response. Many officers praised its effectiveness, whilst also being disappointed that it hasn't made a bigger impact on the number of mental health calls they are attending. Where mentioned, it was often talked about in conjunction with not having the skills to effectively respond and feeling they were

the wrong agency to turn up as it could escalate the situation.



PACER team is ambo and Police in one. Still similar to ambos, they don't come to lots of things. Should have more people for that. But they won't go to incidents related to alcohol and drugs. If they could go into jobs first it would probably help us – if they went there and made a judgement, it would probably help us...It's like we're causing an issue in the first place [by showing up], they just get agitated that police are there."

– Constable

In the Northern District, the PACER team were regularly mentioned in interviews as being a valuable source of expertise and advice that officers could call during shifts. However, they are available for a limited window in each day, and officers felt this was a gap in response that left them requiring ambulance, who were often too busy to help. It was also reported that where the PACER team were able to attend the call, they would rarely do so without police in attendance.

Between February 2024 and January 2025 there were 18,251 mental health calls to Tasmania Police in the Southern District. Of this, the proportion responded to by PACER were 5.7% (1040). In the same period, the Northern and Western Districts received 13,897 mental health calls. Officers in both these districts expressed a desire to see PACER implemented in the Western District. It has since been implemented in the Northern District with one unit. Given its success in the South, and promising results in the North and the current numbers of calls received, there is a strong case for implementing PACER in the Western District.

²⁷ Evaluation of the Mental Health Emergency Response service in Southern Tasmania. Tasmanian Centre for Mental Health Service Innovation, 2024.

²⁸ Mental Health Emergency Response monthly report for August 2024. Tasmanian Government.

Mental Health

Recommendation 9

Expand the PACER co-responder model to the Western District, with ongoing evaluation against demand and outcomes.

Recommendation 10

Review feasibility of increasing the PACER to two teams in the Southern District.

Recommendation 11

Review information recording practices for mental health to enable clearer data on police versus health system responsibilities including information on risk, activity and outcome.

Evaluations³⁰ on the model in a UK context found that the model can provide better outcomes for callers to police who need help but are not reporting a crime, and gives time for assessment of need to determine the correct response. It was also observed that for such a model to be successful there had to be good information-sharing between both services (mental health and police), which in turn improved communication across the services. Having a mental health practitioner in the control room would allow for a knowledge base and understanding that is fed into the triage and dispatch service to send the most appropriate response. It may also provide an opportunity for increased understanding and closer working between the Police and Ambulance control rooms.

Recommendation 12

Explore the feasibility of embedding a mental health practitioner in Radio Dispatch Services for improved triage.

Mental health expertise in the triage process

Within the interviews, one officer suggested that having a mental health nurse in RDS may assist in better triaging jobs so that police do not turn up to situations where they are not needed. Embedding mental health practitioners in police control rooms is a tried and tested model for reducing the number of officers attending mental health calls unnecessarily, and importantly, reducing protective custody detentions. It works by having a mental health nurse or experienced mental health support worker based in the control room during peak hours (typically between 1200–2300 hours) to provide advice to uniform police and dispatch staff in managing mental health incidents. The goal is to provide early intervention, reduction of harm to all parties and ultimately, reduce demand on police resources, which has had some success where it has been introduced in some jurisdictions.²⁹

29 Broome, Davies and Lewis. Science evaluation of the South Wales police control room mental health triage model: outcomes achieved, lessons learned and next steps. *Journal of Forensic Practice*. 2022.

30 Maskrey, V., Notley, C., Musgrave, S., Gentry, S., Karavadra, V., Khan, A., Vincent, L. and Holland, R. (2016) Norfolk Constabulary Pilot Project Evaluation: Mental Health Practitioners in the Control Room. Norwich: Norwich Medical School.

Gwent Police (2016) Specialist Mental Health Support in Force Control Room, Available online at: <https://www.gwent.pcc.police.uk/en/news-room/specialist-mental-health-support-in-force-control-room>.

Mental health support for police control room callers. UK College of policing. 2024. college.police.uk/support-forces/practices/mental-health-support-police-control-room-callers

Mental health

CASE STUDY 1

Total time on incident: 3 hours 38 minutes



INITIAL RESPONSE
3 hours 38 minutes



WAITING TIME
1 hour 37 minutes

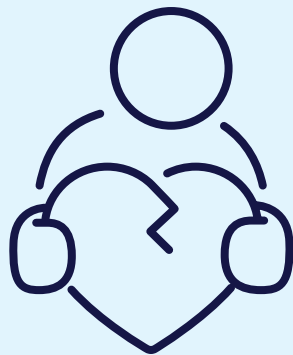
This incident was initiated by a phone call to 000 from an informant concerned about their ex-partner. Uniform members conducted a number of checks before locating the individual. The individual was ultimately taken into custody under the provisions of the *Mental Health Act 2013* and transported to the Royal Hobart Hospital (RHH). This incident did not involve PACER.

Key points:

- Two units were dispatched to locate the person of interest (POI).
- Officers spent over an hour on scene, speaking with the POI to assess their needs and decide on the appropriate course of action. The POI was not forthcoming in engaging with questions.
- Officers used their powers under the *Mental Health Act 2013* to detain a person into protective custody.
- Two officers spent 1 hour 37 minutes waiting at the hospital with the POI.
- Whilst waiting at the hospital, officers were proactive in trying to speed up the process and get the person seen by a healthcare practitioner. On multiple occasions the officer spoke to the triage nurse and emergency department navigator. The officer also consulted on current policy with the shift sergeant and relayed this to the hospital staff.

Initial Response	23:56	000 call received	15 June 2024
	00:05	Glenorchy and Bellerive units enroute	16 June 2024
	00:12	Glenorchy unit on scene	
	00:20	Bellerive unit on scene	
	01:19	Bellerive unit engaging with POI	
	01:25	POI taken into protective custody	
	01:30	Bellerive unit and POI enroute to RHH	
	01:40	Arrive at RHH	
	01:42	Unit register POI at RHH	
	01:52	Officer told they need to wait with POI	
	03:29	Unit leaves POI with hospital staff	
	03:43	Incident closed	

Family Violence



Family Violence

Family violence

Volume and time taken

Family Violence (FV) incidents are the fourth most frequent incident type attended by Tasmania Police. These incidents frequently require significant officer time and have significant impact on resources. In the past decade, FV dispatch incidents have more than doubled from 1,582 in 2013–14 to 5,856 in 2023–24, with the greatest growth in medium and low risk cases.³¹ The total number of offenders, victims and child victims have all risen in this period placing increased strain on frontline resources.

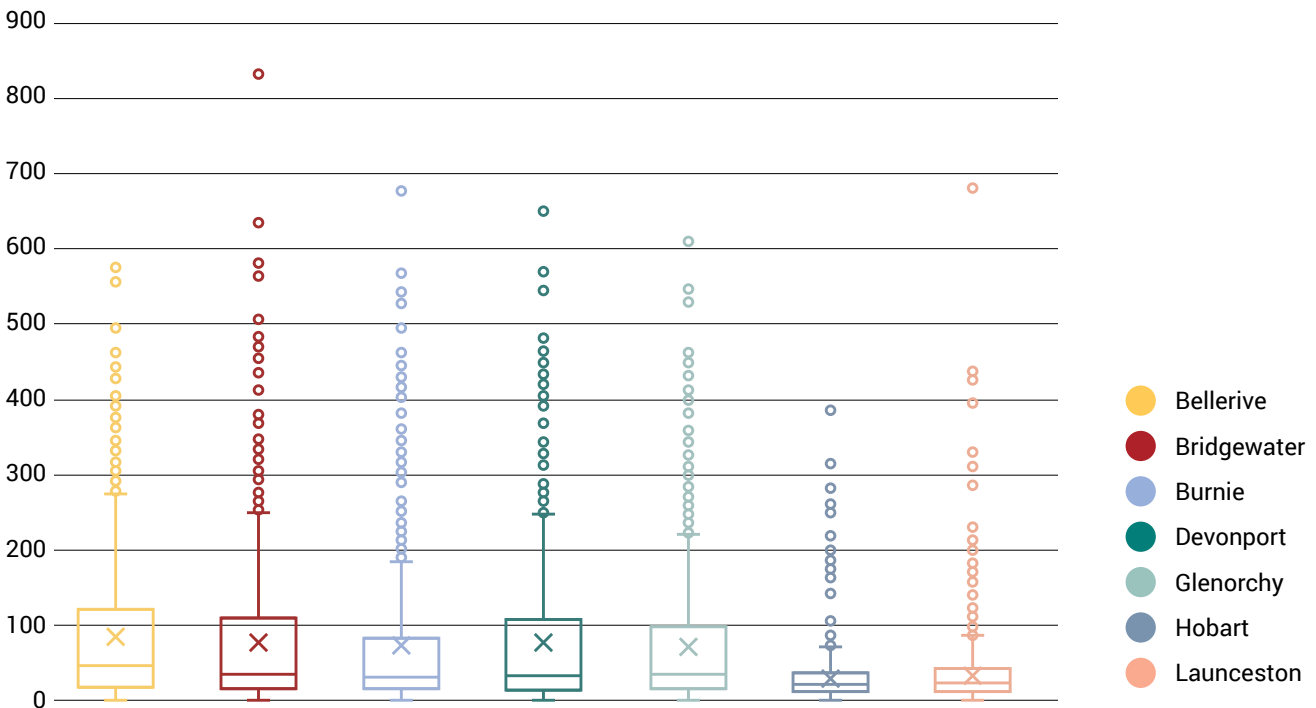
Officers interviewed reported attending one or more FV incidents in most shifts. The ESCAD data confirmed that there were between one to two FV incidents reported in every day or afternoon shift.

This means at least one police unit per shift is usually engaged responding to a FV incident. FV demand is highest at Launceston, Glenorchy, Hobart and Bridgewater which broadly aligns with the denser population.

Officers reported FV incidents typically taking at least two hours and, where an arrest was made, this could extend up to 8 hours due to investigation, paperwork and follow up activities. During the data collection period, the calculated average duration was three hours (including reporting, travel and follow up enquiries within that shift).³² Total duration spent on incidents from the ESCAD data shows huge variation in time spent on each incident (see *Figure 4*). ESCAD data breakdowns show Launceston and Bellerive with higher average incident times, though it remains unclear how much is due to case complexity or logistical factors.

Figure 4: Total duration in minutes spent on Family violence calls across all Tasmanian 24-7 stations. This only includes initial response; it does not include any follow up and paperwork

Family Violence Incident Duration in minutes



³¹ Tasmanian Police Other Statistics by State to 31/01/2025. Provided by Reporting Service (DPFEM) in February 2025.
³² Three hours was the average for the data collection period; however, the data was hugely variable and ranged from under an hour to more than six. Time estimates were given at the end of the surveyed shift to include reporting, travel and follow up enquires that took place within that shift.

Family Violence

The volume of FV incidents, coupled with the time taken evidently presents a significant challenge to managing the resource of frontline staff. Innovative ways of managing the FV demand, whilst ensuring risk is managed effectively, is required. One model that has shown to have considerable success is Rapid Video Response (RVR), a virtual policing response model that enables victims of mid-level FV to connect with police officers through secure real-time video. RVR has now been rolled out nationally across the UK after evaluations showed that response times reduced from 32 hours to 3 minutes, arrests rose by 50% and victim satisfaction rates increased to 89%.³³ The success of the model has led to Enhanced Video Response (EVR), which uses the same model for response routine and priority crime types. It was evidenced to reduce response times by 78.6 hours, reduce the overall investigation by seven days, reduce staff stress levels and importantly, did not have a negative impact on public trust and satisfaction.³⁴ If a crime or command centre was established, as discussed in both these models could be incorporated into its remit. For more information about RVR, please refer to *Appendix B*.

Recommendation 13

Consider the feasibility of a Rapid Video Response model to address mid-level family violence response.

The uniform roles and distribution of work in FV

Uniform officers generally lead the first response, providing crisis containment, risk assessment for victims, and initial investigative steps to establish the legal situation and safeguard parties. However, officers in both the survey and interviews revealed frustration amongst the uniform officer cohort regarding the balance of responsibilities with the Family Violence (FV) Command. Officers felt that this was an unfair distribution of work. Many believe uniform police carry the investigative and administrative burden, while the specialist FV Command largely manages victim and perpetrator aftercare. The lack of clear demarcation of duties and inconsistent FV team involvement in investigations contributed to perceptions of unfairness and inefficiency. Officers expressed a strong preference for greater FV Command engagement in the early investigative phase and for more consistent handover opportunities.



They do a lot of work behind the scenes, but I couldn't tell you aside from management of offenders and assisting victims, apart from that, I couldn't tell you what they do."

– Constable

Where FV staff are involved in initial investigations, officers reported the input was often delayed or limited. Interactions are highly variable across stations: larger bases like Hobart, which have specialist FV staff on-site, tend to see better collaboration. However, officers described feeling 'stuck' waiting for clearer direction or specialist input, especially on complex or historic cases, while still carrying responsibility for immediate risk.

More consistent early involvement from FV specialists in risk assessment, decision-making, and complex investigation was desired from frontline officers. Clarifying boundaries, workflows, and responsibilities would help ensure resource pressure and case quality are balanced appropriately.

³³ Mental health support for police control room callers. UK College of Policing, 2024. college.police.uk/support-forces/practices/mental-health-support-police-control-room-callers.

³⁴ Mental health support for police control room callers. UK College of Policing, 2024. college.police.uk/support-forces/practices/mental-health-support-police-control-room-callers.

Family Violence

There is a view that over time there has been a shift in responsibility for family violence that does not align with core policing. Many of these responsibilities fall to police where it can be argued that these are not core policing such as conducting security audits of victim's homes.

A co-responder model was suggested as being a potential way forward to ensure that decision making is done with appropriate expertise, especially in more complex cases, and that the investigation can be shared according to skill and capability. The PACER co-response approach in mental health was widely praised by uniform staff. Some officers suggested a similar co-response model for FV, where initial attendance could include not only police but also a support worker, such as an Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA), to ensure specialist input and trauma-informed early support.

Recommendation 14

Outline distinct responsibilities between uniform and specialist Family Violence teams, including incident triage processes and collaborative investigations.

Recommendation 15

Pilot co-response units for family violence, evaluating collaboration between police and support workers for victim-centred outcomes.

Reporting and responsibility

Victim safety and protection are consistently prioritised, and thorough reporting is understood as essential. Nonetheless, the administrative and reporting load generated by FV is a significant ongoing burden, often extending into officers' personal time and creating lasting feelings of responsibility and stress.

Concerns about needing to "cover oneself" with exhaustive records appear rooted in a combination of legislative reality and organisational culture. The Scrutiny Framework, depicted in *Figure 5*,

demonstrates the high level of accountability that Tasmania Police Officers face when responding to FV incidents. Officers feel that are often criticised by victim support advocates for the decisions made during front line responses. Officers say they have a sole focus on ensuring the safety of all parties and removing the risk of further harm. Officers also point to the weight of paperwork, especially for breach of court orders or statutory filings, as a universal source of frustration and anxiety.



Family violence orders, places of safety, family violence reports, it can take time to do paperwork and takes a while to get through the bouncing balls, it can take time to do and its very resource heavy. It can also take time to do breaching of court order jobs in Hobart because it's a busy city."

– Constable

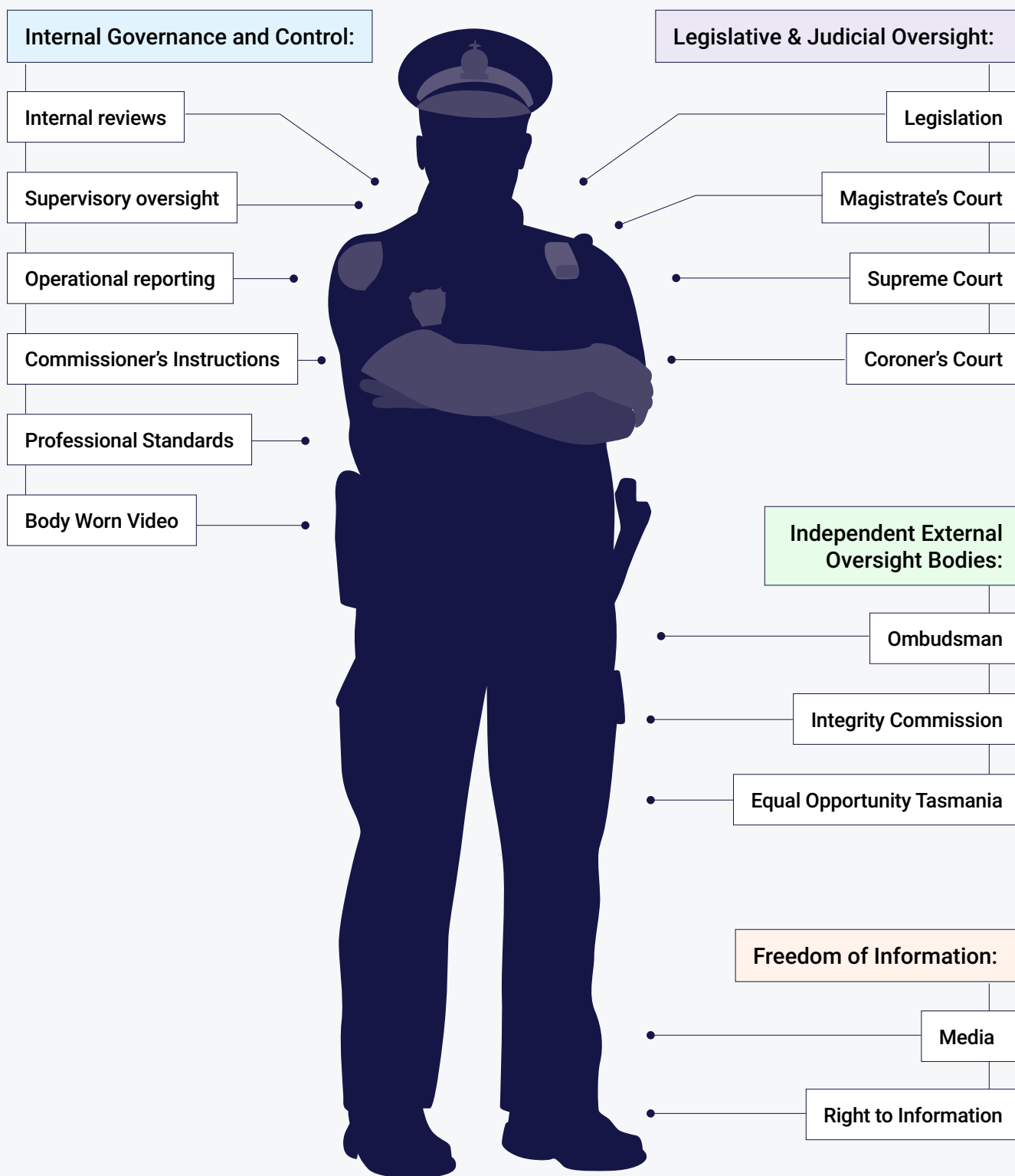
Uncoordinated systems make this a difficult process. This is discussed in detail in [Systems, Technology, and Data](#), however, it is worth noting that Project Unify may go some way to resolving this.

Tasmania Police are currently conducting a pilot for the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) with body worn camera and reporting for FV incidents. It is unclear if there will be any significant reductions in time taken on the reporting at this stage in the pilot, however, its impact on quality, especially relating to detail, and standardisation of reporting are promising.

Tasmania Police should explore further opportunities to utilise AI especially to assist in file preparation and the making of orders. The key to effective use of AI is to ensure documentation is reviewed for accuracy.

Scrutiny Framework – Police Response to Family Violence

Figure 5: Image depicting the high level of accountability Tasmania Police officers face when responding to family violence incidents



Family Violence

CASE STUDY 2

Total time on incident: 5 hours 37 minutes



INITIAL RESPONSE
2 hours 54 minutes



FOLLOW UP
2 hour 43 minutes

Police were called by a women’s shelter in the Southern District when one of the residents received letters from the offender who had a family violence order (FVO) relating to the victim. The offender was serving a custodial sentence at the time. This was the second FVO breach in two weeks.

Frontline staff initially took a report from staff at the women’s shelter and returned the following day to take a statement from the victim. The offender eventually declined to interview; he was charged with a breach of order.

Key points:

- One frontline unit initially took the report, statement, and forensic evidence from the staff at the women’s shelter. As the victim was not present, they liaised with shelter staff to arrange a second visit to take the victim’s statement.
- Another frontline unit from the following day shift visited the shelter for the second time to take the victim’s statement.
- The primary frontline officer corresponded with the prison to arrange an interview with the offender. This included offering the offender an interview and providing dates and times of the officer’s shifts to conduct the interview. The offender agreed to an interview and an interview date and time was set. This correspondence took place on five days over the month following the reported incident.
- When the officer arrived at the prison to interview the offender, the offender declined to interview.

Initial Response	12:59	000 call received	20 March 2024
	13:09	First unit enroute	
	14:19	Unit on scene with shelter staff	
	15:02	Incident deferred to next day shift	
	08:15	Second unit enroute	21 March 2024
Follow up	08:38	Unit on scene with victim	
	12:55	Primary officer contacts prison, offering offender interview	25 March 2024
	01:30	Prison correspondence, offender consents to interview	30 March 2024
	00:03	Correspondence with prison	15 April 2024
	07:13	Correspondence with prison	21 April 2024
	21:33	Correspondence with prison	22 April 2024
	14:00	Primary officer enroute to prison	29 April 2024
	14:30	Primary officer at prison, offender declines interview	
	16:18	Incident filed for court proceedings	
	09:41	Report complete, ESCAD incident closed	

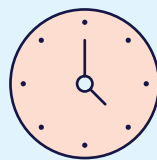
Family Violence

CASE STUDY 3

Total time on incident: 37 hours 34 minutes



INITIAL RESPONSE
5 hours 34 minutes



FOLLOW UP
32 hour approx.

A relative of a woman in a relationship with a known FV perpetrator presented as a walk-in at a 24-hour Southern District station to report his concerns and seek advice on how to safeguard the victim. The informant reported that the victim was afraid of the offender and had been physically assaulted and subjected to coercive and controlling behaviour.

The offender had a history of serious organised crime (SOC), possession of firearms and violence. Both he and the victim had a history of drug use and were currently under bail conditions and curfew for separate offences.

The offender lived at the same premises as the victim, her son and the informant, and was threatening and intimidating to all three. The informant had expressed fear over retribution of reporting the offender to the police and did not make an official statement.

Following on from the informant contacting Community Corrections, a further referral was made to Police by Community Corrections. The case was escalated to the Family Violence Unit (FVU), who liaised with uniform staff at a non-24-hour station to make an arrest and apply for an Interim Family Violence Order (IFVO).

Key points:

- Frontline officer took the initial report from the victim's relative and conducted the relevant checks.
- The frontline officer referred the case to FVU to contact the victim and advise on next steps.
- Frontline staff conducted bail checks on the offender and victim.
- FVU carried out a coordinated response with frontline staff to arrest the offender.
- Four police teams were involved in this incident: frontline, FVU, the Safe Families Coordination Unit, and the Child Safety Assessment Unit (CSAU).
- The ongoing investigation involved weekly reviews by FVU.

Initial Response	11:55	Informant presents at police station	9 December 2024
	11:56	Officer takes report from informant	
	14:19	Officer conducts checks, and completes FVU referral	
	15:02	Officer logs incident in ESCAD	
	17:29	Dispatch reviews ESCAD incident and it is closed	
Follow up	21:42	Bail check for victim planned for the evening	
	05:58	FVU plan approach with uniform staff	10 December 2024
	08:57	CSAU receive call from Community Corrections	
	10:28	FVU conduct bail management checks	
	18:10	FVU and uniform staff attend address and arrest offender	
	15:32	FVU consider victim pendant if offender bailed	11 December 2024
	15:44	IFVO issued	
	16:45	FVU confirm offender remanded until 22 February 2025	
	15:22	Victim completes victim interview with FVU	8 January 2025
	16:08	FVO issued	5 February 2025

Youth related crime

Youth related crime, whilst not a separate legal category or crime type, was repeatedly cited by officers as a major source of daily demand and resource pressure.

It was also flagged within the Tasmania Police Community Safety Survey (2023) as being a primary concern for the public, where 22% of the public rated youth crime as their primary safety concern.³⁵ Both nationally and internationally, the 16–24-year age group make up a considerable proportion of offending, with a higher proportion of males offending in this age group.

In 2024, there were 5,124 youth offenders (under 17 years) proceeded against by police; however, not all of these resulted in a charge. In 2024, there were 5,782 charges laid against a total of 506 unique youth offenders, emphasising the large number of repeat youth offenders. The number of charges laid against youth offenders was the highest since 2009. The most common charge was stealing, followed by burglary, property damage, and assault.



[young people] know their rights, they know what we can do, they can be given bail on bail on bail. Youth crime is taking up a lot of our time."

– Constable



YC can be very time consuming, if you are taking them into custody, a lot of legislation, getting an independent person, we can have someone sitting for 3 hours before someone comes, they don't want family to come and if they are family, they tend to be anti-police. We have a bit of culture where we will drive people home rather than them finding their own way home"

– Constable

Officers reported that managing youth-related crime is especially complex and resource-intensive due to legal requirements. Dealing with young offenders often involves significant administrative overhead, including arranging an independent person for interviews, often lengthy waiting times for guardians or legal representatives, and compliance with extra procedural checks. Officers frequently feel pressure to transport youths home rather than leaving them to find their own way, further increasing time spent per incident.

Anecdotally, the repeat involvement of a small minority of youths in theft, anti-social behaviour, and assaults contributes to frustration and a sense that the same individuals generate a disproportionate share of work for the uniformed response. Many officers described "revolving door" bail conditions and difficulties in implementing meaningful interventions, expressing concern at the limitations of current responses both in terms of prevention and consequences. In both 2023 and 2024, in 80% of crime custody incidents, the young person was bailed.

Addressing youth-related crime will require not only sharper operational strategies but investment in early intervention, coordinated youth justice, and sustained public partnership approaches.

³⁵ DPFEM Community Safety Survey conducted in 2023 surveyed 4,080 members of the public from across Tasmania.

Early intervention and diversion

Early intervention and diversion are becoming more frequently used in preventing young people from becoming involved in criminal activity and to help them achieve legitimate ambitions and goals. One such intervention is mentoring. Research suggests that mentoring can reduce violence by 21%, all criminal offending by 14% and reoffending by 19%.³⁶ An example of a police officer-led mentoring program is the US based Youth Safe Havens, which provides two hours of mentoring per week to young people. Evaluations from the program found that it reduced crime and the likelihood of arrest.³⁷ Whilst this model may not fit with Tasmania Police's early intervention strategy, it could be considered by Department for Education, Children and Young People (DECYP) Another early intervention model is the Navigator scheme, where Navigators (support workers) offer support in custody settings to those who are involved in criminality. They use arrest as a 'teachable moment' to motivate changes in high-risk behaviours and attitudes. Navigator programs provide support to break the revolving door of crime. Evidence shows that they reduce involvement in violent crime and other criminality by combining immediate and long-term support, addressing needs around unemployment and education, and involving family in the process (Brice and Boyle, 2020; Brice and Boyle, 2020; Gaffney, 2021B). Navigator services are a helpful tool in prevention for those who may not otherwise engage in support services and may provide a means for young people to move away from involvement in criminal activity.

These early intervention and diversion schemes, along with other models such as restorative justice, have been shown to be effective tools for addressing youth related crime and ensuring that young people do not remain in the criminal justice system into adulthood.

Stealing and acquisitive crime

Stealing and other acquisitive crime (burglary, theft and robbery) make up 13% of all crime in Tasmania.³⁸ It is a crime type that was raised by the public³⁹ as being a safety concern. It is quite rightly perceived by officers as being a high proportion of their work, and it's the volume that can be time consuming. This is especially when factoring in the current process of investigation, often requiring attending personal and business addresses to take reports and collect CCTV and other evidence.

There is no dispute that stealing and acquisitive crime falls firmly within the role of police, and lower severity stealing should be predominantly dealt with by uniform police officers. Given both the sheer scale and recurrent nature of such incidents across all 24-7 stations, there is a strong impetus to reconsider how police resources are best deployed to address current and future increases in volume crime with limited staff availability. Project Link, the online reporting system that Tasmania Police is due to launch in 2026, will allow both businesses and individuals to report specific low-level crime such as theft and vandalism. For this to be successful and the benefits realised, it needs to be adopted, and use encouraged by all levels of Tasmania Police.

↓ Priority Action

Recommendation 16

Implement, embed and expand usage of online reporting (Project Link) for eligible low-level offences.

36 Raposa EB, Rhodes J, Stams GJJM, Card N, Burton S, Schwartz S, Sykes LAY, Kanchewa S, Kupersmidt J, Hussain S. The Effects of Youth Mentoring Programs: A Meta-analysis of Outcome Studies. *J Youth Adolesc.* 2019 Mar;48(3):423-443. doi: 10.1007/s10964-019-00982-8. Epub 2019 Jan 19. PMID: 30661211.

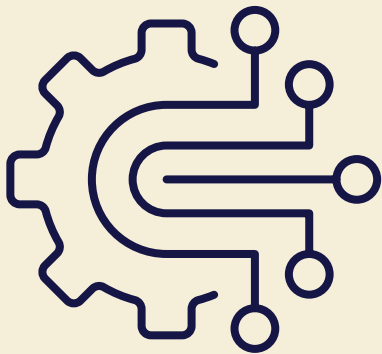
Farrington, D.P., Gaffney, H. and White, H. (2022). Effectiveness of 12 Types of Interventions in Reducing Juvenile Offending and Antisocial Behaviour. *Canadian Journal of Criminology and Criminal Justice*, 64(4). doi:<https://doi.org/10.3138/cjccj.2022-0022>.

37 Stewart, K. and Dubois, D. (2021). The Effects of Law-Enforcement Mentoring on Youth: A Scoping Review. [online] Available at: nationalmentoringresourcecenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/NMRC-Law-Enforcement-Mentoring-Review.pdf.

38 For a one-year period from 1 February 2024 – 31 January 2025.

39 The Tasmania Police Community Safety Survey (2023) reported 36% of the public surveyed were worried about theft from their homes.

Systems, technology, and data



Systems, technology, and data

Systems, technology, and data

Frontline officers consistently report that managing their workload and working efficiently is hampered by fragmented, legacy technology.

At present, Tasmania Police operate 28 disparate systems for reporting and intelligence. This lack of integration leads not only to significant duplication of effort for every incident but also threatens the accuracy and accessibility of data required for effective policing. While the past decade has seen visible improvements such as touchscreen laptops, the new Tasmanian General Radio Network (TasGRN), and expanded CCTV access, there is strong consensus that greater investment in integrated, mobile, and secure digital tools is urgently required. This section summarises current challenges and innovations across data quality, digital skills, frontline mobility, secure communications, and capability development.

Data and intelligence quality

Officers at every 24-7 station cited poor data quality and siloed intelligence as major impediments to both daily operations and longer-term investigations. Manual entry across multiple platforms creates risk of error, while duplicated reporting requirements are both frustrating and inefficient, reducing the time available for proactive policing. The lack of a unified system also hinders information sharing between teams, particularly in fast-moving or high-risk cases. Many officers raised concerns that delays or errors in systems contributed directly to poorer outcomes for victims and operational risk on the frontline.

Within interviews and surveys, a primary driver for poor data quality was reported to be the use, or misuse, of the Atlas system. Regardless of length of service, most officers felt they did not fully understand how to use Atlas and were not adequately trained. In most cases it was described as onerous and not user-friendly. This was leading to some officers not inputting information correctly, and in some cases bypassing the system entirely.

These behaviours highlight a significant risk in quality of data within Atlas. While Atlas was the biggest issue, officers mentioned difficulty in using most systems to varying degrees.

Alongside the interviews and survey, the case studies highlighted issues with data accuracy and recording. The two case studies for FV both had clear inaccuracies in incident date and time information, with both showing incorrect timings in their reports.

Unique identifications and risk of duplication

Currently, across the Tasmania Police systems, there is no unique identifier for each individual police to interact with. This likely results in duplicate or inconsistent records, limitations in tracking history of interactions, and reduced data quality. This will likely impact reporting and decision-making, which in turn may have an impact on investigation outcomes and public trust in policing. Victoria Police (VICPOL) use a unique identifier called Master Name Index (MNI). A new MNI is created for an individual the first time they are recorded in VICPOL's data system,⁴⁰ either as an offender, victim, informant, or subject (for instance a child present during an interaction). Any subsequent interactions or incidents are logged against the same MNI. Similarly, New Zealand Police have the unique identifier Person ID (PID). In New Zealand, an individual charged with an offence is also assigned a Personal Reference Number (PRN), which is linked to their associated PID in New Zealand Police's system. A unique identifier should enable any police officer to easily look up an individual and view a history of their interactions with police, charges, flags, or involvement in any previous incidents. It prevents confusion between individuals with similar names or other details.

As Tasmania Police go through their system transformation (Project Unify), they should prioritise the generation of a unique identifier field, which would be consistent across their different systems. This would alleviate the stress on frontline officers when accessing information as they would be able to search efficiently themselves. It would also allow better risk assessments for certain incident types such as mental health and FV cases. Subsequently,

⁴⁰ Law Enforcement Assistance Program, commonly referred to as LEAP.

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this would likely reduce the amount of time officers may spend on certain incidents where delays are caused by time taking to gather information, as well as assist in information sharing across teams.

Logging priorities

ESCAD currently has two priority options when logging an incident, low and high. Most incidents are deemed low as high priority incidents must meet strict criteria. While this is standard for high priority incidents, the lack of another option such as medium priority hinders analysis of trends. For example, all mental health incidents reported for the February 2024 – January 2025 period were deemed low priority, however, it is likely there were some incidents where there was significant risk to an individual or the public. Currently, analysis is unable to be completed on ESCAD data alone to identify these. Additional priority options may assist in deferring incidents that fall into the remit of other agencies, to ensure the subject receives the response best suited to the situation.

Recommendation 17

Practical refresher training should be given on Atlas, for current and future iterations of the system.

Recommendation 18

Generate a unified system unique identifier field for each individual police interact with. This could be undertaken as part of Project Unify.

Digital literacy and the current workforce

The frontline workforce is increasingly digitally literate, especially amongst younger staff, who are likely to have a more fluent understanding and familiarity with computer technology. Digital indexes suggest that younger generations are becoming more confident and proactive in the digital space.⁴¹ More generally, the digital inclusion score for the Australian population was measured as 73.2 in 2022, with the highest score being in the 18-34 age

group (82.6).⁴² With this increasingly digitally literate population, it would be a missed opportunity not to leverage these capabilities in current frontline staff and future recruits.

The rollout of touchscreen laptops reportedly made a noticeable difference in officer productivity, allowing for statement and report completion in vehicles. However, officers view the current laptops as cumbersome, particularly during foot patrols, rapid incidents, or for sergeants working alone. Officers showed a strong desire for handheld devices, expressing concerns that the cumbersome nature of laptops led to missed opportunities and delays when systems require time-consuming login or manual data entry. Many officers reported that not having laptops mounted was a safety issue when using the device on the road. Several advocated for deploying secure, police-issue mobile phones and in-car tablets.



In the cars we're carrying the big laptops around and if we're doing foot patrols, I'm not going to carry that around the city. A phone or a tablet that sits in the rest would be easier, also means that we don't tie up RDS. But obviously it's money, with Tassie it's always money". – Constable

↓ Priority Action

Recommendation 19

Conduct an operational trial with secure mobile devices and in-car tablets at pilot stations, evaluate impact, and iterate deployment plans. This could include the creation of an interface for frontline activity to submit street checks and intelligence.

⁴¹ Australian Youth Digital Index: Key Findings. November 2024. australiayouthdigitalindex.com/australian-youth-digital-index-five-key-findings.

⁴² Digital Preparedness. Australian Bureau of Statistics. 2022. abs.gov.au/statistics/measuring-what-matters/measuring-what-matters-themes-and-indicators/prosperous/digital-preparedness.

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Messaging platforms

Uniform police reported that they have begun resorting to personal messaging platforms (e.g. WhatsApp) to share intelligence, images, and personal details about potential suspects. While officers thought this to be efficient, this behaviour introduces considerable data security risks as these communications often reside on unencrypted, privately owned devices accessible to family members and vulnerable to loss or cyberattack. Beyond individual privacy risks, there are implications for court proceedings, as officers risk losing access to their own phones for extended periods if seized as evidence.



People go to group chat rather than through the systems because people won't upload there. The risk there is if it goes to court, losing your phone for 12 months as evidence".-

Constable

Recommendation 20

Identify and implement a secure messaging platform for work devices, with direct integration to official reporting and intelligence systems

Project Unify and major transformation

Project Unify is a long-term transformational project that aims to make systems and processes more streamlined. When completed, the project promises to link Atlas with the ESCAD system, FV system, offence reporting, death and coronial reporting systems, along with others. Rolling these into one core spine system under Atlas may provide better opportunity for statistical reporting, auditing and data visualisation. The project will be delivered in phases, with the next phase due to go live in the first part of 2026. Aside from delivery of an integrated system, success of the project will be contingent on its ability to ensure currently held data and inputted data is good quality, along with sophisticated reporting operability. If both these are met, there will be opportunity to leverage AI to begin demand forecasting and mapping resource allocation with

more accuracy. At present, the disparate systems and varied data quality across systems prevents effective use of AI in this area, as any AI tool is subject to the data fed in.

There were several officers who were aware that Project Unify was in the pipeline and there was a sense of optimism that this provided an answer to the challenges they currently face with Atlas, and the patchwork of other systems.

The launch of the TasGRN in September 2023 also marked a substantial leap in frontline communication, with officers universally praising its clarity, reliability, and security. This project was cited as an example of successful, consultative technology transformation, demonstrating "visible impact" on both officer safety and operational capability.

The frontline understand that Tasmania Police is limited due to financial constraints. One officer spoke about a singular police force in Australia as being a solution to the issue, by pooling resources and making bespoke systems for police that meet multiple jurisdictional needs. Recommending such a step would be outside the remit of this report, however it is worth noting that ANZPAA has established a cross jurisdictional procurement group with this goal in mind. Meaningful engagement with this group, from Tasmania Police and all other jurisdictions, will likely lead to tangible financial and technological benefits for all jurisdictions.

Recommendation 21

Model future major technology upgrades after the TasGRN. Use staged consultative rollouts for all major technology upgrades, defining metrics for user benefit and frontline efficiency.

Recommendation 22

Prioritise ongoing design and frontline user testing for Project Unify.

Recommendation 23

Seek a Treasurer's Exemption to allow Tasmania Police to undertake collaborative purchasing of specialised police equipment.

Systems, technology, and data

Use of AI in Tasmania Police

There is little doubt that AI, both predictive and generative, will become more commonplace in policing in Tasmania, and globally. Despite its considerable advances and research, there are still vast limitations to what is known about the benefits and risks of using AI in a policing context. What is known about AI is that its outputs are dependent on its inputs. Correct and good quality data is necessary to using AI within the criminal justice and public sector.

Some moves towards a more AI assisted and automated reporting approach may contribute to considerable time reductions, for example, where systems are linked and the information is no longer duplicated, but instead pulled across all reports. However, other uses of AI are likely to change the way in which officers interact with systems, leading to reduced report writing and a move to quality checking, proofing and editing reports, which can be as time consuming, but may lead to standardisation and improved quality.

Tasmania Police is already piloting the use of one generative AI product - Axon's Draft One - where the AI uses body worn camera footage to create a first draft statement for the officer to review. The use of this product is considered feasible because it does not draw from system data that has been identified as variable quality. It also keeps the officer in the loop to ensure that reports are reflective and correct. The potential benefits of using this product may be time saving and increased standardisation and quality. An evaluation is ongoing to understand its potential impact and risks. This and similar products must be evaluated prior to full rollout, as well as being consistently monitored and audited. Furthermore, the issue of accountability should be considered with the use of this and any other AI tool, as incorrect use and product error may prove difficult to determine.

Alongside accountability, data bias, and privacy, public appetite needs to be considered carefully prior to implementation of any AI tool.

Any predictive or generative AI tool that relies on historical and system databases (e.g. Atlas or FV systems) would require significant improvements to data quality before considering application within Tasmania Police.

Systems, technology, and data

Tasmania Police and Other Agencies

Tasmania Police is under pressure from evolving demand patterns, particularly mental health, FV, and youth crime. Their officers are committed to community safety and demonstrate resilience in an evolving environment which is characterised by their continuous support to the public and response to all reported incidents. However, this, alongside insufficient public knowledge and indeterminate processes in other state agencies, mean police are often completing work that could or should be the remit of other agencies. These are discussed in detail in the following sections:

Mental Health	Child Safety	
<p>Responded to <u>10,650 primary incidents</u> of Concern for Welfare, Concern for Mental Health, and Mentally Disturbed Person. These were all deemed low priority in ESCAD.</p> <p>It is recognised that police do not always have the requisite skills and knowledge to effectively address the needs of those in a mental health crisis, and the remit often should primarily sit with a healthcare professional. Officers reported instances of acting as hospital security guards, transporting mentally ill individuals to community units, and helping care home staff calm down a distressed resident.</p>	<p>Responded to <u>340 primary incidents</u> of Child Lost, Child Found, Uncontrollable Child, and Neglected Child.</p> <p>Officers reported difficulties in contacting Child Safety Services (CSS) outside of 0900-1700 hours, resulting in extensive delays before getting a response. They then found constant push back from CSS on tasks within their remit.</p>	
Fire	Ambulance	Bailiff Warrants
<p>Responded to <u>1,213 primary incidents</u> of Fire [various forms].</p> <p>Officers reported the relationship with Tasmania Fire Service could be improved, noting occasional inefficiencies in joint responses.</p>	<p>Responded to <u>2,443 primary incidents</u> of Crew Safety Ambulance [not urgent] and Request from Ambulance.</p> <p>Officers reported an increase in ambulance assistance, covering for shortages or extended response times in the health system.</p>	<p>Requested to assist on <u>6 execution warrants</u>.</p> <p>Tasmania Police is the only police force across Australia and New Zealand that routinely assists in a bailiff role.</p>

Emergency service



Emergency service and partnership working

Emergency service and partnership working

Frontline policing increasingly intersects with emergency services, health, and social care systems.

Officers often respond to incidents outside their traditional remit, including welfare checks, ambulance assists, and child safety concerns. Strengthening interagency collaboration is critical to managing shared demand and ensuring individuals receive the right response, from the right person and at the right time. Concerns were consistently raised about the impact a stretched public health system had on policing, particularly leading to a time and workload burden. One such example reported, primarily in the Southern District, was the requirement to conduct scene-watch duties concurrently with fire crews, effectively doubling up resources. Officers expressed frustration at being tasked to manage non-core policing matters, particularly when the original responsibility lay with another agency.



Have the other agencies do their own work. For instance, getting called to retrieve a mental health patient that has been let go unaccompanied on leave from the MH ward and now gone missing creates hours of work for us trying to find them. This is due to the ineptitude of the other agencies. Mental health, concern for welfare and assisting ambulance takes up way too much of our valuable time. How can we allocate resources to deal with our core business when we are picking up work from other agencies? More and more of these agencies have a protocol that imposes a need for them to tell police and get a job number to write off their responsibilities yet that then creates work for us."

– Constable



Mental health have released individuals from hospital – they do things deliberately on a Friday so that we have to fix their problems. They issue orders thinking we're going to mop up messes at the weekend."

– Constable

Ambulance

Ambulance callouts and hospital interactions represent a frequent source of tension for frontline police officers. Many officers reported that they believed calls for “ambulance assists” have inflated in recent years, with frontline police covering for shortages or extended response times in the health system. In both interviews and surveys, ambulance-related tasks were regularly cited as sources of frustration, where officers described feeling burdened by repeated attendance at scenes, which they felt required specialised and clinical responders. Ambulance and hospital wait times were consistently singled out as ‘challenges most in need of fixing’.⁴³

↓ Priority Action

Recommendation 24

Develop statewide interagency protocols with Ambulance Tasmania to define when police attendance is essential and formalise rapid handover processes at hospitals.

⁴³ From the open-text question ‘What change would you most like to see happen to address these challenges?’ 28 out of 159 people made suggestions to address the volume of taskings from ambulance. This was one of the highest repeating themes.

Emergency service and partnership working

Child Safety Services

Partnership with Child Safety Services (CSS) is vital, given the intersection of FV, youth offending, and welfare-related policing. Officers report that collaboration is strongest when information sharing is timely and expectations of agency roles are explicit. Nonetheless, officers cited instances of frustration where police were expected to provide support or emergency intervention in cases that could be more effectively resolved by specialist child protection staff.

Officers reported difficulties in contacting CSS outside of standard business hours, resulting in extensive delays before getting a response. They then found constant push back from CSS on tasks officers believed were within CSS remit. Conversely, CSS staff felt that officers did not fully understand the statutory duties and limitations of CSS, and expected more than they were able to give, especially with consistent funding pressures. One CSS staff member described being contacted out of hours and shouted at by an officer for not taking a child into their care, which they were unable to do as they did not have a safe placement available. The lack of funding and/or solutions for this and similar problems has a significant impact on children and young people who require safeguarding, as well as causing tension between two agencies that are required to work together for that purpose.

Improved cross-agency triage mechanisms and the regular embedding of CSS representatives at major stations were suggested as ways to streamline responses, reduce double-handling, and better protect vulnerable children. Embedding CSS representatives was also seen as an opportunity for education and knowledge transfer for those in both agencies, to help build back better relationships.

Recommendation 25

Commence discussions with CSS to establish shared triage protocols and co-location pilots for high-risk welfare reports.

Ashley Youth Detention Centre (AYDC)

Officers are being regularly called to attend the AYDC to respond to incidents within the Centre. Officers believe that many of the calls for assistance are because of AYDC being understaffed and being unable to respond to incidents within the facility. There are several examples where multiple officers have been tied up at AYDC for several hours which has put pressure on other units to respond to jobs in the area. There is a need for a clear documented framework that sets out what incidents require a police response.

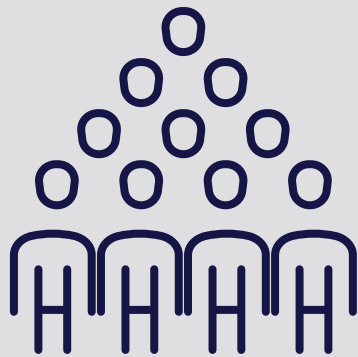
Year	No. of Incidents	Total time (hrs)	No. of Members Involved
2023	34	36	82
2024	42	70	137
2025	40	73	**159
2026 YTD	5	5.5	22

** This number is slightly elevated due to a specific police event in December 2025 where multiple police units were required to attend.

Community Corrections

Officers reported several concerns with the expectations placed on police by Community Corrections. Police are being required to undertake drug and alcohol testing and at times curfew checks of parolees which does not fit with core policing. There is a view that Community Corrections could improve their engagement with Tasmania Police by consulting with them prior to decisions being made to release high risk offenders. Officers are often left with little time to develop safety plans or consider the community safety impacts of these offenders being released into the community.

Recruitment and retention



Recruitment and retention

Recruitment and retention

Similar to other police jurisdictions across Australia and New Zealand, concerns were shared throughout the research regarding the capacity of Tasmania Police to recruit, develop, and retain a high-quality frontline workforce.

Recruitment

Across all comparable police services, the issue of recruiting new officers to retain approved establishment numbers has become increasingly challenging. Interviewed Tasmania Police officers cited doubts about the preparedness and life experience of some new recruits, frequently linking this to high turnover in the first 6–12 months as new officers confront workload pressures and trauma exposure. The perception is of an increasingly ‘junior’ workforce, both in uniform and the Criminal Investigation Branch (CIB), compounded by challenges in attracting and holding onto mid-career, experienced personnel. While no evidence conclusively demonstrates current recruits are universally less capable, persistent concerns centre on the confidence and readiness of the cohort to deliver community-facing, advisory, and investigative roles.



The world is changing, previously at 18 years old people, young people were out and about, whereas now due to the cost-of-living crisis people are living at home for much longer. Policing can be a scary job; we do provide life advice. As an 18-year-old whose just been living at home providing advice about life – come on.”

– Constable

Recommendation 26

Increase communications to Tasmania Police staff regarding current recruitment practices including level of vetting for readiness and real-world experience.

Retention

Frontline feedback highlights a perceived overemphasis on recruitment while retention has lagged, resulting in a cycle where hard-won experience drains from the service, increasing pressure on remaining staff. Experienced officers report a “sense of burden” from mentoring and supporting large intakes of new recruits and feel that insufficient focus is given to valuing and incentivising long service. Within the officer survey, calls for increased attention to retention (pay, roster flexibility, meaningful development, and progression) were among the top five responses on priority changes.

There was likely a perception from some frontline officers interviewed that there is a larger issue with retention within Tasmania Police than there is. Workforce data confirms a recent uptick in resignations and retirements since the 2021–22 period (refer to Figure 5), however, 27% of resignations in the last financial year relate to the settlement of Workers Compensation (WC) claims. Since the 2022–23 period, 23% of all resignations have related to WC claim settlements. Tasmania Police have an unplanned separation rate of 2.8%, which is relatively low compared to other jurisdictions⁴⁴ and the number of resignations for alternative employment has progressively decreased over the last three years. However, Tasmania Police does offer a Leave Without Pay (LWOP) employment option which has been taken by 168 officers since 2019. While this does not impact separation rates, it does reduce the number of officers available for deployment.

⁴⁴ Commissioner’s 100-Day Review of the Queensland Police Service -Final Report, 2025. police.qld.gov.au/sites/default/files/2025-07/Commissioners%20100-Day%20Review%20Queensland%20Police%20Service%20Final%20Report.pdf.

Recruitment and retention

Figure 5: Number of resignations and retirements in Tasmania Police in the last four financial years. This is sworn officers only; however, it does not specify general uniform officers.

Resignations and Retirements at Tasmania Police



It may be prudent to communicate with staff regularly about attrition, and ongoing challenges and successes around recruitment and retention strategies. This will ensure staff feel confident in their leadership team and organisation, and feel supported when relevant issues or information are raised in the media.



I think if you can improve the way people feel about work, it will improve performance. Biggest issue is keeping people on not bringing people in, need to support people you already have.”

– Constable

Quick promotions, particularly to acting supervisory positions, have led to anxieties about adequate leadership capacity and operational judgement among newly promoted Sergeants and Acting Sergeants. Some officers mentioned feeling under prepared for supervisory roles with only limited time in the role of Constable. Officers suggested more rigorous experience thresholds for investigative/prosecutorial tracks and for eligibility to supervise. Structured mentoring for new Sergeants and clearer skill benchmarks were recommended by several respondents.



We are losing our most experienced, whilst they are flooding us with new recruits...there isn't a lot of support for the more seasoned coppers, they leave with a sour taste in their mouths.”

– Constable

Recruitment and retention

Recommendation 27

Establish early support and mentoring programs for new officers and formalise structured mentoring for new supervisors.

Recommendation 28

Develop a dedicated retention and development strategy for mid-career officers, incorporating flexible pathways and formalised succession planning.

Recommendation 29

Consider minimum service requirements for appointment to acting and substantive supervisory roles.

The second is to mention that the handover and cross over time in the current roster pattern was seen as valuable protected time to do administration and paperwork and stay on top of the work. The fear of losing this was part of the worry around the changes in the roster, and concern was expressed amongst some as to how they would manage administrative tasks and reporting without this.

While not seeking to support any particular roster, the review found that a popular roster being worked in Australia and the UK is a roster where officers work 6 days on and 4 days off. South Australia Police undertook extensive research on rosters that included engaging an independent consultant and the 6 & 4 roster was endorsed as a roster that met service delivery requirements balanced with member wellbeing. There is an evidence base to support this roster based on a balance officer health and wellbeing and service delivery.

Rostering

The review took place during a time of negotiations around rostering and as such, rostering was a noticeable theme in both interviews and surveys. The remit of this review did not include any consideration of the rostering preferences of the uniform cohort or recommendations of rostering best practices. However, it would be remiss not to acknowledge the feeling amongst officers in two specific and relevant areas to this review. The first is concern around wellbeing amidst the work life balance of any considered roster in relation to feeling burnt out and fatigued from work demand.

Officer Training



Officer training

Training

The training and capability development of uniform officers is a foundational concern for Tasmania Police. Feedback from officers highlights strong support for practical, scenario-based training but indicates a persistent need for greater depth and consistency, particularly in areas directly impacting daily operational confidence and effectiveness.

Initial training

Officers' training experience of the academy course was varied having come through in different cohorts across multiple years. Some had experience of the current 28-week course and others reported doing longer 32-week courses with or without outstation postings. A couple of officers interviewed did their training in other States such as Queensland. Those who trained in other States spoke more to the differences they had heard about and what aspects of the training were the most impactful and beneficial to them, mostly the practice of skills on the job or the mentoring programs.

There was varied opinion on the Tasmania Police academy training and how prepared and capable officers felt to do their jobs. Many officers interviewed thought that the training at the academy was good, while some officers spoke of it only as an introduction to policing. There was an acknowledgement that training at the academy was limited; it was not possible to be fully prepared due to the practical nature of the job and the classroom environment being vastly different to carrying out many of the skills on the street.

Placements in the outstations were a valued part of the initial training program, allowing officers to practice learnt skills and begin to understand and get used to the reality of the job. Whilst opinion was varied and a few felt underprepared, most Constables reported feeling ready for their first day, confident, or that they knew enough to get going.



The recruit training is survival in policing; you don't learn enough in the academy to be self-sufficient outside."

– Constable

To ensure unrealistic expectations are not set, communication to all staff can be improved by outlining what is expected of a first-year constable. This can be implemented at various stages of training: at commencement at the academy, during placement, and at completion of academy training. As stated above, much of policing is learnt on the job, and they will continue to develop over their first year as a Constable.

Learning and practicing practical skills were deemed the most valuable and relevant part of training by most. There were practical areas highlighted as either not being covered in enough detail at the academy or trainees not having sufficient practice prior to using skills on the job. These were understanding the radio and how to use it, bail processes, the systems (specifically Atlas) and on occasion, report writing.

Practical skills gaps

Many officers felt that they did not have enough skill or practice in a few key areas, which they felt could have been addressed better in their recruit training. Understanding bail processes came up multiple times in interviews, a few reported not knowing what bail was and how it was used. However, the rest who mentioned bail reported that while they knew what bail was, they were not taught enough about the process of bail and felt underprepared and lacked the confidence to manage it.



They don't teach you about some stuff like bail. I was like, what is bail."

– Constable

Officer training

There was a near universal reported low confidence in interacting with systems, which extended to how officers spoke about training delivered on systems. While mostly related to Atlas, some did extend to the FV system. Some officers reported that systems training at the academy was lacking, calling for both more attention at the academy and refresher training on the job. Training versions of systems such as Atlas were considered unfit for purpose and practicing on them was perceived as difficult.



Broken systems so unable to practice. Think they have gotten a bit lazy with their training systems, for the amount of time we spend on them we need training."

– Constable

Correctly filling out reports, particularly offence reports was raised as an issue. This was especially so in the context of training, where the classroom environment did not effectively prepare trainees for the number and pace at which they would be filling out reports. To some extent this is unavoidable as it would not be possible to simulate the same pace and teach trainees how to fill the offence reports out more, however, it may be worth reviewing the frequency that report writing is practiced and ensure that officers are doing enough at the outstations to improve confidence in report writing.



There was nothing at the academy that prepared us for the tempo of the actual world. For example, in the academy you might have a week to do an offence report, but would be doing six a day on the road."

– Constable

It was also stated that there was little consistency in the way report writing was taught at outstations and on the job. Individual differences in writing styles and preferences are inevitable and whilst this may impact on quality, there are limited opportunities to address this in the short term. The most effective way to improve quality and consistency around report writing is to do so within systems. Automated forms that extract required information from already created records or databases would add value. If the systems are intuitive, these kinds of changes will not only address inconsistent reporting, but it will also lessen the need for in-depth training and may improve confidence of new Constables creating reports for the first time in the field.

Recommendation 30

Review consistency and depth of training for bail, systems, and report writing for recruits and, expand opportunities for recruits to train on systems both at outstations and using practice platforms.

The Radio Dispatch Services (RDS) program

Placements in the RDS provide valuable behind-the-scenes perspective and hands-on skill acquisition. Officers who completed RDS rotations expressed increased operational confidence, better appreciation of dispatch challenges, and smoother communication.



Radio comms, as far as the training in how to use the radio, and how important it is, you don't receive enough, you don't receive any and you don't stop using it from the moment you book on."

– Constable

Officer training

The radio room program runs in most recruitment cohorts, with 3-4 trainees on placement in RDS either prior to or during their time at the academy. Those who had experience of the program spoke positively about it, describing it as helpful preparation and an insightful experience prior to starting in the role. They talked about feeling more comfortable in using and understanding the radio and felt a greater appreciation for the challenges of call and dispatch handlers than colleagues who had not experienced the radio room. Officers who hadn't worked in the RDS were more frustrated with a perceived lack of information being passed on to frontline from dispatch, whereas those who had, understood that RDS did not always get all the information needed. One officer called it an 'eye opener' and spoke about how many calls RDS get and how much they filter out. Those who hadn't worked in the radio room expressed a desire for more in-depth training on the radio; one officer talked about having had no training on the radio and the extent of his knowledge was what a callsign is.



The radio room was awesome but a real eye opener. I saw how quickly things can go pear shaped. It has so much admin like allocating reports such as firearms and stolen cars."

– Constable

Given the considerable benefit to staff in both understanding and confidence in the radio processes, it may be worth exploring the possibility of expanding the program to include more recruits, or to make short placements within specialist teams such as RDS part of the probation period.

Recommendation 31

Consider expanding the RDS program to more recruits as part of probation or initial academy training.

Ongoing mentoring and development

Mentoring is a key part of the training program in outstations, in the probation period and beyond. The mentoring allows for trainees and recruits to put their newly learned skills and knowledge into practice with a safety net and constructive guidance. Mentor relationships were mentioned consistently in relation to the initial training experience. These relationships proved to be influential on how positive the training was overall.

Where the mentor relationship was good, the training would more likely be seen as positive and informative. Several officers had enjoyed having more than one mentor so that they could understand how different people work and the varied ways of dealing with different parts of the jobs.

Where the mentor relationship was poor, quite often because the mentor was reported as being unengaged or oversubscribed with workload and/or number of mentors, this was felt to be detrimental to learning and resulted in reduced confidence. It is worth noting that this was only mentioned by a few officers – many spoke highly of the mentoring experience.

Sergeants described struggling to balance the workload they have and giving dedicated time and energy to mentoring new recruits. One Sergeant reported mentoring five new Constables, which he felt was too many. Not having the adequate number of mentors within training stations, especially experienced mentors, was considered a risk in quality of training.



I don't have time to sit with people and mentor them or to sit in a car and do jobs with them. Because we are a training station we have junior people training junior people."

– Sergeant

Officer training

Both Sergeants and Constables expressed concern that the number of people needing mentors mixed with the lack of experienced mentors led to more junior staff mentoring new Constables. This presents risks of limited perspective and understanding, leading to ineffective guidance, along with potential for slower skill development. This may impact confidence levels in new Constables and the general feelings they have concerning their training experience.



I was mentoring three Constables and was six months their senior. I had been off probation for six months."

– Constable



QPOL when you graduated, every shift for my first six weeks I had a mentor, and those mentors had to have done a field training course to be a mentor and we all had that. Minimum 3-4 years post probation to do the course to be a mentor. Here, in my first month I had done just as many shifts with connies that I graduated with as seniors".

– Constable

Recommendation 32

Establish structured mentoring and professional development programs, with recognition for mentor roles as career advancement steps and/or consider a Leading Senior Constable position when mentoring, which is financially rewarding.

The university model

Views on university-accredited aspects of the academy are mixed. Some value the theoretical underpinning for senior and investigative roles, while many officers prefer practical, scenario-focused methods and see essay writing and extensive theory as less relevant for frontline duties.



Uni might be a nice background but writing uni papers doesn't make any use for papers in court.'

– Constable

The university model was also seen as an unnecessary hurdle for promotion, with some people not feeling that they were suited to further university education to move through the promotion process, despite confidence in their leadership skills. There was disparity of opinion that the university model and emphasis on theory provided enough relevance in promotion to Sergeant and beyond. Although, one Sergeant did state that understanding the theory of crime and policing was more important in increasingly senior/investigative roles.

The scope of this review did not include a full review of training curriculum. However, it is worth noting the views expressed on this issue and that there is a greater desire for more practical training both in the academy, continued development and the promotion process.



UTas has a contract to provide professional aspects of the training, which is fine to professionalise the force, but frontline policing is more about experiential knowledge...Having the theoretical knowledge is very important but needs to be balanced with scenario-based training."

– Constable

Officer training



Essays were a waste of time. I do not want to be worried about essays – I should be worried about the person trying to stab me. I've found it's been stressful and then the reminder emails. He's doing the job and cannot get off probation due to an essay."

– Constable

There is a wealth of research which reflects the benefits of higher education in policing. However, it is not uncommon for junior police in particular to seek more practical skills and training. It is therefore important that university providers contextualise the learning and ensure it is fit for purpose. When officers feel overwhelmed or underprepared to take on the full role of policing, they will not easily recognise the value of any underpinning knowledge or broader learning. Officers felt they spent a lot of time learning about the theory of policing and crime, and when they arrived on the frontline, they didn't have the knowledge or skills to confidently perform the practical aspects of the job.

Recommendation 33

Review communications around the benefits and opportunities within the University of Tasmania model in relation to both initial training and promotion.

Recommendation 34

Discuss with the University of Tasmania the nature and suitability of assessment models

Recommendation 35

Review possible vocational and accessible opportunities for career progression outside of university-based progression.

Training days

Training days were regularly mentioned, with many officers talking about training days not being used for training and instead being for normal shift work such as paperwork or traffic duties. There was a desire for more training during the training days, which directly related to how valued officers felt and how capable they felt to deal with certain situations (e.g. first aid and firearms).



Training days are a complete waste of time... We haven't done any expandable baton training in 10 years. And if you got everyone to take out their tourniquet this week, they wouldn't know how to use it."

– Constable

One officer reported being out of the academy for a year and not having done any training on the training days. The desire is not only for use of more training days for training but a move toward team-based training instead of online. The perception of training differs. One officer, who had experience in another jurisdiction, felt that the training offered by Tasmania Police was more in depth and practical in nature.



I think since graduating, I would say it's reasonable, not amazing and not often enough. We don't get refreshers, but we do get introductions, but we need to practice it."

– Constable



We should be doing a lot more team-based training, taking people down, quickly, how to clear a house...A lot of online training, Constable got a kicking from a Commander because they hadn't completed half of it. It's a tick box, not necessarily retained.

– Sergeant

Recommendation 36

Review use of training days and consider imbedding a continual development program focused on practical skills, scenario-based learning, and new technologies.

Officer Safety and Wellbeing



Officer safety and wellbeing

Officer safety and wellbeing

Safety

Nationally, the environment police operate in has become more challenging, with an increase of incidents involving weapons, particularly edged weapons, and subjects affected by mental health conditions or substance abuse. This is alongside an increase in incidents involving the assault or obstruction of police.

In Tasmania, there has been an increase of 276% in reported Armed Person incidents since 2020-21 and an increase of an estimated 127% in Dangerous Article charges from 2021-22 to 2024-25. These are significant increases. Additionally, since 2020-21, there has been a consistent annual increase in Assault Police (13% total over the last four years) and Resist/Obstruct Police (11% total over the last four years) incidents, highlighting the increasingly challenging conditions in which Tasmania Police operates.

It is essential that officers have use of force (UoF) options to minimise their exposure to physical and psychological harm. The most recent UoF review produced by the Operational Skills Unit (OSU) found that there is only one tactical option available to frontline officers that can be deployed beyond five metres, the Mk9 variant of the oleoresin capsicum (OC) spray. However, it found the Mk9 does not produce consistent results in terms of both effective range and subduing a motivated subject, which was highlighted in a 2025 incident where four Mk9 deployments were ineffective against a motivated mental health subject, resulting in police using a firearm. Currently, the Mk9 is unable to be supported by any other option except for lethal force.

When responding to incidents involving edged weapons, police are trained to keep greater distances – minimum seven metres – however they

routinely reduce this safety margin to deploy the Mk9 from a closer distance, intending to increase its effectiveness. With the increase in edged weapon incidents, there is increased risk to frontline safety. The UoF review recommended that Tasmania Police equip frontline officers with Taser devices which are effective in subduing an individual with minimal long-lasting impacts and can be deployed from an increased safety margin of 10-13 metres. This recommendation has been accepted, and Tasmania Police is now in the trial planning phase.

While writing this review, Constable Keith Anthony Smith was killed on duty in the North District. This event highlighted the courage that officers show every day at work and the high-risk nature of policing, which can impact how officers, and their friends and families, feel about their safety at work. There is no doubt that this was a traumatic incident and impacted all those at Tasmania Police.

A subsequent review found there were no known oversights or failings in the actions taken by Tasmania Police in the incident involving Constable Smith (hereafter referred to Constable Smith incident review). This emphasises the unpredictability of policing, and the threats officers consistently face. However, an opportunity was identified to enhance capability to frontline officers where qualified Special Operations Group (SOG) members always carry Taser and Extended Range Impact Weapons (ERIW) when working general duties, without requiring approval of the SOG Commander. This will provide immediate support to frontline officers. Essentially, this recommendation aligns with the recommendation from the UoF review of equipping frontline officers with a Taser. Both recommendations will ensure all officers responding to any incident, frontline or specialist, are well equipped to attempt to de-escalate the situation using an acceptable UoF option. This should minimise risk to their safety and the public. It is recommended that Tasmania Police consider implementation of both proposals, as this will fill the capability gap during the trial and procurement phase of the frontline Taser roll out.

In the aftermath of the Constable Smith incident, focus was on the role of police in executing bailiff warrants (or similar). The Constable Smith incident review found Tasmania Police was the only police

Officer safety and wellbeing

force across Australia and New Zealand⁴⁵ that routinely assists in bailiff roles. It is not considered a core policing role. Since 2023, Tasmania Police has been requested to assist in executing ten warrants. It is unknown how many similar requests other police forces in Australia and New Zealand have received, but noting their different processes, it is likely much less. A commonality in request criteria across the responding Australia and New Zealand police forces⁴⁶ was that if there was a likely risk to life or the community, then police may be requested to assist. This criterion is not included in the Tasmania Police process. The Constable Smith incident review made several recommendations on reforming the current bailiff assistance process, including clear methodology in the Tasmania Police Manual, as there are currently contradictions with the legislation, and removal of statutory appointment of police officers in Tasmania as bailiffs. This would need to be done in conjunction with the Department of Justice.

During the interviews, there were mixed feelings about safety in the workplace. Only a couple of officers mentioned feeling physically unsafe in the workplace and it was mostly situational, based on certain incidents they had attended. Most officers interviewed felt that the equipment provided on their person such as their vests, batons, OC spray and firearms were sufficient protection, outside support of other officers. The high standard of personal equipment was praised by some.

Wellbeing

The cumulative demands of modern policing, including exposure to trauma, rising workload, and after-hours demands have heightened the risk of psychological injury and fatigue. Efforts to address wellbeing include prevention, intervention, and recovery, involving both in-house and external expertise, yet the frontline still raised concerns regarding their wellbeing.

Several officers reported feeling long-term fatigue and burnout with what they felt was a continually mounting workload. This was not limited to one district - it was mentioned in Glenorchy, Hobart and Burnie. Officers tended to feel well supported by their teams and immediate managers, with the only exceptions being where there are difficult relationships with mentors and managers. However, they generally did not feel supported by the wider organisation and senior staff. This could in part be attributed to ongoing disputes around rostering at the time of interviews and feeling overwhelmed by the demands and pressures of frontline policing.

When formal wellbeing support services were mentioned, feelings on this were mixed. There was an acknowledgement by more senior members that wellbeing and support services provided by the organisation had improved in the last few years. Newer officers were largely negative about wellbeing and support offerings. The tri-agency support was mentioned as being a positive service.



Wellbeing support is terrible; I've had my own mental health issues but wellbeing are terrible ... you get a text [from the mental health provider]; you don't even get a phone call anymore. If someone's going to hide it, how is that going to help? I couldn't even tell you where they are, they're not proactive. Emergency services should be more like DBA relations services. You should be able to roll in and show your card. My psychologist is no longer being funded because she didn't sign up for the list, I now have to fund it myself. They should pay for any psychologist, not just because they're not on a list anymore."

– Constable

⁴⁵ Based on responses received from Australian Federal Police/Australia Capital Territory Policing, New Zealand Police, Northern Territory Police Force, Queensland Police Service, and Western Australia Police Force.

⁴⁶ With the exception of ACT Policing who does not assist in bailiff roles in any circumstance.

Officer safety and wellbeing



I think it starts from recruitment, I think there needs to be more done in the mental health space at recruitment. If people are more susceptible to mental health related issues, it shouldn't preclude anyone but it needs to be made aware so there is more support for those people. In training, there needs to be more emphasis on mental health and it could be already, as I am not in the academy and I know there is more now than there ever was, for your own mental health and how to cope with it. Spruiking policing is for everyone when it isn't for everyone."

– Sergeant

Morale appeared to vary in interviews, with some feeling that it was good and others feeling that it wasn't and that staff were 'putting on a false front'. A lot of the negative morale appeared to come down to staff not feeling valued, not having opportunities to do secondments and training, and struggling to go on leave easily because of rostering. It was also linked to the current contentious rostering issues.



[the morale of staff] Not good, no doubt about this. Staff are putting on a false front." –

Sergeant



It is frustrating. People are not being released to allow them to do the training and courses."

– Sergeant



Morale is good, people want to work with each other and to turn up."

– Constable

When talked about, most people mentioned that they rarely took a proper break during a shift. Quite often people would eat whilst doing paperwork or heat up meals and then be dispatched to a call. This added to a sense of feeling overwhelmed.



Couldn't tell you when I have had a meal break and actually stopped and not did work."

– Sergeant

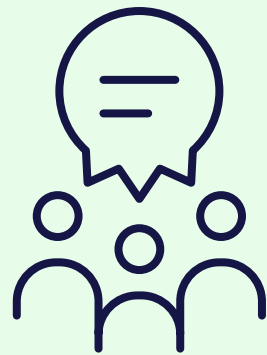
Recommendation 37

Continue and expand the Wellbeing Support Officer/Peer Support network, ensuring all stations and teams have ready access to confidential support.

Recommendation 38

Monitor impacts of rostering reform and physical health initiatives with regular feedback loops to staff and review groups.

Community perceptions



Community perceptions

Community perceptions

Trust in the policing institution

Trust in police is conceptually defined as being willing to be vulnerable to, give control to, and rely upon in moments of vulnerability.⁴⁷ Trust is only necessary where there is risk and uncertainty in any given situation and an individual or group understands they are not the appropriate person to assume responsibility.

Putting trust in the police is accepting that officers have the ability to appropriately respond, keep the public safe and impose social order and control. It is also accepting that the public cannot know if the police will fail in their duty.⁴⁸

Public trust in policing directly impacts the ability of police to investigate and reduce crime. Safety and security in the public cannot be achieved by either police or public alone. Vital factors to achieving community safety such as sharing intelligence, cooperation with crime prevention and seeing law enforcement as appropriate voices of authority requires the public to see police as trustworthy and have confidence in their effectiveness. That trust is reliant on the public feeling confident that police address concerns around safety, understand community needs, treat people with fairness and dignity, communicate with the public well and listen to local problems.⁴⁹ Measuring levels of trust and confidence of police within the public is a difficult task, often done through single survey questions that leave little room for understanding context and reasoning.

There are limited longitudinal measures of public trust and confidence in police within Australia. Questions asking whether the public agree that the police can be trusted, when included in the ABS Social Survey or other similar surveys such as National Survey of Community Satisfaction with Policing (NSCSP) can offer some insight. The percentage of people who agree the police can be trusted or who have moderate or high trust in police was reported as 79% in 2020, 63% in 2021 and 68% in 2023.⁵⁰ These figures are drawn from separate surveys with varying methodology, and as such are not comparable. These indicators of trust and confidence suggest a fluctuation in public sentiment. Many other countries both with a similar policing model such as the UK, as well as those with differing policing models such as the US, are recording a decline in levels of trust and confidence in police amongst the public (see Appendix C). Evidence shows a general trend of trust in police was rising globally from 1991 onwards but has starting to show signs of decline in the last decade.⁵¹ It is difficult to determine how relevant this is to Australia, both nationally and at state level, due to a lack of consistent surveying and reporting on trust and confidence.

Public perceptions of Tasmania Police will not only be influenced by the actions of and communications by Tasmania Police, but also by national and global policing. This creates a challenge for all individual state police services, as they cannot control the actions of other state or international police services. The impact of this has been evidenced in recent years with events such as the killing of George Floyd and Black Lives Matter movements in the US, prompting activism and protests around racism and police treatment of Aboriginal people in Australia.

47 Bradford, B., 2024. What goes up must come down? 25 years of public trust in the police. *International Journal of Police Science & Management*, 26(4), pp.470-477.

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48 Bradford, B. et al. 2022. 'The space between: Trustworthiness and trust in the police among three immigrant groups in Australia', *Journal of Trust Research*, 12(2), pp. 125–152. doi: 10.1080/21515581.2022.2155659.

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50 Trust in Key Institutions. Australian Bureau of Statistics. Released September 2025. abs.gov.au/statistics/measuring-what-matters/measuring-what-matters-themes-and-indicators/cohesive/trust-key-institutions.

51 Valgarðsson, V., Jennings, W., Stoker, G., Bunting, H., Devine, D., McKay, L. and Klassen, A., 2025. A crisis of political trust? Global trends in institutional trust from 1958 to 2019. *British Journal of Political Science*, 55, p.e15.

Community perceptions

Trust and confidence in Tasmania Police

A 2023 Community Survey conducted by Enterprise Marketing and Research Services on behalf of Tasmania Police found that 41% of those surveyed were confident or very confident in Tasmania Police being able to deliver policing services to the community. Conversely, the latest Report on Government Services (ROGS) prepared for the 2023–24 year found 73% of the sample were generally satisfied with the services provided by Tasmania Police.⁵² While this satisfaction rate was a slight decrease from the previous 2022–23 period of 78%, it was the highest across all Australian police organisations.⁵³ The confidence levels are surprisingly low and without comparative data from previous or subsequent years, it is difficult to determine if this is accurate or a result of methodology.

There are some clear limitations with the methodology of the 2023 Community Survey, which may have reduced the accuracy of the results. The method of recruitment for the survey was on an opt-in basis and recruitment happened via Facebook and through local councils, meaning only those who interacted with the Tasmania Police Facebook page, or Facebook altogether, and those who engaged with local council provided information or advertising would be captured. There is also a significant risk of a negativity bias within responses as only those motivated to give feedback will have responded, and it is well evidenced that those with negative experiences are more likely to participate in giving feedback.

When asked about perceptions of police qualities in the 2023 Community Survey, 67% somewhat or strongly agreed that they perceived the police in Tasmania as 'Trustworthy and honest' and 57% felt they were 'Fair and equitable'. In the ROGS sample, 68% agreed that 'police are honest' and 67% agreed that 'police treat people fairly and equally'.⁵⁴ These trust measures are on par with the reports of 68% at a national level for 2023.⁵⁵

When speaking with officers, the majority did not feel there was an issue with general trust and confidence in police. Most acknowledged this would be different for those who they repeatedly interacted and repeat offenders, who actively showed contempt and dislike towards them.



I think majority have faith and trust in police. They are happy to see us and understand the pressures we have. 70% have faith and 30% don't. More visibility, more confidence." –

Constable

However, a few people reported that they felt public trust is low in general and those officers (both constables and sergeants) attributed this to challenges in recruitment. They also felt that it affected the way they were perceived in the community outside working hours, with some feeling wary of telling social acquaintances that they were police officers.



I have to be mindful of who I tell I am a police officer to as I don't trust they will respect that, especially when I am with my kids, I should be able to be proud that I am a police officer. I don't have faith that the public like or trust the police. They always have two reactions 'that's awesome' or 'oh, oh oh, oh.'"

– Constable

⁵² Noting these are two different measures, with confidence future oriented and satisfaction past or present oriented.

⁵³ Pc.gov.au. (2025). 6 Police services – Report on Government Services, 2025. [online] Available at: pc.gov.au/ongoing/report-on-government-services/2025/justice/police-services.

⁵⁴ Pc.gov.au. (2025). 6 Police services – Report on Government Services, 2025. [online] Available at: pc.gov.au/ongoing/report-on-government-services/2025/justice/police-services.

⁵⁵ Australian Bureau of Statistics (2020). Trust in key institutions. [online] Australian Bureau of Statistics. Available at: abs.gov.au/statistics/measuring-what-matters/measuring-what-matters-themes-and-indicators/cohesive/trust-key-institutions.

Community perceptions

Public priorities from the Community Survey

The biggest safety concerns for the Tasmanian public in 2023 were youth crime, theft from home and public order and safety. Youth crime was by far the dominant concern, with 22% of respondents naming this as their primary concern. Within the 2023 survey, 69% perceived crime to have increased a little or a lot. The survey results indicated a general sense of concern around crime and safety.

The key safety concerns identified by the Tasmanian public formed the basis of annual police and community safety priorities. A corresponding media strategy was aligned to the priorities to ensure the public was kept informed of the progress and level of commitment in response to their feedback.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community in Tasmania makes up 5.4% of the population.⁵⁶ The population numbers are the second smallest in Australia⁵⁷ however they make up the highest percentage of the state's population compared to all other Australian states and territories, except for the Northern Territory.

Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander respondents made up 6% of total respondents of the 2023 Community Survey which aligns with the population statistics, noting the survey had limitations with its reach. While Tasmania Police collect indigenous status data, this data was not requested for this report. An offender's indigenous status is always recorded when they are taken into custody via the Standard Indigenous Question (SIQ) as well as occasionally during a police interview. Tasmania Police does not currently ask victims the SIQ.

As culturally appropriate, Tasmania Police attempt to provide additional services if an offender identifies as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander. This may result in additional time spent on the incident as an officer is required to notify the Tasmanian Aboriginal Legal Service (TALS) and offer the offender an opportunity to speak to TALS prior to an interview. The officer is also required to make the effort to notify a relative or friend of the offender. While more labour intensive, the purpose is to ensure those that identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander are supported, which will assist in building trust and confidence with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.

Understanding public perceptions through dialogues

The methods by which the public, particularly younger generations, consume news and information through social media mean that the perceptions of policing may lack nuance and become more reactive to international incidents. In this challenging context, it is important that Tasmania Police has an open and mature dialogue with the community, to mitigate the risk of misinformation and subsequent consequences.

It is worth tracking social sentiments on community safety, police related matters and general perceptions towards police on a yearly basis to understand trends and patterns. This will allow for a greater understanding of what affects trust and confidence within the local context, as well as to address local concerns with more tailored communication.

⁵⁶ Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2021). 2021 Tasmania, Census All persons QuickStats | Australian Bureau of Statistics. abs.gov.au/census/find-census-data/quickstats/2021/6

⁵⁷ Australian Capital Territory (ACT) has the smallest.

Community perceptions

Whilst traditional surveying can be a valuable and potentially cheaper tool to gauging perception, when used by itself it misses a valuable opportunity to have a conversation with the public that allows both police and public to understand each other's perspectives and challenges. Using a deliberative dialogue method with the community, such as a citizen's assembly or town hall forum provides a chance for managing expectation and allowing the police to define their own role. VICPOL and SAPOL both host community forums to encourage public participation and engagement in policing. There is no clear evidence on the impact these have had on trust and confidence in the community.

Comments from a few officers in the interviews indicated a gap in the understanding between the reality of the police role and the expectation of what that looks like for a member of the public. Even when officers saw the relationship with the public as being generally positive, they felt that a lack of visible policing, delays in getting to calls for service and a sense of crime increasing led to perceptions that police were failing in their role as guardians of community safety.



Most interactions with members of the public are usually positive, get your odd person who's frustrated about something/how long it's taken police to get there, they don't know the volume."

– Constable



It's heartbreaking when you see or pull over a person and they say I haven't seen a cop for weeks, saying we just sit at the station when we actually get stuck at the station."

– Constable

The use of deliberative dialogue with the public would help to rationalise these perceptions and set more realistic expectations of the police role. However, ultimately, it's impossible to know how much trust the public has in police, and by extension how good they are in attending to public priorities if the question isn't asked.

Recommendation 39

Explore the feasibility of holding regular community policing forums within each district. The focus should be on community safety issues, public priorities and addressing issues affecting trust and confidence.

Concluding thoughts

Over time, the role of police has evolved to respond to incidents that previously would not have sat within the realm of police. But still their core role remains the same: to maintain public order, prevent crime, protect life and property, and enforce laws.

With increased recognition of incidents such as mental health and family violence, as well as novel types of offending and a general increase in reporting, police now respond to more incidents than before. While police play a key role in responding to instances where there is risk to personal safety or public harm, understanding when the remit lies with another agency is crucial. This is particularly the case for incidents involving mental health concerns, where the responsibility often lies with a mental health practitioner or health service. Likewise, for certain incidents involving youth, where they are not required to be held by police, responsibility should fall under the remit of CSS. Police are trained to respond to incidents that fall within their core role; being obliged to respond to incidents that are beyond this will not only have an impact on the officer, but the subject too. The way for police to successfully operate is with the support of other state services.

The review found that many officers felt overwhelmed by the work. An accumulation of workload caused by navigating arduous systems, data pitfalls, slow processes and a lack of support from an under resourced public sector, alongside the mental impact of repetitive and complex incidents (e.g. mental health and FV) were all contributing factors.

The data from the review did not support the perception that frontline police in Tasmania were overworked and understaffed. However, there were clearly some examples of certain stations struggling to meet demand at peak times. Internal, consistent communication on these issues would be beneficial to address these perceptions.

Officers remain deeply committed to community safety and demonstrate resilience in an environment characterised by rising public expectation, administrative demands, and interagency overlaps. However, commitment and resilience have limitations and addressing the causes of feeling overwhelmed should be resolved as a high priority to ensure staff remain capable of meeting the challenges of policing.

The 'surge' nature of police demand needs to be clearly understood to ensure that as far as practicable, resources are distributed to meet the fluctuating calls for service. Ensuring an adequate response to incoming demand is essential to fulfilling the policing role and serving the community.

This cannot be achieved by simply recruiting more officers to the frontline. It requires strategic staffing solutions (e.g. use of supplementary police and state service employees), accurate data and intelligence collection, user-friendly processes and effective technology, along with clearer working relationships both internal and external to Tasmania Police. Such an approach would future proof the police service in the long run.

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Appendix A:

Right Care Right Person model

Right Care, Right Person (RCRP) is a police led, multi-agency triage model developed by Humberside Police to ensure that non-criminal, health related incidents, particularly those involving mental health, are redirected from police to more appropriate clinical or social services.

The model was introduced in response to the rising burden of mental health demand on police, which diverted officers from core duties and often exposed vulnerable individuals to inappropriate criminal justice involvement.

The UK College of Policing and the National Police Chiefs' Council have developed a detailed toolkit to support national rollout in England and Wales, accompanied by guidance from the NHS on interagency coordination and care standards.

RCRP differs from co-response models such as PACER in Australia, which dispatches multi-agency teams to the scene. Instead, RCRP intervenes at the first point of contact to assess whether police intervention is needed, reserving attendance for genuine risk and enabling health-led responses elsewhere. While the Tasmanian Mental Health Emergency Response (MHER) program successfully utilises tri-agency co-responder teams, it lacks structured triage at the dispatch level. RCRP-style thresholds may enable faster clinical intervention, reduce police callouts, and support consistency across the state.

Appendix B:

Rapid Video Response (RVR) model

Rapid Video Response (RVR) is a virtual policing response model that enables victims of mid-level family violence (FV) to connect with police officers through secure real-time video.¹

It offers immediate trauma-informed contact as an alternative to conventional in-person attendance, delivering reassurance, safeguarding and evidence capture at critical moments.

A trained dispatcher assesses eligibility (incident type and risk, aged over 18), offers RVR using a standard script, and if the victim consents, a link is sent via GoodSAM (app-free and data charges waived). Police officers then conduct an initial risk assessment and provide support by video, while still dispatching a physical unit if threats are imminent.

RVR, pioneered by Kent Police and robustly evaluated in the UK, reduced response times from over 32 hours to 3 minutes and increased both victim satisfaction and arrest rates. The UK College of Policing now supports the method for broader national rollout, and early results show strong operational and victim outcomes.

RVR gives those hesitant to request a visible police presence, due to stigma, children, or emotional readiness, a discreet and accessible alternative. The approach has improved trust and willingness to report in vulnerable cohorts. With thousands of FV jobs across key stations in 2024-25, timely, trauma-informed, and victim-centred intervention is urgently needed.

¹ West Yorkshire Police. What Is Rapid Video Response? (RVR) West Yorkshire Police - Domestic Abuse Reporting. 2024. [youtube.com/watch?v=bM6PPRgjtG0&t=76s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bM6PPRgjtG0&t=76s).

Appendix C:

Notes on Trust and Confidence surveys from international policing organisations

Each country has a different methodology and measures for public trust and confidence.

Details on each can be found below. Most measures used relate to confidence in general, a few relate to specifics around confidence (e.g. investigation or trust). This table should be used carefully and as an indicator of sentiment internationally, not as a direct comparison.

Percentage (%) of public surveyed who expressed positive sentiment on confidence for local or national police.

Country	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Australia	79	–	–	63	72
NZ	–	74	69	67	69
England and Wales	74	–	–	68	65
Scotland	69	–	66	–	62
Ireland (Republic of)	–	91	90	89	–
USA	48	51	45	43	51

Australia

Survey data for Australia measures trust and has been taken from multiple sources, these include ABS General Social Survey (2020), OECD Drivers of Public Trust Survey (2023) and Mapping Social Cohesion Report (2024). Therefore, any trend or comparison between years cannot be used reliably.

New Zealand (NZ)

Data was taken from the NZ Ministry of Justice Crime and Victims Survey – Police Module. This is an annual survey and covers a 12-month period from November to October. The measure covers trust and confidence in the police and asks the respondent to choose between three options: none, some or not much, and full or quite a lot. This module was only included in the NZCVS from 2021.

England and Wales

Data was taken from the National Crime Survey for England and Wales, conducted by the Office of National Statistics. The survey is reported on at the end of the financial year (April to March). The measure relates to public confidence in local police (policing in the England and Wales is made up of 43 different local or specialist forces). Confidence levels were not recorded for 2020–22 due to Covid. There has been a general downward trend in confidence in local police since 2018 in England and Wales.

Scotland

Data taken from the Scottish Crime and Justice Survey. The survey is reported on at the end of each financial year (April to March). The survey is not available for 2021 and 2023. The measure relates to public confidence in Police Scotland (the national police force) to investigate crime, there were six measures of confidence taken (prevent crime, respond to calls quickly, deal with incidents as they occur, investigate incidents, solve crimes and catch criminals). Investigate incidents were used as it was the highest of all in each year and gives an indication of maximum confidence levels. Prevent crime was the lowest scoring in each year by around 10% points. Confidence in Police in Scotland has been decreasing steadily since 2017.

Ireland (Republic of)

Data taken from the yearly Garda Public Attitudes Survey. This is reported on in each calendar year. It is an internal survey conducted by an independent market research company. Questions on confidence in policing are not asked. Related measures include Trust in Garda and Satisfaction from service provided. The Trust measure (mid-high trust) has been used as a comparative measure to indicate sentiment in Ireland; however, it does differ from measures on confidence in police. Survey results are not available for 2020 due to Covid and have not been released from 2024 as of August 2025. Levels of Trust in Garda are high, although show signs of minimal decline. Satisfaction rates in the service provided by Garda are also high, with 73% satisfied with the service provided in 2023.

United States of America (USA)

Data was taken from Gallup, an analytics company that has been measuring confidence in the police in the US since 1993. Since that time, the percentage of people who have stated they have a great deal or quite a lot of confidence has varied between 64-43%. Confidence levels have been continually declining in the US since 2017, with 43% in 2023 representing an all-time low. In 2024 confidence levels rose 8%, this has not been attributed to anything in reporting. Reporting suggests that those aged 18-34 typically have a lower level of trust in police than any other age group.

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