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Council of Women  
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*The Journal for*

# WOMEN

AND POLICING

**Issue No. 58 2024**





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**Issue No. 58**



Cover Image: Chaplains are an important part of welfare support provided to Police staff. Western Australia Police Force Chaplains Darren Hultgren, Wayne A Warfield, Olive O'Brien, David Ladner, Ev Heard, Paul Trimble feature in this edition

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# President's Report



**Sandra Venables**  
**ACWAP President**

Assistant Commissioner – NZ Police  
president@acwap.com.au

**W**elcome to this edition of your ACWAP journal. Recently I have been contemplating the similarities we have across the many different jurisdictions of our membership. We are so different on many levels, our different cultures, our countries histories and on occasion issues particular to where we operate within Policing or Emergency management, but thankfully there are also many similarities. When a person joins a service or force either as a sworn officer or civilian employee, then they have made a deliberate choice to serve their communities and be part of something bigger than themselves. This is what I see as our connect point.

As is proven whenever we all come together at conferences and development courses our camaraderie and ability to learn from and offer support to each other is always the consequence most commented on by participants. I am interested in how we stretch that to continue the connect when many of us are unable to get the opportunity to travel to conferences or training sessions, particularly as women.

In New Zealand our female employees have come together to develop Employee led Networks (ELN) to support and offer guidance to other women in similar circumstances and I am sure that some of your jurisdictions have the same. There are a few of these groups featured in this journal and my admiration goes out to those people making a difference to so many staff by breaking down the barriers to benefit us all.

And Mana Wahine for our Māori, Pacific and Ethnic women. The support that flows from these groups is powerful and has truly enriched our organisation in so many ways.



My question is, how do we build on these many groups to ensure we spread that support and share our learnings to connect across our different jurisdictions? You will see that the articles in this journal talk to that support, particularly in times of high stress or when things seem to be spinning out of control. The ability to access support through these times is crucial.

As your committee we are continually looking at ways to improve our services to you and would welcome your feedback or ideas as to what you would like to see more of.

Recently we had the opportunity to offer a Balance program ACWAP scholarship and we had numerous exceptional applicants. We are mindful that this is something we would like to grow as part of our commitment to enabling leadership opportunities across our membership. The winner of this scholarship will be announced shortly.

Please feel free to email me directly if there is something you would like us to consider or to put on our planning for the future.

I would like to thank everyone who has taken the time to contribute to this journal, the stories are powerful and show the benefits of having this platform to share our learnings.

Take care.  
**Sandy**





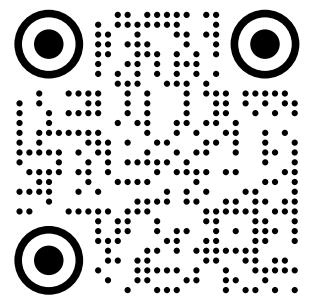
# Keeping Australia's police officers mentally fit and strong.

## National Emergency Worker Support Service

Australia's emergency service workers and volunteers keep our communities safe, but stress and anxiety are often part of the job. Experiencing mental health challenges after a traumatic event is normal and very common – and it's treatable, too.

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# Note from the Editor

**Dorothy McPhail**  
Editor



It is pleasing to see more females now being recognised in the Kings Birthday Honours and well deserved. The main theme of this edition of the journal is health – both physical and mental. Police services have thankfully become much more aware of the need to ensure that their staff are as healthy as possible and to educate about health issues when necessary. As well as featuring health and welfare services available in regions, there are articles focusing on mental health and menopause. Fortunately, the “taboo” around the subject of menopause is now lifting and both women and men are becoming more aware of the effects of it, and there are now on-line support groups available.

My own health journey began in 2014 when I was diagnosed with breast cancer. I received the necessary treatment and thankfully have remained cancer free since then. Unfortunately, there is a 1:8 chance of women having breast cancer in their life time, so it is extremely important for women to be vigilant and have regular mammograms. The silver lining for me was discovering that dragon boat paddling is highly

recommended for breast cancer survivors to help with the prevention of lymphedema and teams of dragon boat breast cancer survivors can be found all around world.

So, I am now a dragon boat paddler participating in local, national and international events in a Breast Cancer category. Every four years an international event is held solely for Breast Cancer teams and in 2023 was held at Lake Karapiro, New Zealand with over 70 teams from all over the world attending. I encourage anyone reading this to give this sport a go, whether you have had cancer or not. It is particularly good for those who wish to take part in a team sport and may find other types of exercise difficult. Age is no barrier – my team includes an 84-year-old.

This edition of the journal contains several articles courtesy of Policing Insight and I would like to thank Ian Barrett and the respective authors for approving the use of them. While Australasia may be halfway round the world from the UK, shared knowledge can be invaluable.

A big thanks to all those who have contributed to this edition and



I hope you enjoy the read. Be sure to contact me if you have any articles or ideas for future editions at [journal@acwap.com.au](mailto:journal@acwap.com.au). The next deadline for submissions is 30 September 2024. I look forward to all future contributions.

Finally, **“Courage is what it takes to stand up and speak. Courage is also what it takes to sit down and listen.”** Winston Churchill

Take care and stay healthy.

Warm Regards  
**Dorothy**

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# How do you Make Property Work for you?

**Danny Buxton**

Director Triple Zero Property

**Do you have dreams of an early retirement?**

**What about owning your own home?**

I'm Danny Buxton, founder of Triple Zero Property Group. For the past twenty years, I have been working with Australians to help them achieve their dreams and make the most of the property market.

## SAFE WEALTH CREATION

Many people dream of creating wealth, having something to leave their kids, or having security as they reach retirement. With the current pressures of higher interest rates, property prices, and cost-of-living pressures, how do you make property work for you?

## IMPORTANCE OF THE RIGHT TEAM

Before looking for property, you need to get your ducks in a row. If not, you are set for disappointment! It's crucial to have a good team of experienced people around you. At Triple Zero Property, we start by understanding your goals and what you want to achieve. Then we bring the right people to help you. We are passionate about seeing our front-line workers achieve the financial prosperity that investing in property can bring over the long term.

## REAL-LIFE SUCCESS STORIES

Creating wealth is a journey, and every generation has overcome hurdles and difficulties. The hardest part is starting. The second? Stepping away from 'your group' who will tell you that you can't do it!

Our team has a proven track record, and I would love to help you achieve your dreams. Whether you are buying your first home or investing in property, you will need focus and dedication - your future self will thank you for it.

## CASE STUDIES

**Let's dive into some real-life case studies:**

Our clients, Dave and Jenny, have successfully built a property portfolio with TZ Property over the last 12 years to create a passive income of over \$100,000. They started in 2012 with their first investment property in Murrumba Downs (QLD) for \$480,000 and have progressively invested in Banyo (QLD), Newport (QLD), and a duplex in Maitland (NSW).

With each purchase, they strategically grew their wealth. Over the years, they have sold some properties and paid off others. Through this strategy, they've achieved an annual income of \$110,500 with no debt on those properties.

I have followed a similar path, consistently buying properties in SE Queensland over the past 25 years. Through strategic investments in various locations, I've built a portfolio that generates a good passive income through buying in areas that we have researched and meet strict growth criteria. Again, some I have kept, and others I have sold to pay down debt.

## YIELD-FOCUSED STRATEGY

For those interested in yield-focused strategies, we've been involved in Special Disability Accommodation (SDA) since its inception. This approach can generate significant returns. For example, one of our clients, Sam, built an SDA property that nets him \$138,000 annually. This strategy, though complex, can be incredibly rewarding if done correctly and one I am also doing!

## MITIGATING RISKS

You have probably heard someone tell you about their nightmare building and owning an investment property!

There is a risk with everything you do, but getting good advice from experts who 'walk the talk' will provide checks and balances. This is why we often talk about building an independent expert team before you buy (financier, conveyancer, accountant, financial advisor).

Our team are the property specialists. Location is critical, and properties should be in areas with strong demand and good long-term growth potential. We also help you engage a financially strong, reliable builder/construction team.

## HOW TO TAKE THE NEXT STEP:

Our passion is seeing front-line responders succeed in their finances and personal lives. Over the years, we have helped many in law enforcement grow their property portfolios. We invite you to schedule a free discovery call to discuss your unique situation and determine the best approach for you.

If you want more information, head to our website, which is packed with property insights and case studies.

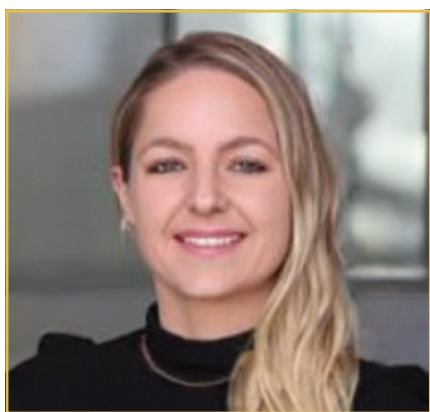


# Australian KING'S BIRTHDAY HONOURS RECIPIENTS

Congratulations to all King's Birthday Honours recipients and a special mention to the following.

## **AFP**

### *Public Service Medal (PSM)*



#### **Dr Jodie Ward, NSW**

For outstanding public service in advancing forensic human identification capabilities in Australia, particularly for the establishment of the Australian Federal Police National DNA Program for Unidentified and Missing Persons.

The National DNA Program for Unidentified and Missing Persons has proven to be an impactful scientific capability that has reunited unidentified human remains with families suffering ambiguous loss. This includes the long-held remains of missing persons and homicide victims, and the Ancestral Remains of First Nations people that can now be repatriated.

Dr Jodie Ward successfully advocated for the resources to establish this unique facility and implemented specialised forensic testing not previously available in Australia to position the Australian Federal Police at the forefront of best practice forensic human identification practices locally and globally.

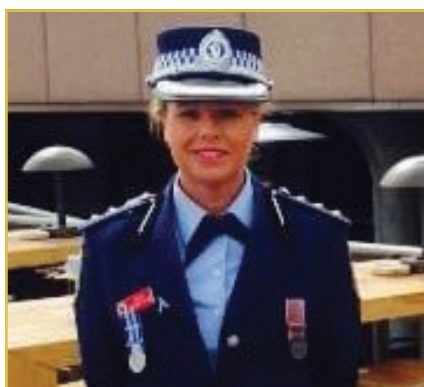
Her commitment to pioneering new forensic DNA techniques to advance unidentified and missing

persons' cases has seen her awarded a Churchill Fellowship, and invited to join the International Commission on Missing Persons Expert Panel of Scientific Advisors, INTERPOL Disaster Victim Identification Forensic Genetics Sub Working Group and The Missed Foundation board.

Dr Ward worked tirelessly to research, envision and apply an effective human remains identification program for Australia. Her technical expertise and utmost dedication have contributed to resolving numerous cold cases and providing long-awaited answers to families with deceased and missing loved ones.

## **NEW SOUTH WALES**

### *Australian Police Medal (APM)*



#### **Chief Inspector Amanda Lee Calder**

Chief Inspector Amanda Calder joined the NSW Police Force on 23 July 1993 and was stationed at Manly Police Station in general duties. In 1996 she took up highway patrol duties at North Sydney for a period of five years, and in 2001 transferred to the Metropolitan Crash Investigation Unit until 2003. She then moved onto the Media, Marketing Unit and corporate communications

where she was promoted to sergeant in 2004, senior sergeant in 2007 and inspector in 2008.

As an inspector, Chief Inspector Calder moved through strategic management positions at the Public Affairs Branch. She undertook roles such as commander of the Security Management Unit, staff officer of the Police Transport Command, duty officer at the Surry Hills Unit, traffic and highway patrol regio tactician and to her current role as the manager of the Planning and Delivery Team for the Major Events Group. With over 10 years of managerial experience overseeing high-level projects, personnel, facilities, equipment and budgets, Chief Inspector Calder has forged strong relationships with both internal and senior external stakeholder representatives inclusive of government agencies, the media, and the private sector.

As the manager of the Planning and Delivery Team, Chief Inspector Calder led Operation Border Closure (2020) during which she was responsible for the planning and delivery of human resources and logistics, deploying 14,800 police over 29 weeks. Chief Inspector Calder also oversaw Operation Sydney WorldPride (2023) during which she was responsible for managing the project team focused on ensuring the safety of the community linked to 14 major events held across Sydney over two weeks. Chief Inspector Calder is responsible for managing a number of strategic state-level portfolios for the NSW Police Force, including logistics, procurement contracts linked to meals, assets linked to transport, coordination of prisoner transport and escorts and management of major on-road events.

Chief Inspector Calder is considered a subject matter expert in respect of the niche portfolios she has managed,



often providing strategic advice to both internal and external senior stakeholder representatives. Chief Inspector Calder has been instrumental in identifying and implementing new systems and processes, focused on delivering efficiencies, enhanced capabilities, and overall savings for the NSW Police Force.



**Detective Sergeant Kristi Lee Faber**

Detective Sergeant Kristi Faber commenced her career as a NSW police officer on 23 October 1992 stationed at Burwood Police Station conducting general duties. In 1993 she attained the rank of constable and in 1997 transferred to a criminal investigation position at Bankstown. The same year she obtained the rank of senior constable and moved to the regional area of Maitland working in the Criminal Investigation Unit.

In 2000 she transferred to the Lake Macquarie detective's office where she has remained for the last 24 years. In 2006 she was promoted to the rank of detective sergeant within the Lake Macquarie Detectives Unit and has relieved as the Lake Macquarie crime manager periodically since 2020.

In her role as the team leader at the Lake Macquarie Criminal Investigations Unit, Detective Sergeant Faber has pursued prosecuting child sex offenders with results that have achieved national and international attention. Since gaining her detective designation in 2006, Detective Sergeant Faber has displayed excellent customer service as part of her varied duties in the Hunter Region, including the investigation of many cases relating to child sexual assault offences.

In 2008, Detective Sergeant Faber established Strike Force Georgiana to investigate child sexual assaults committed in Newcastle. This strike force would continue for 14 years, becoming one of the longest running in the New South Wales Police Force's history and result in prosecutions which made

headlines internationally and facilitated legislative change in New South Wales. Detective Sergeant Faber was also instrumental in the investigation of crimes committed by a former member of parliament, and their eventual conviction and custodial sentence. The strike force, which was passionately led by Detective Sergeant Faber, laid over 650 offences against 19 offenders and obtained over 800 witness statements.



**Superintendent Kirsty Maree Heyward**

Superintendent Kirsty Heyward joined the NSW Police Force (NSWPF) on 13 November 1996 and performed general duties at Bankstown, Kogarah and St George commands. In 2003 she moved into the Prosecutions Command as a police prosecutor, an area where she remained for 20 years. During this time, she received a number of promotions, and then in 2019 was promoted to superintendent as operations manager and commander of Police Prosecutions Command. In 2023 she moved to become the commander of Blacktown Police Area Command.

Whilst relieving as the assistant commissioner of Police Prosecuting & Licensing Enforcement she led and directed resources of the Police Prosecutions Command, Operational Legal Services Command, Firearms Registry and Security & Licensing Enforcement Directorate within dynamic environments and periods of reform.

Superintendent Heyward assumed leadership amid ongoing organisational change and pressures, including risks to the health and safety of employees due to the COVID-19 pandemic. She identified NSWPF and community risks in the management of the firearms license renewal process and introduced risk mitigation strategies and business enhancements for the Firearms Registry. She led consultations with key stakeholders, including digital technology

and innovation to clearly communicate the issues, risks and opportunities to enhance the Gun Safe system.

Superintendent Heyward was the commander of more than 400 police members deployed across numerous business streams throughout the state and chaired the Prosecutor Education Program (PEP) Review Committee to provide a considered alternative to prosecutor education. In collaboration with the Education & Training Command, a modern training course of shortened duration was created which has improved the retention and proficiency of trainee prosecutors. Superintendent Heyward designed the centralised Regional Weekend Bail Court model and established legal professional privilege for legal advice provided by non-legally qualified prosecutors. Superintendent Heyward introduced the automated exchange of court papers to ensure business continuity across local and children's court jurisdictions during the COVID-19 Pandemic.



**Senior Sergeant Catherine Ann Urquhart**

Commencing a distinguished 43-year career in 1981, Senior Sergeant Catherine Urquhart has been an integral part of intelligence support provided to numerous squads, task forces and operations, including the protracted investigation into the Ivan Milat backpacker murders conducted by Task Force Air.

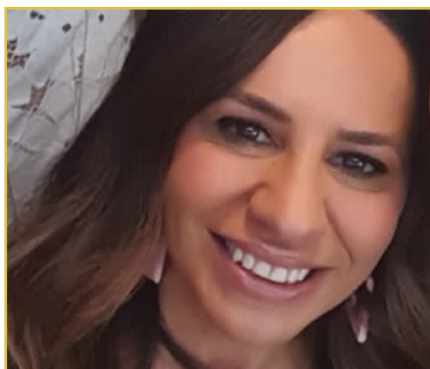
Following an already long and distinguished career in the NSW Police Force in 2018, Senior Sergeant Urquhart developed, designed, and set up the Intelligence Coordination Centre at the State Intelligence Command to effectively manage, document and appropriately disseminate all intelligence information. Prior to this, often critical information was submitted to the NSW Police Force via many different avenues, with no centralised method of recording.



Senior Sergeant Urquhart identified this as a significant risk to the organisation and set about creating a unit which would be integral in mitigating this risk. She did this by establishing processes to record incoming and outgoing intelligence information shared between the NSW Police Force and other agencies including, but not limited to, the Australian Federal Police, Australian Border Force, and the Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission.

Senior Sergeant Urquhart's unwavering dedication, exemplary leadership and pioneering spirit embody the highest ideals of professionalism and service. Her contribution to the advancement of intelligence practice within the NSW Police Force cannot be understated, and her legacy will continue to inspire and guide future generations of intelligence professionals, leaving an indelible mark on the fabric of the organisation.

**VICTORIA**



**Detective Senior Sergeant Angela Hantsis**

Detective Senior Sergeant Angela Hantsis has devoted her working life to solving some of the most complex and intriguing criminal cases in recent Victoria Police history, including cold case murders, armed robberies and sex crimes. Detective Senior Sergeant Hantsis served with distinction on taskforces, including Taskforce Briars which conducted the investigation into alleged involvement of police in the murder of a Victorian man, Taskforce Phoenix which conducted the investigation into the 2009 Victorian bushfires, and the Purana Taskforce which conducted the investigation into the infamous gangland murders in Melbourne.

In 2010, Detective Senior Sergeant Hantsis was only the second female police officer in Victoria Police to successfully complete the Level 4 – Australasian

Human Source Management Course. She utilised her training and skills to recruit, manage and deploy high-risk human sources, managing significant operational risks which led to the successful prosecution of a number of complex crimes.

In 2014, Detective Senior Sergeant Hantsis was appointed to the Missing Persons Squad, where investigations are particularly complex and demanding in the serious crime environment. Undertaking these investigations requires a special skill set, not only in crime investigation, but also emotional and physical resilience, all qualities Detective Senior Sergeant Hantsis embodies.

As a senior sergeant at the St Kilda Police Station, she worked with both government and non-government organisations, social workers, health providers, local government, counselling services and housing providers to address complex needs that surround street level drug use and sex work in order to reduce harm to individuals and the local community.

Detective Senior Sergeant Hantsis is an excellent example of a police officer who can apply herself to large-scale criminal investigations and always display the highest level of integrity and understanding that in the justice continuum, deviating from proper process can rob victims of their right to justice.

**QUEENSLAND**



**Sergeant Kelly Suzanne Gurski**

Sergeant Kelly Gurski has 30 years policing service and has dedicated most of her career to supporting those affected by domestic and family violence (DFV). Sergeant Gurski worked in the domestic violence liaison officer's (DVLO) role for the Queensland Police Service (QPS) for 14 years. Her dedication to the numerous community support-based policing and volunteering roles she has undertaken during her service has been exemplary.

Sergeant Gurski was the first DVLO at Pine Rivers Police Station and was responsible for establishing the role and training others to assist her in undertaking this vital work supporting our communities' most vulnerable members. One of her legacies was the creation and implementation of interagency engagement models (Duluth and PRADO) to assist those affected by domestic and family violence.

Sergeant Gurski has been a role model for other QPS employees, demonstrating exemplary conduct and professionalism when working to address DFV. Since 2012, she has continued her commitment to this area by dedicating her time as a volunteer with RizeUp Australia, a community-driven organisation created to provide support and raise awareness about the social injustice of those affected by domestic or family violence. This is done through speaking engagements providing specialist domestic violence services to deliver fast and safe solutions to families experiencing violence, fundraising and donations.



**Senior Sergeant Rima Seferovic**

Senior Sergeant Rima Seferovic commenced with the Queensland Police Service (QPS) as a police liaison officer in a non-sworn position in the South Brisbane District supporting the Muslim community. Later she attended the police academy and was sworn-in as a constable in October 2006.

Her path to policing was not an easy one, as she negotiated cultural norms within her own community and the QPS, as well as the challenges of being a young female Muslim police officer, while also raising her young family. Senior Sergeant Seferovic became an appointed detective and rose to the rank of Detective Sergeant.

She is now part of a vital team of officers working as part of the Workplace Assessment Support Team making a difference in highly challenging



station and section workplace conflict situations where using her dynamic communications skills and forthright manner, she is making a difference across the state to officers working in challenging environments.

Senior Sergeant Seferovic's drive, enthusiasm and professional skills have led to a capability being available to the QPS and its managers that is not available in other jurisdictions. She, as leader of a high performing team, has made transformational change in workplaces across Queensland. She is a highly regarded officer amongst senior managers and her peers, with her tenacious attitude allowing her to succeed where others have not.

Senior Sergeant Seferovic demonstrates dedication, professionalism, and a mentoring and pioneering ethos in frontline policing. She is transforming the culture of workplaces as an integral member of the Workplace Assessment and Support Team.

## WESTERN AUSTRALIA



### Assistant Commissioner Arlene Mavratsou

Assistant Commissioner Arlene Mavratsou joined the Western Australia Police Force in 2020 after serving other law enforcement intelligence services across Australia and United States. She was promoted to the rank of assistant commissioner and was the first public servant appointed by the Governor to a commissioned officer rank in Western Australia.

She has had a profound impact on law enforcement and tactical intelligence, overseeing both day to day operations and long-term policing objectives, whilst consistently contributing to agency and government priorities to enhance community safety and effective law enforcement outcomes both nationally and internationally.

Assistant Commissioner Mavratsou is an accomplished leader which is evident

in many of her key achievements, such as leading the design and implementation of the agency's new intelligence and data analytics functions. Her vision embedded a tactical intelligence culture focused on "working better together" applying the Identify, Locate Associate (ILA) principles.

She consistently demonstrates her ability to achieve outstanding results through strategic initiatives, leading the intelligence and data reform for the agency, designing and delivering ILA training courses effectively demonstrating the value of intelligence within law enforcement. She has also enhanced the capability within Rapid High Harm Offender Response teams across the state by embedding tactical intelligence analysts within multi-disciplinary operational teams, resulting in significant volume crime reductions.

Other notable accomplishments include implementing new frontline operational technological solutions providing modern crime solving tools and equipment to assist the frontline. These have since played crucial roles in helping to solve many high-profile crimes and historical cases.

Assistant Commissioner Mavratsou is a highly respected and visionary leader who has left an indelible mark on law enforcement and tactical intelligence. She consistently achieves high end results and exemplifies unwavering commitment to community safety and the relentless pursuit of excellence in law enforcement.



### Brevet Senior Sergeant Karyn Lee Meyer

Brevet Senior Sergeant Karyn Meyer joined the Western Australia Police Force in 2012, and in 2014 transferred to Laverton Police Station. In 2017, she was deployed to the Warburton Multi Function Police Facility (MFPF) where her experience, knowledge and skills proved invaluable to build trust with the local women and helped provide critical support around safety for females and children, empowering the community to make positive changes around family violence, including perpetrator accountability. Brevet Senior Sergeant

Meyer established a strong collaborative partnership with Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (NPY) Women's Council, and the local Women's Leadership Group. Since those partnerships and strategies were implemented, family violence in the area reduced by 60% and breaches of family violence restraining orders reduced by 80% in the same period.

In 2022, Brevet Senior Sergeant Meyer was appointed as the first female officer in charge of Blackstone MFPF and established the Warburton Women's Leadership Group. She is the chairperson of the Warburton Inter-agency Meetings group and Warburton Local Drug Action group. She implemented a delayed engagement strategy, putting in place diversionary initiatives to prevent youths re-offending. She obtained over \$45K in funding for the Warburton Local Drug Action Group, including Safe4Kids Child Abuse Prevention Program and the Women's Leadership Group's Safe Space art project within the station.

Brevet Senior Sergeant Meyer installed a restorative justice youth diversion and as a result the volume of crime trended downwards, with most of the offending youths being diverted and not having any further formal police or official justice sanctions. This local youth diversion initiative increased community confidence, building mutual trust, care and respect within the community.

Throughout her career, Brevet Senior Sergeant Meyer has made a significant contribution to the Western Australia Police Force and the communities of regional Western Australia with her leadership, initiatives and dedication to her duty.

## SOUTH AUSTRALIA



### Senior Sergeant Heidi Maria Baldwin

Senior Sergeant Heidi Baldwin has diligently served South Australia Police (SAPOL) since joining in 1990. She initially performed general patrols in metropolitan Adelaide followed by



operational duties at the Mounted Operations Unit. In 2005, she transferred to a metropolitan field intelligence position, igniting an unwavering passion and commitment in the discipline of intelligence. She was promoted to sergeant in 2012 and shortly thereafter, was seconded to an organisational reform project involving police records management systems. Demonstrating leadership and highly accomplished as an intelligence practitioner, she was integral in the transition of intelligence systems, processes and records to a new records management program, improving frontline access to information and warnings and enhancing officer safety during incidents, operations and investigations.

In 2015, Senior Sergeant Baldwin returned to intelligence operations within the State Protective Security Branch and was promoted to senior sergeant in 2019. She has played a pivotal role in working collaboratively and collegiately across law enforcement agencies to counter terrorism and violent extremism; and developing a cadre of intelligence officers and analysts in support of the national and state counter terrorism strategies and plans.

Senior Sergeant Baldwin is highly regarded by colleagues and partner agencies for her leadership, agility and ability to form partnerships and operationalise strategic intelligence

objectives to mitigate risks of terrorism and violent extremism to the community. She has been instrumental in the development and delivery of intelligence training on a national stage and is considered a subject matter expert who is regularly sought out by law enforcement partners for her advocacy and skills within the discipline. Renowned as a role model in police intelligence, Senior Sergeant Baldwin engenders practitioner confidence in the operational and training environment. She demonstrates exemplary integrity and service delivery and has positively contributed to SAPOL and the community for over 33 years.



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# New Zealand KING'S BIRTHDAY HONOURS RECIPIENTS

## By Ten One – New Zealand Police

**T**wo women from New Zealand Police have been recognised in this year's King's Birthday honours. Congratulations go to Inspector Freda Grace, Manager of Operations Support based at Police National Headquarters (PNHQ) and Catherine Petrey, Principal Strategic Policy Advisor, also based at PNHQ, who have both become Members of the New Zealand Order of Merit (MNZM).



### INSPECTOR FREDA GRACE

#### **For services to New Zealand Police**

Inspector Freda Grace's many roles in 40 years in Police have included Hamilton Area Commander, Waikato AOS Commander, Road Policing Manager and Prevention Manager. She has relieved as Tasman District Commander.

Her current role has oversight of all Police's tactical teams, with a focus on ensuring they are properly equipped and supported.

Inspector Grace has been a supporter of women on specialist squads and has provided support and resources to help them reach their potential. This has resulted in the number of women in specialist squads increasing from fewer than 10 in 2017 to 35.

She has also developed several business cases to acquire safety equipment, to greatly increase the safety of all staff. This has included individualised night vision equipment for all Armed Offenders Squad (AOS) members, in replacement of the two to three antiquated sets of equipment per team. This has resulted in every AOS member having full awareness of activity when deployed at night.

She established the Critical Incident Liaison Officer programme, to provide support to AOS members who have responded to traumatic incidents, implementing sponsorship to ensure its future success. While the programme was being developed, she travelled to locations immediately after critical incidents to provide support to AOS members.

She has led the subsequent reintegration programme, which slowly reintroduces staff to work situations they may encounter following exposure to traumatic incidents.

Inspector Grace helped coordinate fundraising efforts for a Sergeant who required \$100,000 for lifesaving surgery in Germany, fundraising more than the target.

"I'm amazed and very humbled that someone would even think to nominate me," she says. "I don't think I've done any more than my job."

She says her role has shifted her focus from directly policing the community to supporting Police staff so they can deliver to the community.

"Why I come to work is to make sure the systems, the processes, the training and the equipment are the best they can be."





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## CATHERINE PETREY

### **For services to New Zealand Police, arms control and the community**

Catherine Petrey worked in the agricultural and fisheries sectors of New Zealand, Australia and Papua New Guinea from the 1970s and since 2006 has held several senior policy roles with New Zealand Police.

Mrs Petrey has been central in providing advice to Ministers of Police and the Government for amendments to the Arms Act 1983 to improve the safety of New Zealanders and frontline police officers.

She contributed a high level of technical expertise to the development of the Arms (Military Style Semi-automatic Firearms [MSSAs] and Import Controls) Amendment Bill, passed in 2012. She established in 2012 and was inaugural Chair for five years of the Police-led Firearms Community Advisory Forum.

She was Police lead in submissions to the 2016 Law and Order Select Committee 'Inquiry into issues relating to the illegal possession of firearms in New Zealand', later writing briefings to lawmakers highlighting gaps being exploited.

Following the 15 March 2019 masjidain terror attack, she and her team applied their expertise to enable the enactment of reformed firearms legislation to prohibit MSSAs 26 days after the Christchurch attack, with subsequent involvement in developing and passing further related legislation until 2022.

She actively contributed to the establishment of the Independent Police Conduct Authority.

Within the community, Mrs Petrey has volunteered more than 35 years to dog training organisations.

She says the honour acknowledges the commitment of many people.

**"When I first came to Police, after working in the public service for most of my life, what I really noticed was that it's an organisation of really committed people who take big and important decisions on a daily basis.**

**"I'm very pleased to be able to work with such people."**



# Royal Solomon Islands Police Force Gender Initiatives and Achievements



The women in the Royal Solomon Islands Police Force (RSIPF) have a growing impact on the RSIPF, and now make up 26% of the force.

**Photos provided by RSIPF Media**

*RSIPF Gender Coordinator Alice Roteku Hillary promoted to the rank of Inspector, receives her letter of promotion from Commissioner RSIPF in May 2024*



Opening of the RSIPF Women's Advisory Network (WAN) Annual General Meeting in March 2024, attended by RSIPF Supervising Commissioner and Senior Executive, AFP and New Zealand Police Advisors and RSIPF WAN members with representation from all Solomon Island Provinces

The impact is reflected in the increase in gender related initiatives led by the RSIPF in recent years, as direct outcomes of the key focus areas of the RSIPF Gender Strategy. This strategy continues to guide the RSIPF in promoting gender equality and this article highlights several of these initiatives.

This year the RSIPF Women's Advisory Network (WAN) celebrates 20 years and has been instrumental since its establishment in the advancement of women in the force. It is one of the main tools identified in the RSIPF's Gender Strategy to advocate for gender equality.

Key areas the WAN offers are professional support to women and an increased understanding and capability in responding to gender-related crime. The WAN has directly contributed to the establishment of the Sexual Assault Unit, deployment of women across various RSIPF departments and units, attendance at training, promotions and the establishment of policies addressing pregnancy, sexual harassment, and other gender-related challenges. The RSIPF and Australian Federal Police (AFP) Policing Partnership Program (RAPPP) provides ongoing support to the WAN.

In March 2024, the RSIPF WAN held the first Annual General Meeting (AGM) since 2019. The biennial AGM had been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, internal unrest and operational priorities. In the AGM opening address, RSIPF Supervising Commissioner Ian Vaevaso, praised the resilience of the RSIPF's female leaders. He highlighted that the



RSIPF Assistant Commissioner Patricia Leta presents the IMOSC Award of Excellence to Detective Inspector Rose Nala

presence of women in frontline and specialist roles, tactical units, maritime, criminal investigation, traffic and fire services demonstrates women's capability. Supervising Commissioner Vaevaso encouraged the attendees to serve as beacons for their peers, especially the younger recruits.

As part of the advocacy focus in the RSIPF Gender Strategy, a designated RSIPF Gender Coordinator position was established in 2019. Inspector Alice Roteku is the first officer to have filled this role and over the past five years has demonstrated a passion for promoting gender equality and striving for an inclusive workplace that

supports and values the contribution of women within the RSIPF. Inspector Roteku has leveraged her 23-year long policing career and broad organisational experience to achieve several initiatives.

One of these initiatives was supporting the implementation of maternity uniforms in the RSIPF. The RSIPF WAN Committee and Inspector Roteku identified that a lack of availability of a maternity uniform was an obstacle for pregnant female officers. It limited them to only administrative or office-based work instead of operational duties. To address this, the RSIPF WAN Committee and Inspector Roteku worked collaboratively on an initiative to design and make available a maternity uniform for the RSIPF.

**'The RSIPF is a disciplined organisation, and pregnant women officers must be provided proper work uniforms to wear to work.'**

**Inspector Roteku**

A trial across the RSIPF of these uniforms commenced in January 2024, supported by the RAPPP. This trial made the RSIPF



the second Pacific law enforcement agency to introduce maternity uniforms, following Vanuatu Police Force's maternity uniform introduction in 2021.

The WAN established a committee to oversee this process and received endorsement from the RSIPF Commissioner. The committee developed a design and identified a local manufacturer in Honiara to produce the trial uniforms. It was agreed that the uniform needed to be simple, and of the same type and style as the approved uniform currently in service for the RSIPF. Providing female officers with a comfortable uniform, whilst maintaining a professional appearance was essential. The final design was endorsed by the RSIPF Senior Executive Management Forum and recognised as an official RSIPF uniform at the end of 2023.

At the completion of the trial period, an evaluation of the initiative will be provided to the RSIPF WAN Committee with recommendations. The intended outcome is for the RSIPF Logistics section to take over the purchase and distribution of the uniform as part of the standard uniform process for RSIPF.

This initiative shows that the RSIPF has taken an important step towards achieving equal opportunities for their officers and demonstrates a willingness to bridge the gap between women and men within the RSIPF. Throughout the initiative, the RAPPP have supported Inspector Roteku and the WAN, something Commissioner Mangau acknowledged at the launch of the uniform:

'... [the] AFP has been supporting the RSIPF with uniforms and other resources. I thank the AFP and RAPPP for this.'

**“Detective Inspector Nala is a highly regarded leader within the RSIPF and role model for fellow female colleagues to aspire to. This award recognises Inspector Nala’s continued dedication to learn and grow as a Police Officer and her efforts will continue to positively impact the RSIPF and wider community.”**

Another key initiative achieved under the RSIPF Gender Strategy is recognising the value of women within the workforce through inclusive leadership and capability development of its female officers. This commitment was exemplified by the National Traffic Department (NTD) in the lead up to the Pacific Games in 2023. Superintendent William Foufaka (NTD) identified the need to provide female officers with additional tools to manage the influx of people into the community and increased requirement in crowd management. The arrival of additional external police officers and visitors to Honiara was identified as having a considerable impact on the community and the local police force, of which women are a crucial part of.

The RSIPF Gender Coordinator, Inspector Roteku, was engaged to coordinate and deliver gender workshops for two RSIPF Frontline Honiara Stations in the lead up to the games. The workshop was developed in line with the RSIPF Gender Strategy, supported by RAPPP. Delivered to Frontline female officers and Executive members, these workshops focussed on gender appropriate personal health, wellbeing, and organisational responses to sexual harassment.

During these sessions, Inspector Roteku emphasised the importance of promoting the role women play in Pacific police forces, providing an invaluable and essential contribution to policing capabilities. The attending officers agreed with this sentiment, and the principle that creating a workplace that actively values and supports women in all aspects of policing contributes to a strong and professional force. The RSIPF Executive were extremely supportive of this initiative, stating they want to ensure that Executive members are strategically promoting gender equality.

Investment in professional development and targeted opportunities for skill and leadership development for RSIPF female officers is core to the RSIPF Gender Strategy. This can be seen through a growing number of female officers representing the RSIPF in international forums in recent years. Five female officers represented the RSIPF at the International Women in Policing Conference in Auckland in 2023, providing the officers with

an opportunity to network and learn from shared experiences from over 800 delegates from 75 countries. At the ACWAP Awards dinner held during the conference, five female RSIPF officers were nominated for awards. This is a significant achievement for these officers to be recognised for their contributions to serving their communities and supporting the development of female colleagues in RSIPF.

Another example is the selection of Detective Inspector Eileen Rose Nala to represent RSIPF internationally. Detective Inspector Nala was selected to attend the International Management of Serious Crime (IMOSC) course in recognition of her excellent skills and leadership in the RSIPF.

IMOSC is Australasian policing's premier training program for leaders of complex serious crime investigations and aims to enable senior leaders to combat serious crime through strategy, policy, and capability development both organisationally, nationally, and internationally. In 2023 the course was held in Indonesia, and Detective Inspector Nala was joined by senior investigators from 15 countries.

Due to her performance on the course, Detective Inspector Nala received the IMOSC Award of Excellence on International Women's Day on 8 March 2024. It emphasised that Detective Inspector Nala had demonstrated outstanding leadership, collaboration, strategic awareness, and management of serious crime philosophies. RSIPF Assistant Commissioner Patricia Leta, presented the IMOSC Award of Excellence to Detective Inspector Nala and reflected on her contribution to RSIPF and women in policing:

Detective Inspector Nala is a highly regarded leader within the RSIPF and role model for fellow female colleagues to aspire to. This award recognises Inspector Nala's continued dedication to learn and grow as a Police Officer and her efforts will continue to positively impact the RSIPF and wider community.

During her career Detective Inspector Nala has seen a noticeable, positive transformation in the RSIPF and the role of women in policing. At the event she passed on some advice to members commencing their career:



'Always ask questions and have a thirst for more knowledge; use the challenges you face as learning experiences not as setbacks; engage with as many people as you can as there is a real strength in diversity; and accept and embrace change.'

All these examples and the achievements of the RSIPF WAN demonstrate the strength of RSIPF's female officers. Through RSIPF's continued commitment to the implementation of the Gender Strategy to work towards gender equality, real change can occur. RSIPF is leading the way in the Pacific with creating change through their gender initiatives which will hopefully inspire colleagues across the Pacific to also keep working towards gender equality. It cannot be underestimated how RSIPF women together can shape the future of the organisation and ensure that the RSIPF is an organisation that values the contribution of a diverse and supportive workforce.



Launch of the RSIPF Maternity Uniform in January 2024. Female officers participating in the uniform trial with RSIPF Gender Coordinator, Inspector Alice Roteku (far left) and RSIPF WAN Deputy Chair, Staff Sergeant Marcillar Haga (far right)

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# RU OK?™

A conversation could change a life.

## The R U OK? Are They Triple OK? Podcast



### Building connection and comradery

R U OK? has launched a new podcast series to encourage life changing conversations, early intervention and supportive behaviour amongst the peers, family and friends of those who work and volunteer in the police and emergency services.

The **'Are They Triple OK?'** podcast features personal stories and practical tools to increase social support for emergency services personnel and build a mentally healthy workplace. It also includes tips on how to ask, 'are you OK?' and navigate a conversation if someone is not OK.

Episode one features James Maskey, a retired front-line Queensland Police Officer. In 2013, James was diagnosed with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.

*"As first responders historically, we talk about everything except for mental health and, importantly, suicidal thoughts,"* said Mr Maskey. *"Either because we didn't have the confidence to have that conversation, or we were worried*

*about the impacts of having that chat. And when I say we, I'm talking about me. Certainly, that was my experience."*

Mr Maskey says frontline first responders, in the fire truck, in the ambulance, in the patrol car, have a unique opportunity to get to know their colleagues.

*"You know what they like to eat, their coffee order and what their family and their children are up to,"* he said. *"You know the intimate details of their lives because you've got a long time in the car sitting side by side to share so many experiences."*

Mr Maskey is now the National Sector Specialist at Fortem Australia, and is passionate about enhancing the mental, physical and social well-being of the first responder community.

*"My advice to the emergency services community is to learn how to have an R U OK? Conversation and start having them,"* he said. *"If someone is struggling, reaching out for help can feel like a heavy thing to do, it can be a hard task and it can feel overwhelming."*

*"But when you take the time to ask someone how they're travelling, you can take some of the weight off and some of the burden away. People are often relieved to have a conversation and feel that level of camaraderie."*

The **'Are They Triple OK?'** podcast is hosted by Matt Newlands, R U OK? Community Ambassador and former police officer and is one of a suite of free resources available from

R U OK? for those who work in the police and emergency services, their families and friends. The podcast and resources including a conversation guide and personal stories that demonstrate the life changing impact of an R U OK? conversation can be found at [ruok.org.au](http://ruok.org.au). The **'Are They Triple OK?'** podcast will also be available for download on a range of streaming services, including Apple Podcasts, Spotify, Google Play and Audible.

**'Are They Triple OK?'** was developed in response to the Beyond Blue nationwide 'Answering the call' survey which found more than half of all police and emergency services employees indicated they had experienced



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[ruok.org.au/triple-ok](http://ruok.org.au/triple-ok)

a traumatic event that had deeply affected them during the course of their work. Positively, personnel with higher levels of social support and resilience reported lower levels of suicidal thoughts and behaviours.

*"The results from 'Answering the Call' showed us that the support of peers, family and friends does make a difference for those who work in frontline services. It's OK to not be OK. It's OK to lean on each other, and it's OK to retire that unhelpful stereotype of being that six-foot bulletproof superhero,"* said Maskey.

*"I would urge leaders to explore vulnerability to share their own story if they have one, or to support others to share their own story as well. We know that this helps in demystifying mental health."*

If you're worried about someone and feel they need professional support, encourage them to contact their Employee Assistance Program (EAP), appropriate agency support service or connect with a trusted health professional, like their local doctor.

Pinnacle Charitable Foundation is a Funding Partner of R U OK? and is proud to fund the 'Are they Triple OK?' campaign.

Specialised wellbeing and mental fitness support for first responders and their families can be accessed through Fortem Australia at [fortemaustralia.org.au](http://fortemaustralia.org.au).

For 24/7 for crisis support call Lifeline on **13 11 14**. Text support is also available: **0477 13 11 14**.





# My Health Journey: Detective Acting Sergeant Mikayla Absolom



Captains holding the cup prior to the Tasmania Police v Tasmanian Prison Service charity match



Mikayla in action for the Tasmania Police Women's Football Team  
Roussov

## HOW DID YOU JOIN THE TASMANIA POLICE FOOTBALL TEAM?

I first got involved back in 2021, which was the initial year females were involved in the National Police Football Carnival. Due to COVID, that carnival unfortunately didn't go ahead - however the Tasmanian men's and women's police football teams played in charity games against the Tasmanian Prison Service and a local team instead. We have since competed in National Carnivals during 2022 in Melbourne and 2023 in Perth. Now have our sights set on the 2024 Carnival in Brisbane.

## WHAT IS YOUR ROLE IN THE TASMANIA POLICE FOOTBALL TEAM?

I am Captain, which is an honour that I'm very proud of. The role involves leading the team on and off the field, as well as giving a good 'gee-up speech' to get the girls up and running on game day. I also sit on the Board for the men and women's teams and assist in all the behind-the-scenes work. Our team is made up of players from around the State, although we are currently lacking in Northern based players. There are no pre-requisites - all we ask for is enthusiasm and willingness to give 100% on game day.

## HOW WAS THE LAST NATIONAL POLICE FOOTBALL CARNIVAL?

Our last carnival was in Western Australia last year. We were feeling pretty confident after a successful 2022 Carnival, where we finished second and only went down by a few points to the home side (Victoria) in our third game. However we were very quickly brought back to Earth with the improvement of the other teams, going 0-3 across our three games! But the matches only make up a small portion of what the carnival is about; the relationships you develop with other states, the camaraderie you grow within your own team and the bonds you develop with your male counterparts are what makes it all so special. Tassie are very lucky to have good relationships with all the other states, with interstate players often banging the door down to play a game wearing 'the map'!

## WHAT ARE YOU DOING NOW IN THE BROADER FOOTBALL COMMUNITY?

I play in Division 1 of the Southern Football League for the Kingborough Tigers, where I have loyally spent the entirety of my nine year career. I previously played in the state-wide competition (TSL) before it split into the three regional competitions.

Recently, I captained the Southern Representative Side in games against the Northern and North West sides over the June long weekend.

## HOW HAS POLICE WORK OR FOOTBALL IMPACTED UPON YOUR PERSONAL HEALTH 'JOURNEY'?

Police work and football have both impacted on my health...similarly my health has had a reciprocal effect on police work and football!

Football has been a great motivator in my health journey. Just the desire to be fitter, stronger and to have improved health which is enabling me to play some of the better football of my career. I spent a large amount of the 2023/2024 off-season in the gym and developing healthy habits with my eating. That not only enabled me to become stronger, but also saw me lose 10kg. This has definitely had an impact with how I move and increased my ability to run games out.





The Tasmania Police Women's Football Team and Coaches

These healthy habits have also allowed me to develop a routine around a busy work schedule - meal preparation overtook buying lunches, plus better sleep and hydration meant better cognitive ability during long days on the job.

**WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNED OR GAINED FROM PLAYING FOOTBALL?**

Football has also helped me develop my leadership skills, resilience and discipline, as well as positively impacting my physical and mental health.

But the biggest thing I have gained from playing football is being involved in that community, be it police or local clubs. I've been able to build relationships and met so many people from different walks of life. This has helped me to develop and grow from the knowledge I have gained from a vast amount of people I have either played with or against, as well as everyone else along the way. The football community is incredible, and something that I fully threw myself into when I first started - and I'll be forever grateful that I did. Any 'village' that encourages you to be who you are, whilst also allowing your personal development (not just physical aspects that come with playing a sport) is worth being involved in.

**WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNED ABOUT YOURSELF THROUGH YOUR OWN HEALTH 'JOURNEY' (THERE IT IS AGAIN!) AND WHAT IS THE IMPACT UPON YOUR LIFE?**

My health journey has been years in the making: lots of ups and downs, falling off the wagon and getting back on it again! My biggest takeaway has been around consistency, discipline and remembering your goals.

I have also noticed the positive impact healthy habits like going to the gym, eating well and being dedicated to footy training can have on mental health. I went through a rough patch with life where it probably would have been forgivable to fall off the wagon a bit with everything going on...but instead I stuck to my routine, remembered my goals and kept working away it. This resilience is something that I'm really proud of, but also something that benefited my mental health along the way.

I have also learned how inspiring you can be to other people without even realising it. This has been really nice to discover and something that has motivated me to get more involved in the health community. I think you are so much more capable than you often think you are - and once you push through the boundaries of what you think you can or can't do, you really surprise yourself.



Mikayla giving one of her famous 'gee-up' speeches to the Tasmania Police Women's Football Team

**WHAT'S NEXT FOR YOU IN THIS SPACE?**

I've commenced my Certificate 3 in Fitness, and have begun working at local gym Undrgrnd Training, which has been a pinnacle place for me to progress my health goals. What I have achieved through my own health journey has inspired me to help others with theirs, and give something back to the local community.

**Football wise:** locally at Kingborough we're putting together a really strong season and so far remain undefeated. So we're hoping to go all the way to a premiership, albeit still a little way away yet!

The police football team are gearing up for a big trip to Brisbane for this year's Carnival and looking to put some wins on the board...so we'll see you there!



Back row (L-R): Chaplain Darren Hultgren, Chaplain Paul Trimble, Chaplain Wayne A Warfield, and Chaplain David Ladner. Front row (L-R): Chaplain Olive O'Brien and Chaplain Ev Heard

# In Dedicated Service to the Ministry of Presence

“Our role is to help people identify that not feeling okay is actually when the heart, mind and body aren’t aligning. It’s not about church, it’s about helping them understand that they already have within their systems ways of coping.”

- Chaplain Wayne A Warfield.

The Western Australia Police Force, Police Chaplain Dave Ladner sometimes reflects that he doesn’t actually do much when he turns up to a critical incident, other than hand out lollies and bottles of water.



Chaplain David Ladner



Chaplain Olive O'Brien



Chaplain Wayne A Warfield



Inaugural Police Chaplain Father Barry May

He knows, however, that the mere fact he is there sends a powerful message to officers that someone cares. It's what Chaplain Wayne Warfield – the longest serving of the recently expanded team of six WA Police Chaplains – calls 'the ministry of presence.'

For a long time that ministry was a solitary job, administered by inaugural Police Chaplain Father Barry May in ways that sometimes defied understanding: to officers, he seemed to materialise from nowhere whenever he was needed. Since then, an unbroken line of chaplains has built on Barry's legacy, seeking to reach every corner of Western Australia in order to provide a unique brand of support that may be different for every chaplain, every officer, and every situation. Covering everything from critical incidents to graduations, inductions, weddings, funerals and baptisms, the one constant is that commitment to presence.

"Our only KPI is to reach every station, active or frontline unit, and multi-function police facility in the state at least once every year," Dave says. "Over the past few years we've got within 95 and 97 per cent – it's really only those very remote Multi Functional Police Facilities (MFPFs) we haven't been able to get to. In saying that we still make sure we make contact with those OICs and those people."

Now that there are six chaplains – a record number achieved with the addition of two female chaplains, Olive O'Brien and Ev Heard, in October 2023 – that goal has become much more attainable, with hopes the team will be able to reach every station twice a year. These proactive visits – as opposed to responsive visits sparked by a critical incident – see the chaplains pop in simply to say g'day and have a natter, making themselves known so officers and police staff know who they can call should they need support.

"Our presence is promoting not only the chaplains but the health and welfare side of things, to let our people know that whatever they may be experiencing is normal and that it's okay to not be okay," Dave says. Working in six-week cycles, each chaplain will usually do a week on call responding to critical incidents around the clock, a week as reserve chaplain, and two weeks travelling to their allocated region. They'll try to ensure each chaplain has one low week to help them recharge, with the other week flexible. "Our contract is to provide 24/7, 365 coverage, and that's what we sign up for as chaplains," Wayne says. "But there's always backup, and then if there's a terrible crisis – which thankfully are very few – all of us will be there unless we're out of the country."

It was just such a crisis which laid bare the need to grow the team. Last year, when Constable Anthony Woods was critically injured during a traffic stop, two of the then four chaplains – Dave and Wayne – were travelling, leaving only



Paul Trimble and Darren Hultgren on hand to support the family as well as the many affected officers. Dave returned from Albany the next day, while Wayne – in remote Paraburdoo – got back as fast as he could. “It became very clear that four chaplains wasn’t enough,” Wayne says.

Within months, Olive and Ev were part of the team. Although such catastrophic situations are rare, the women have had no shortage of critical incidents since coming on board – Olive attended 14 during her first week on call, and the last time she was on call she had three in one night. “We travel with our bag in the car at all times – clothes, uniform – ready to go even when we’re on holidays, and our phone goes everywhere,” Olive says. “You just have to be free morning, noon and night.”

How each chaplain responds on scene varies, with each having their own strengths and style and every critical incident with its own dynamics to be navigated. Typical incidents include double fatalities, fatalities involving children, and incidents where officers have given CPR. Upon arrival the chaplains are on high alert, seeking out the incident controller, trying to identify who they should look out for or follow up once the dust settles, but also trying to stay out of the way.

“We go in there with all senses blazing,” Wayne says. “We listen very carefully, work out what’s required and attend to that.” Often, it’s the little things that make a difference in the moment: the bottle of water; the meal run; the momentary cover so an officer can nip to the toilet; or the snake lollies that can be relied upon to break the ice in the tensest of situations.

The people they’re looking out for are not only the officers at the centre of the incident but those at the fringe.

“Sometimes when you’re out in the middle of the night and all the action’s up the road and you’re on traffic duty and stopping people from coming near, it’s very easy for people to be so caught up in what’s going on that the traffic management officers are forgotten,” Wayne says. “Then we come along and I think they’re just thankful someone’s remembered them, even if it’s just to give them a drink of water. It’s caring for the physical side as well as the spiritual side.”

Olive says the chaplains don’t have any magic wand: “We’re just present and we will give you the time, and listen, and try to help in whichever way we can.” For many officers – too busy undertaking their duties to speak with the chaplains at the time – the support comes later, with a cup of tea and a debrief back at the station or a follow-up visit some time down the track.

The chaplains take care to mind their own welfare as well as that of the officers and live by the rule: if you don’t have to see, don’t. “All of us have been to tragedies and the two or three first responders who go in and see what’s going on will stop every other officer who doesn’t need to go in from seeing it, because you can’t unsee it,” Wayne says. “They protect the chaplains from that as well, and we’re very thankful.” “Part of our job is promising that we will be there to stand beside you. If we go and look then we’re no good to you,” Olive adds.

Conscious of the very real risk of vicarious trauma, the chaplains see a psychologist every 6-8 weeks to protect their own wellbeing. Each has their own way of processing trauma and finding balance in their own lives. For Olive, it’s crochet, stargazing, lighting a candle or attending her church, and for Dave it includes Brazilian Ju-Jitsu, fishing and camping.

He’ll often ask young officers what they do at the end of their shift – whether they have some sort of outlet to help them deal with the toxic hangover that comes from trauma and adrenalin spikes. “Doing something that’s intensely physical – some people run, some people work out at the gym, some people do line dancing – it doesn’t really matter but it’s that physical activity that helps your body process all the toxic stuff that comes with adrenal dumps, and you can start to find balance,” Dave says.

“But all spiritual practices have some form of quiet space and that’s the other thing I encourage people to do. A lot of nurses will go and sit down the beach and watch the sunset. Some people will go and get some tree therapy. My wife works in the garden. It’s about finding the things that fill you up.”

This ties in to what represents a large part of the chaplains’ job: providing spiritual care – not so much in the religious sense, but helping people to restore balance. “Not everyone is religious but everyone is spiritual,” Dave says. “Good spirituality is about a balance between the heart, mind, body and soul. If you’re not processing what you’ve experienced properly then that dissonance can continue and that’s when people can become unbalanced.

“Our role is to help people identify that not feeling okay is actually when the heart, mind and body aren’t aligning. It’s not about church, it’s about helping them understand that they already have within their systems ways of coping.” Equally, the chaplains aren’t there to proselytise: “That’s not what we’re there for at all,” Wayne says. “Our ministry is to all people of faith or people of no faith. We’re there to support – to bring whatever stability might be needed in a time of chaos.”

# Responding with Resilience



Fortem is Australia's leading not for profit, delivering mental health and wellbeing support to first responders and their families.

**O**ur first responders are a critical resource within the Australian community. They are the individuals we lean on for help in times of disaster, or during moments of crisis.

However, first responder work can come at a significant personal cost.

This is where Fortem steps in. At Fortem, we believe those who work to keep our communities safer shouldn't have to hurt from helping us. Nor should their families. That is why we exist.

For the last five years we have adopted an early-intervention and preventative mental health and wellbeing framework, and offered support to first responders across Australia, nurturing resilience to boost mental health and wellbeing in the face of tough conditions.

Through social connection and wellbeing activities, confidential counselling, online resources and strategic career management, we help turn struggle into strength.

Many of Fortem's team understand the impact of first responder work firsthand, having held careers in New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland Police, often spanning decades. We recognise that meaningful support requires a

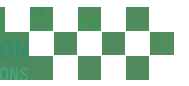


balance of science and heart, combining the latest research with genuine lived experience.

Our evidence-informed programs have been developed in line with extensive research and in conjunction with senior leaders from state based first responder agencies, national law enforcement agencies and representative agencies from Australia's National Intelligence Community. This ensures that we complement existing internal service offerings.

As we continue into our fifth year of operation, we continue to strive for better mental health literacy and support for our first responders, nationwide. Acknowledging the human toll of being the first on the scene, and collectively expressing gratitude for this often-overlooked duty are crucial steps we as a community must take.

Fortem's services are open and accepting self-referrals for our first responder community and their inner circles. You can find out more by visiting [fortemaustralia.org.au](http://fortemaustralia.org.au)



# Not Fine, The Hidden Cost of Caring

Donna Davis had never imagined a life outside the Police.



Ten years of service had woven her identity tightly with her roles as a Detective and Sergeant. Yet, as the years passed, the weight of constant exposure to pain and distress began to bear down on her. The toll became undeniable. In her new book, "Not Fine, The Hidden Cost of Caring," Donna candidly shares her journey through the shadows of cumulative vicarious trauma and her subsequent path to recovery. Her story unfolds revealing the hidden struggles behind the badge.

Donna's journey into the New Zealand Police began in 2007, at the age of 26. Motivated by her own experiences of childhood sexual abuse, she sought to offer solace and support to others facing similar trials through her work. Assigned primarily in the Waikato, she transitioned to roles within the Criminal Investigation Branch (CIB), specializing in cases of adult sexual assault, child protection, and specialist interviewing.

Early on, Donna found herself entangled in the intricate webs of her victim's traumas. Lack of boundaries blurred the lines between personal and professional involvement as empathy took over. She became deeply invested in the lives of those she sought to help, unaware of the toll it would take on her own well-being. "I just absorbed everything without knowing. I wasn't putting in the current boundaries or self-care." I also had no idea I was at higher risk by carrying my own trauma into the job.

By 2015, the strain began to show. Despite attempts to distance herself by returning to uniformed duties, the relentless onslaught of trauma persisted. Using the role changes as avoidance was not a reliable coping mechanism. Her mental health deteriorated rapidly, casting a shadow over her family life. Anxiety, panic attacks, and reliance on alcohol became her coping strategies, but they offered only fleeting relief.

The turning point came in 2017 when a psychologist delivered a stark ultimatum: leave the Police force to reclaim her health. It was a devastating blow, yet it sparked a journey of recovery that would span four arduous years. Central to this process was Donna's decision to document her experiences, culminating in the creation of "Not Fine." Initially conceived as a personal project to help her children understand her journey, the book evolved into a profound exploration of trauma in its myriad forms.

Donna unraveled the threads of her life, tracing their connections to her entry into law enforcement and the subsequent roles she inhabited. The first section of "Not Fine" delves into the landscape of trauma, from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) to vicarious trauma and compassion fatigue. Drawing on her own encounters and those of fellow officers, as well as individuals from other professions

such as nursing and midwifery, Donna sheds light on the insidious nature of trauma exposure.

Her message to colleagues is clear: recognise when you're struggling and have the courage to seek help. "It's like anything when you're doing it every day, it just becomes normal." Only upon leaving the force did she fully grasp the extent of her own struggles. While bidding farewell to the Police was bittersweet, Donna discovered new avenues to fill the void left behind. Sharing her story has already made a difference, offering solace to others grappling with similar challenges. Through her advocacy, Donna hopes to ignite vital conversations around mental health in the workplace, challenging prevailing narratives and fostering a culture of support and understanding.

In "Not Fine," Donna Davis emerges not only as a survivor but as a beacon of resilience and hope. Her journey serves as a testament to the human spirit's capacity for healing and renewal, even in the face of profound adversity.

To reach more people Donna created a podcast called "Blurred Lines," available on Spotify and her website, [www.kiamaianz.com](http://www.kiamaianz.com), along with the book.

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NSW Police Force &

# Employee Wellbeing







## There is no denying the nature of police work is both exhilarating yet simultaneously challenging for all involved.

From our sworn officers to the administrative employees helping keep the well-oiled machine going, every single employee in one way or another contributes to the safety of our community. NSW Police Force (NSWPF) is dedicated to investing in the health and wellbeing of all our employees who proudly protect our state and also seek to support the families who play a pivotal role in supporting their NSWPF loved one.

To achieve this, the NSWPF has implemented several strategic measures, such as the Mental Wellbeing Strategy 2020-2025, People Strategy 2023, and the Health & Safety Strategy 2021-2026. Whilst these policies formally recognise the formal importance to enhance wellbeing and mental health among the workforce, it is the foundation and backbone reinforcing the delivery of progressive initiatives. Focus of such initiatives has been placed on promoting early intervention, holistic support services and creating a culture for all employees to feel valued and supported. A huge variety is on offer, with over 20 different forms of support available to all employees, plus different mental health training packages and not to mention the enormous array of external agencies also seeking to support our frontline. NSWPF has increased its time, investment and interest in this area to make support more accessible and available statewide, to create a healthier and more resilient workforce. By caring for members of our organisation this means we can better care for our community too.

Our Health, Safety and Wellbeing (HSW) Command is exactly that, an area of our organisation exclusively dedicated to enhancing these three key areas. This includes safety culture, promotion of mental health awareness, integration of safety practices into daily operations and enforcing a comprehensive approach to employee wellbeing.

Research and acknowledgement is placed on the importance of enhancing wellbeing in the workforce and mitigating psychosocial risk factors.

This space is one continuing to evolve, not only in relation to our workforce but worldwide interest continues to gain traction. Therefore, NSWPF can not afford to be static in this area and as such, the HSW Command is dynamic, continually seeking to improve and adapting to the everchanging nature of work faced by our employees. New initiatives are continuously developed, and existing programs further enhanced. PULSE funding has been a significant five year investment contributing to ground breaking enhancements and support for the mental health and wellbeing of our employees, and members of their family.

Two key PULSE initiatives that support the mental health of our employees are our mental health clinicians and our Early Access to Treatment Initiative (EATI). Mental Health Clinicians are embedded in our Commands, they understand the police working environment and can offer support to employees discreetly whenever they need help. As an additional program, our EATI program covers out of pocket expenses for employees after the Medicare rebate for external psychology appointments.

We will be introducing Steps to Better Health, a comprehensive program combining a free 15-minute periodic health check with a Functional Movement Screening (FMS). The former conducted by a nurse to evaluate key health indicators such as glucose and cholesterol levels, blood pressure, diabetes risk, and waist circumference. The latter is a brief 10-minute evaluation conducted by a Physical Training Instructor involving seven movement-based tests to gauge an individual's mobility, flexibility, and stability, pinpointing any weaknesses and suggesting corrective exercises. All employees will have access to this package, empowering them with the ability to put their health first. This reduces barriers like accessibility and time, and provides our workers with a snapshot of their current state of health and wellbeing. From this, referral to appropriate allied health professionals and services can be determined if

required. Starting 1 July 2024, all employees will have the opportunity to take advantage of this health initiative over the next three years.

We are also developing Potentially Traumatic Events (PTE) Exposure Guidelines to enhance support mechanisms for employees facing PTE during their duties. These guidelines will be the go-to resource for our various commands faced with complex events and incidents likely to have a psychological impact on employees. This is a great step toward providing guidance and support, by creating a standardised and easy to follow approach to understand what constitutes a PTE. By defining these events clearly and assigning specific responsibilities to stakeholders, this provides a structured support system for affected employees. Emphasis is placed on early intervention and proactive monitoring, to manage and mitigate the impact of such events. It promotes help-seeking behaviours among employees and incorporates principles of Psychological First Aid to offer immediate support in distressing situations. All NSWPF are required to undertake Psychological First Aid training throughout 2024-2025.

### **CURRENT WELLBEING SUPPORT SERVICES FOR NSWPF EMPLOYEES**

**Check out the NSWPF internet site for more information on support services. [www.police.nsw.gov.au/about\\_us/wellbeing\\_support\\_services](http://www.police.nsw.gov.au/about_us/wellbeing_support_services)**

As mentioned earlier there is an abundance of support available and it is unsurprising to the end user it can be overwhelming to know where to start or what to utilise. To assist, think of the support available as falling into three categories; prevention, support and response. Each category addresses specific aspects of employee wellbeing and operational readiness and shows a holistic approach to health and safety within the NSWPF. This ensures all employees have access to necessary resources that can help them thrive in both personal and professional areas.



## PREVENTION

### FAMILY SUPPORT

**What is it?**

Provides emotional support, guidance, facilitates connections with counselling services, and resources to employees and their immediate family members; partners, children and parents.

**Why is this service used?**

Beyond a family member being worried about their NSWPF employed partner or family member, this service goes one step further. NSWPF recognises often the biggest form of support is our employees' loved ones.

Family Support seeks to support and guide with a variety of issues, dedicate to ensuring loved ones are not alone in times of adversity. This could range from relationship discord, bereavement, mental health issues, challenges with children/adolescents, critical incidents, coronial inquests, domestic violence, aging family members and more.

### YOUR HEALTH CHECK

**What is it?**

Is a 15-minute voluntary and confidential health assessment to provide crucial information about your health. This comprehensive check evaluates important health parameters like waist circumference, blood pressure, blood glucose levels, diabetes risk and cholesterol. It also briefly discusses an employees diet, nutrition, and exercise habits.

**Why is this service used?**

At the end of the assessment, an employee receives a report card with their results, providing valuable insights into their overall health and potential areas of improvement.

### EWELLCHECK

**What is it?**

It is an online tool designed to help employees conduct self-assessment of their current mental wellbeing.

**Why is this service used?**

This confidential service involves a brief questionnaire, which helps gauge how employees cope with the demands of their roles and personals lives. The responses are triaged by internal clinicians who promptly provide feedback and recommendations, based on the indicated needs.

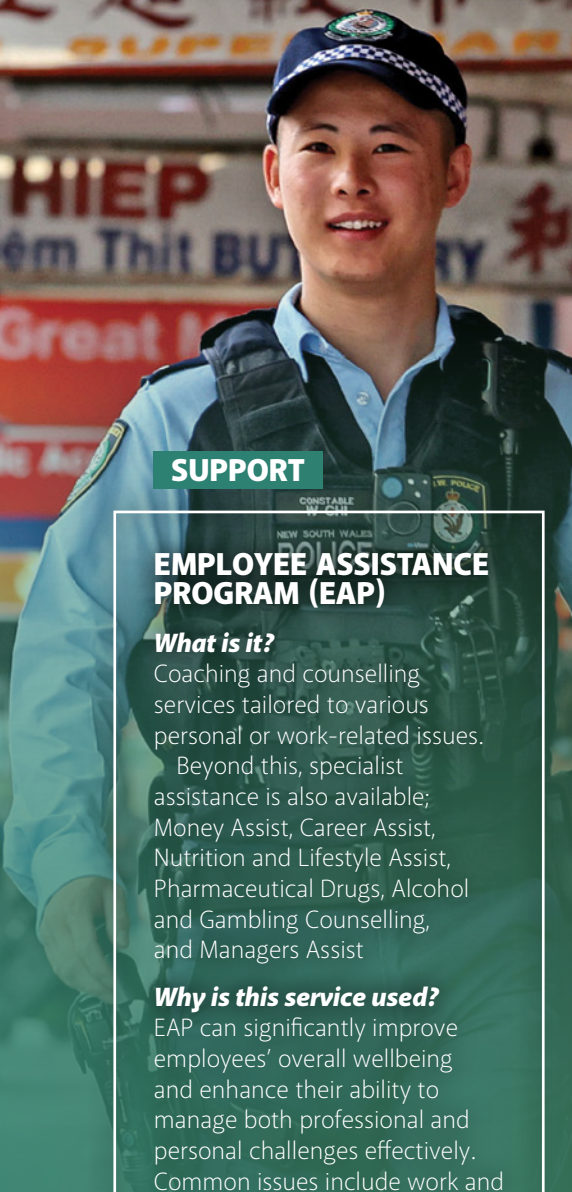
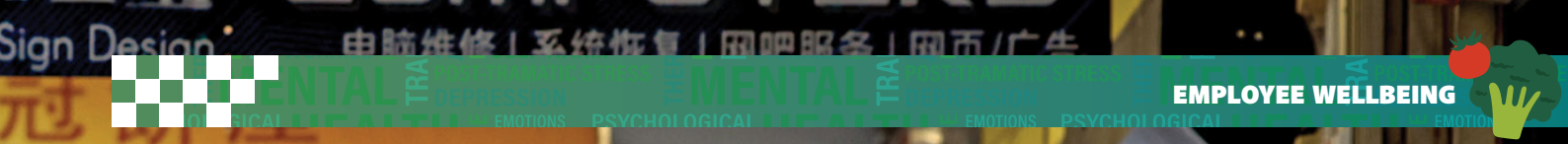
### PHYSICAL TRAINING INSTRUCTORS (PTI)

**What is it?**

PTI's assists individual employees and commands in achieving their health and fitness goals.

**Why is this service used?**

They develop personalised and group programs that effectively contribute to the success and wellbeing of the participants. Additionally, PTIs are trained to perform Functional Movement Screen tests, which help assess employees' physical fitness and movement capabilities. PTIs can also help with other programs such as quitting smoking, losing weight, and increasing fitness levels.



**SUPPORT**

**EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (EAP)**

**What is it?**

Coaching and counselling services tailored to various personal or work-related issues.

Beyond this, specialist assistance is also available; Money Assist, Career Assist, Nutrition and Lifestyle Assist, Pharmaceutical Drugs, Alcohol and Gambling Counselling, and Managers Assist

**Why is this service used?**

EAP can significantly improve employees' overall wellbeing and enhance their ability to manage both professional and personal challenges effectively. Common issues include work and personal stress, career and life changes, challenges in personal and workplace relationships, or emotional difficulties. The program also offers guidance on communication issues, conflict resolution, grief and loss, sleep and fatigue management and anger management.

**PEER SUPPORT OFFICERS (PSO)**

**What is it?**

PSO's are specifically trained to offer empathetic support by listening and understanding various situations and guiding employees to appropriate support services as needed.

**Why is this service used?**

Contacting a PSO can be helpful for managing and recovering from challenging situations. They provide a confidential, supportive and relatable space whilst also clarifying the limits of confidentiality due to mandatory reporting requirements. A great source of support and point of reference for further information on support services available.

**MENTAL HEALTH CLINICIANS**

**What is it?**

Mental Health Clinicians are embedded locally within Police Area Commands and Police Districts.

**Why is this service used?**

Clinicians are available to provide short-term, solution focused support and referral arrangements to other NSWPF wellbeing support services and/or primary allied health professionals in the community. Mental Health Clinicians also provide guidance on wellbeing initiatives that support the Command to ensure mentally healthy workplaces that promote psychological safety.

**CRISIS TELEPHONE COUNSELLING**

**What is it?**

For employees experiencing urgent personal mental health issues or emotional distress.

**Why is this service used?**

The service is available 24/7 and provides immediate telephone consultation with a clinician who will listen, offer support and guide employees through the crisis.



**RESPONSE**

**INCIDENT SUPPORT**

**What is it?**  
Psychological first aid to employees affected by work-related critical incidents or potentially traumatic events. This service acknowledges the immediacy required and upon activation, prompt and immediate support is provided. This includes an initial individual wellbeing check-in by a clinician.

**Why is this service used?**  
Upon assessment, coping strategies and immediate emotional support to help manage initial distress is provided. Follow-up care consists of check-ins at 1 and 4 weeks after the incident and more if required. If requested on site, support is provided within 3 hours in metropolitan areas, 5 hours in most major regional areas, and up to 24 hours in other locations. This service is available 24/7 365 days a year.

**CHAPLAINS**

**What is it?**  
Provide emotional and spiritual support during critical incidents, major events, and personal challenges. Chaplains are available for hospital and house visitations or general spiritual and pastoral care, ensuring employees always have access to support.

**Why is this service used?**  
They offer a wide range of services, including counselling for work, marriage, and family-related issues, preparation and conduct of religious services as well as psychological first aid.

**TREATMENT AND RECOVERY UNIT**

**What is it?**  
Offers in-house physiotherapy, strength and conditioning, and psychological treatment programs to injured employees.

**Why is this service used?**  
Clinics are based in both metro and regional areas, the multi-disciplinary team utilise their in-depth understanding of the physical, psychological and cognitive requirements of an operational police officer to develop individualised, evidence based, outcome focused rehabilitation plans.

**EARLY ACCESS TREATMENT INITIATIVE**

**What is it?**  
Covers any out-of-pocket costs for psychology treatment fees after the rebate from Medicare has been claimed.

**Why is this service used?**  
This ensures that employees receive the support they need without any financial barrier.

**EMBRACING SUPPORT**

International research continues to demonstrate women police officers rely more on communication efforts as opposed to excessive force, and are more adept in defusing and de-escalating potentially violent confrontations than their male counterparts (Bull, M., Watson D., Amin., S and Carrington.,K 2020). This is not to be used as a degradation toward male officers but a reminder to women in policing, your ability to perform is not dependent upon your physical capabilities. Recognise the power and capability drawn from your effective communication and community style approach to policing....this is a strength in its own right. Therefore, not only should you engage with support services when needed but beyond this, you are a leader and pioneer in encouraging others to engage with support too. Be bold, be proud and be confident in all you bring as a woman, tap into the support available and know by sharing your stories and leading by example, you are making a difference.

**Women and policing in the South Pacific: a pathway towards gender-inclusive organizational reform - Bull, M., Watson D., Amin., S and Carrington.,K 2020**

# Interview of Sgt Laura Gibson

**'It would be fantastic to be in a place where officers don't think ending their life is the only option'**

**Policinginsight**

*Sgt Laura Gibson*



**By Sarah Gibbons, Contributing Editor, Policing Insight**

**H**aving had her own battles with anxiety and mental health, Police Scotland's Sgt Laura Gibson embarked on a Churchill Fellowship study to explore the efforts made by law enforcement agencies in the US to better prepare recruits for the psychological impact of the job, as well as to understand more about why officers do take their own lives – lessons she believes could have real benefits in the UK, as she told Policing Insight's Sarah Gibbons.

A series of practical, easy-to-implement recommendations are due to be made by the end of the month around how to prevent police officer suicides.

Research has been conducted by a Scottish Police Sergeant who herself had suicidal thoughts, and her culture-changing findings could be introduced with immediate effect, she believes.

"One suicide is too many," warned Sgt Laura Gibson, who was awarded a Churchill Fellowship to investigate the wellbeing and resilience support and training offered to people working in law enforcement in the US.

"It would be fantastic to be in a place where officers and staff don't think ending their life is the only option, and organisations recognise the stress and strains of being an officer – not just incidents but daily lashings in the media

and by the public, the impact of shift work, and people feeling able to come for support when they need it without any stigma," she told Policing Insight.

"I'd like more of a willingness in law enforcement organisations to do more for people in this area, and the things I'm recommending don't cost anything. It's about a change of perspective and culture to improve things; showing staff we care and that we value them is huge."

## **PREPARING AND PREVENTING**

Sgt Gibson works with Police Scotland's Partnerships, Preventions and Community Wellbeing Division – now known as the Policing Together team – focusing on mental health and suicide prevention.

In 2020 she applied to the Churchill Fellowship for funding to research officer suicide prevention techniques in the US, a trip that was authorised but postponed until last year, due to Covid restrictions and subsequent changes to working patterns.

Her four-week journey took her to the Los Angeles, San Diego and New York Police departments, the FBI Leadership Academy at Quantico, and a police wellbeing seminar in Denver, to see a range of different techniques focusing on officer wellbeing and strategies to support law



*Sarah Gibbons*

enforcement personnel throughout their careers, not just in times of trauma and stress.

Sgt Gibson told Policing Insight: "I'd experienced poor mental health, but sharing my experiences meant that I was a bit of a wellbeing pioneer in the organisation.

"I was quite happy to challenge, to get on my soapbox and fight for the rights of my colleagues. I didn't think the service was investing in wellbeing for colleagues and I wanted to pursue some sort of research.

"I consider myself a pracademic – practical in what I do – and I realise mental health wellbeing is a huge field.

"We are quite good as organisations providing support services when people break – employee assistance



programmes and counselling, for example – although some even say that’s not good enough.

“It’s really inevitable officers are going to experience trauma whether in their first year, after 10 years or even on their first day. If it’s that prevalent, why are we not preparing our officers right from the start about how to look after themselves?”

“It doesn’t detract from those who go on to need support, but it’s about providing resilience and preparing new recruits for what they might face.”

## HIDDEN TOLL

Sgt Gibson, who has 24 years’ service in Police Scotland, praised the work she saw in the LAPD and FBI Academy where they perform a “reality check” with recruits in their first week.

“It reminds officers of the danger they might expose themselves to – they are shown body-worn footage or a bullet riddled vest of an officer who was shot to remind them of what they’re about to undertake.

“We see a lot of naive recruits come through the door, not quite prepared for what they might face, and they might not have the fortitude they need.

“When trying to understand suicide risk in the general public, consideration is given to causal or motivational factors which may be existing in that person’s life, and there is rarely only one reason why people take their own life.

“However, it is accepted that there may be a number of additional risk factors, including organisational structure, scrutinised decision-making and shift work which increase that risk for police officers.

“It is now accepted that the frequent and unpredictable exposure to trauma is a likely risk factor for those who work in emergency response. The hidden toll of policing makes suicide a risk in our organisation and the causes can be varied and complex.

“There is an expectation by officers that they will see and experience the worst in human nature, and it is generally accepted by most that exposure to trauma is an inevitable occupational hazard.

“Although stigma associated with mental illness and the ‘macho’ culture often associated with policing are starting to change, these are still often cited as barriers to disclosure and help-seeking.

“The reluctance to share personal and sensitive information regarding poor mental health in fear that it may inhibit career prospects or undermine their perceived capability in their role, still exists.”

## MORAL INJURY

In Boulder Creek, California, Sgt Gibson was particularly struck by the introduction of HeartMath technology whereby instead of breathing techniques, they use a methodology of regulating the heart so officers can regulate their response to a stressful situation.

In the Netherlands, research showed that officer shootings reduced “quite significantly” after it was introduced, noted Sgt Gibson, who said the technique encourages good physical wellbeing and mental wellbeing too.

In Quantico she spent time with the crisis negotiation team where, she said, “it was traditionally all about being physically fit and capable to undertake the role”.

“Now it’s about doing yoga and mindfulness to improve mental wellbeing, and they start every shift with yoga. They are accepting that a more holistic approach to keeping yourself well can improve how you are performing in your work.”

At the Denver seminar, Sgt Gibson was particularly interested in discussions around the concept of “moral injury”.

Examples given related to veterans having been ordered to go into battle and directed to carry out certain tasks that may not have sat morally right with them.

“The impact on them was described as a moral injury – a conscience issue that social and care workers and nursing staff have also recently experienced, being unable to provide proper care due to staffing and equipment shortages during Covid – and how we could consider that in policing; does it exist in policing as a concept?

“There will always be incidents where something hasn’t sat right with us, or we couldn’t find the conclusion to the incident. Everyone has a situation where it doesn’t sit right and plays on your mind.”

## PSYCHOLOGICAL AUTOPSY

At the conclusion of her travels Sgt Gibson met Dr Jeff Thompson, a retired NYPD detective and crisis negotiator, who invited her to attend a Psychological Autopsy training workshop in New Jersey.

In his research he explains that to effectively prevent officer suicide, it is crucial to first understand why an individual chose to take his or her own life.

“This is called postvention, and conducting a psychological autopsy is an effective, scientific way to better understand why officers die by suicide,” said Sgt Gibson.

The Law Enforcement Psychological Autopsy approach created by Dr Thompson is conducted as with any other policing investigation, and the purpose is to try and answer a number of questions.

Why suicide? Why that method? Why that day? Why didn’t the protective factors in the deceased’s life counter his or her wanting to die? And what, if anything, could have been done to prevent it?

“The training I participated in included understanding the suicidal mind, recognising risk factors and warning signs, as well as dispelling myths,” continued Sgt Gibson.

“All investigation, enquiries and evidence gathered are then presented in a 13-section report.

“Dr Thompson was clear in his delivery that the purpose of the autopsy investigation was not to apportion blame but rather to prove if we don’t understand what factors or circumstances led to the fatal decision for an officer, then simply, how can we prevent it from happening again?

“We need to learn, we need to educate, and we need to support our staff so that suicide doesn’t appear to be a decision they feel compelled to take.

“We also owe it to the families, friends and colleagues of someone who has died, to understand, try to address and answer some of the inevitable, and difficult questions so that loved ones can start to heal.”

## PERSONAL JOURNEY

On the back of her research, Sgt Gibson is proposing the introduction in the UK of some of the techniques she witnessed first-hand in the US, and also plans to pursue further research of her own into specific wellbeing areas.

She told Policing Insight she believes the autopsy investigation into officer suicides should be introduced to provide better support to colleagues and families, and she hopes to see a restoration of pride in the uniform, omnipresent in the US but lacking over here, she feels.



Sgt Laura Gibson and Dr Jeff Thompson

She hopes to explore the concept and impact of moral injury in policing, and help to shift terminology to remove the stigma around wellbeing with a transition in language to ‘mental performance’ not ‘mental wellbeing’.

She is also keen to look further into the issue of families in wellbeing – the reliance on family to provide support, what family and community means, recognising the impact it has on families being an officer, and also the impact of living with someone with poor mental health.

Personally, Sgt Gibson’s trip helped her to overcome some of her own mental challenges which, 15 years ago, at her lowest ebb, saw her consider suicide.

“I’ve always been a worrier,” she told Policing Insight. “It got worse at work where I felt I was responsible for everything and everyone.

“I would catastrophize, risk and decision-making would take its toll on me as I would ruminate on things. I was self-harming and had plans to

end my life. I was addicted to painkillers, lost drastic amounts of weight, and I wasn’t sleeping.

“I’m quite open with colleagues and at conferences that I still take medication every day and battle self-loathing at times. I have accepted I will always have generalised anxiety disorder – I just have to manage it.”

She said taking a trip where you’re expected to network, plan journeys and eat alone is “fear inducing to anyone”, and that for someone with anxiety “it was a real challenge”.

“But I absolutely loved every minute and learned a lot about myself. I needed the space to learn and grow and reflect; it was a challenge, but such a wonderful achievement.”

Sgt Gibson admitted that she is vulnerable to be in crisis at any time, and still experiences periods of poor self-confidence and self-worth. But following the successful completion of her Churchill Fellowship, culminating in this month’s publication of her 80-page

report, she told Policing Insight: “I’m so proud of myself and what I’ve achieved.

“The fellowship recognised something in me and gave me that opportunity – they thought I was worth investing in – and I will keep trying to push myself out of my comfort zone.”

**The final report can be found at:**

<https://www.churchillfellowship.org/ideas-experts/ideas-library/wellbeing-and-resilience-in-law-enforcement/>

**This article can be found here:**

<https://policinginsight.com/feature/analysis/sgt-laura-gibson-it-would-be-fantastic-to-be-in-a-place-where-officers-dont-think-ending-their-life-is-the-only-option/>



# Menopause Support THE WHY



During their own difficult menopause journeys New Zealand Police staff, Detective Steph Bradshaw, and Emergency Communications Dispatcher Alica Barwell both reached out to members of the Police Executive to discuss why Police did not have any programmes in place to support women transitioning through menopause in the workplace.

**T**hey were put in touch with each other, and the New Zealand Police Menopause Support Network was founded in December 2022.

They started with a private Facebook page – “Blue Hot to Handle” NZ Police Menopause Support Group. There are resources, guides, chats, and events on the page. It is a safe place to discuss any issues, share stories, ask questions, and talk to others going through menopause. Acceptance onto the group needs a QID and answers to safety questions.

The purpose of the Menopause Support Network is to educate and raise awareness of the symptoms of menopause and to assist, advocate and support others going through the transition.

There are around 90 documented symptoms of menopause. Symptoms include hot flushes, night sweats, vaginal dryness, vaginal atrophy, urinary urgency, incontinence, joint pain, headaches/migraines, changes in body odour, forgetfulness, difficulty concentrating, brain fog, tearfulness, anxiety, depression, rage, loss of libido, itchy skin, weight gain, sleep problems, fatigue and many more.

International statistics show that 50% of women will find the menopausal transition difficult or extremely difficult. Statistics also show that one in 10 women will quit paid work due to their unmanageable symptoms. The more difficult the symptoms are, the higher the rate of women who will seriously consider leaving paid employment.

Guidelines for the organisation have been approved for publication to all staff. These are in two sections. Managers and Employees. There is advice and guidance for both. A training package is being considered. Presentations to District Leadership Teams and Area Leadership Teams are ongoing. There is a ‘dashboard’ on the Safer People Wellness Hub dedicated to menopause support. There are lived experiences from women in Police and multiple resources available to all who are members of the NZP Wellness programme.


Good management of menopause is essential to retaining our talented women. The average age of menopause in Australasia is around 51. At this stage of life, women employees are often in their second or third decades of service and considered role models and leaders.

In 2019 it was estimated to cost \$63 000 to recruit and train one female employee (non-constabulary) to replace one who leaves Police on a salary of \$45 000. On that statistic alone, if one in 10 non-constabulary employees leave Police, that equates to a massive \$30 million dollars in unnecessary recruitment and training costs. In 2018, it was estimated by then Minister of Police Stuart Nash that it cost \$140 000 to recruit and train a constabulary member through college. Add multiple decades of service and salary increases, imagine the cost to replace a senior woman on a salary of over \$100 000.



## What Menopause can look like


- ▶ Anger/rage
- ▶ Sleep disruption
- ▶ Clumsiness
- ▶ Plummeting self-confidence
- ▶ Fatigue
- ▶ Itchy skin
- ▶ Brain fog
- ▶ Headaches
- ▶ Anxiety
- ▶ Irritability
- ▶ Insomnia
- ▶ Weight gain
- ▶ Depression
- ▶ Migraines
- ▶ Worsening mental health
- ▶ Dizziness



- ▶ Sensitivity to noise
- ▶ Increased urinary tract infections
- ▶ Night driving anxiety
- ▶ Suicidal thoughts
- ▶ Incontinence
- ▶ Allergies
- ▶ Mood swings
- ▶ Joint pain
- ▶ Night sweats
- ▶ Tingling extremities
- ▶ Uncontrollable hot flushes
- ▶ Panic attacks
- ▶ Vertigo
- ▶ Dry itchy eyes
- ▶ Heavy, unexpected periods

**There are 90 documented symptoms of menopause.**

**These are but a few...**

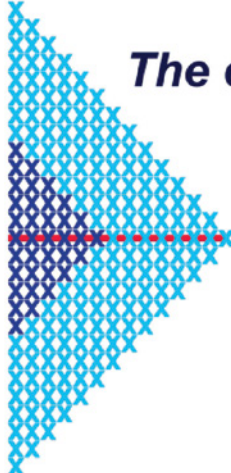


Absence rates increase by around 20% during menopause. Survey statistics vary, but around 80% of women do not divulge that menopausal symptoms are the reason for their absences due to fear and embarrassment/shame. Increased absences often lead to performance reviews and performance plans. Menopause is a medical condition not a performance issue, and it should be treated as such.

How we work and where we work affects how we transition through menopause. The business of policing presents its own challenges for female employees. Shift work, long hours, uniforms, access to bathrooms, access to showers, access to period products, whether we work alone or with a partner or as part of a team, sitting for a long time, standing on cordons, deployments, dealing with the public and weather conditions all affect how we work and how we experience menopause at work.

The impacts of menopause do not stop at physical and physiological symptoms. International studies show that women who have difficult or extremely difficult symptoms will leave paid employment on average 7 years prior to actual retirement age. This results in a loss of retirement savings, more mortgage interest paid and a lower quality of life post 'retirement.' It is estimated that menopause costs the US economy billions of dollars in lost productivity every year.

## The economics of menopause




**\$30 MILLION**

Is the total cost to Police if one in twelve women (500) leave police due to unmanageable menopausal symptoms

**\$63,000**

Is the cost to recruit, replace and retrain one female employee on a salary of \$45,000 who leaves employment due to unmanageable menopausal symptoms.

NB: This increases incrementally due to length of time employed and promotion. (Peppy Employee Support Agency Survey UK 2020)



Women of menopausal age are often looking after ageing parents and have children still at home. Relationships with family, friends and work colleagues can suffer because of menopause. It is suspected that menopause plays a massive role in family harm events. The divorce rate in Australasia is highest in menopausal aged women. There is a strong suspicion that menopause plays a role in suicides of menopausal age women.

Steph and Alica would like to start a trans-Tasman working group on Menopause Support. They are also keen to start either a separate or a joint Facebook group for Australian & New Zealand Police staff. They will need Australian volunteers to monitor any

requests to join the Facebook page. They have the expertise to assist their Australian colleagues to establish their own network and share resources and knowledge. They would love to hear from you if you are interested in working with them. NZ Police already have a strong cross-agency working group with NZ Defence Force, Corrections and Fire & Emergency NZ. Together, they are working on their second annual World Menopause Day 'event'. The programme this year consists of five one-hour seminars with guest speakers, scheduled for lunch times during the week of 14-18th October 2024.

Contact Steph or Alica. Email: [menosupport@police.govt.nz](mailto:menosupport@police.govt.nz).

# Steph Bradshaw

## Bio

I'm Steph Bradshaw. I've worked for New Zealand Police for the last 16 years and before that I completed 21 years with West Midlands Police in the UK.

In August 2021, I tripped over as I walked back to my car whilst I was at a retail park, up here in Whangarei. It was an innocuous trip. I fell on to my right knee and badly fractured the bones just below it.

It was a significant break. I still have 3 metal plates and 16 screws inserted in the area just below my knee which the specialists are reluctant to remove.

That injury has transpired to be a life-changing injury. Not one of the health care professionals that dealt with me through my injury could explain just why my leg had shattered so badly.

I was 55 years old at the time I broke my leg. I was fit and healthy. I exercised up to 6 times a week. Reformer Pilates was my go-to. I was strong. When my local PEO put me on the machines my readings were right where they needed to be.

That injury ultimately, coinciding with a girlfriend mentioning the name of Dr Louise Newson to me some months later, led me on a journey of self-education about everything perimenopause and menopause related.

Up until that point I had never even heard of the term perimenopause, yet I'm a well-educated mother of 2 adult children, who had been living her best life.

Then one night, following another night of being sleep deprived and waking at 1am, being tired, yet wired, I got out my iPad and inserted Dr Louise Newson into the Google search engine.

That was the beginning. I read, I watched, and I listened to whatever I could to anything and everything menopause related. And it resonated, so very loudly that it was deafening.

For the first time, I realised that I hadn't been going mad for so many years and that my body had actually been letting me know that there was something that just wasn't right. I could at last join all

my medical dots together and it enabled me to recognise that my own journey into perimenopause had begun either whilst I was pregnant with my youngest child, or very shortly after she was born. I had been only 31 years old when it had started. It explained why all the tests that I'd had over the years, all the specialist appointments that I'd been referred to, all the exploratory operations that I'd had, had all come back as being 'normal' and why none of the specialists and surgeons could explain the reason for the issues and conditions that I was presenting with.

All of the issues and conditions I was presenting with were symptoms of the perimenopause.

Yet no-one, not one health care professional in 25 years had ever discussed perimenopause or menopause with me, let alone the options available to assist with my symptoms.

I learned about what causes these symptoms to become issues and realised that my body had been depleted of the hormones, oestrogen, progesterone and testosterone for all of those years.

My leg had shattered so badly because my bones had been depleted of these hormones. The dEXA scan, 6 weeks post injury, had revealed that my bone density had considerably reduced and that I was osteopenic.

Of over 90 recognised symptoms of perimenopause and menopause, I've had in excess of 50 of them.

It's only now that I realise how tough and debilitating my own journey has been.

At work I saw female colleagues struggling with what were clearly perimenopausal symptoms, so I'd try to engage in a conversation with them. It was hard. There was such a lack of awareness about what caused perimenopause and what women could do to alleviate their suffering.

I realised that the perimenopause and menopause conversation needed to be started within New Zealand Police and that the conversation needed to be normalised. There needed to be an awareness of the impact that perimenopause and menopause can have on female staff, but that the awareness was relevant for the whole organisation.

So, in December 2022, on the last day before I went on a fortnight's leave, I sent an email to two female Assistant Commissioners at PNHQ in Wellington and said exactly that. I explained that we had to take away the taboo aspect of peri/menopause and normalise the conversation.

I'd stayed on late at work to ensure that no-one was reading the email over my shoulder and switched my computer off as soon as I'd pressed the 'send' button. If I didn't get a response to my email by the time that I returned to work, then I would have had time to process the disappointment by the time I returned from leave.

But within half an hour, one of the AC's had responded so very positively that it was uplifting. I got a response from the second AC the next morning and again the feedback was extremely positive. What I hadn't expected though, was for them to both bounce the onus for starting the menopause conversation back to me.

At just about the same time that I sent my email to Wellington, one of the same Assistant Commissioners went down to Christchurch where Comms Dispatcher, Alica Barwell, spoke to her and also highlighted that NZ Police needed to start a conversation within the workplace on menopause.

Alica and I were linked in and together we started the Employee Led Network, the MenoSupport Group.

# Alica Barwell

## Bio

Hi! I'm Alica Barwell. I have been in Police for 17 years. I work as a dispatcher in Southern Emergency Communications Centre, Christchurch. I do shift work.

**M**y Mother lost her job at the BNZ as a bank teller some 30 years ago due to menopause symptoms - primarily brain fog and lapses of concentration, yet, I blindly stumbled into peri-menopause unprepared and unaware of what was happening to me. We never really talked much about this kind of thing when I was getting older.

My journey started in 2022. The first noticeable symptom was horrendous joint pain in my shoulders. The joint pain came on suddenly and was excruciating. For a period of time, driving to and from work and typing for 10 hours a day was almost unbearable. Other symptoms crept in. Brain fog, extreme fatigue, itchy skin, sleep deprivation, body heat, lack of concentration, anger, anxiety, tearfulness, sadness, rage, plummeting libido, sensitivity to noise & light, irregular, unexpected and heavy periods were next on the list, and yes, all at once! I became extremely reactionary at work. My co-workers drove me nuts. If I was asked to change duties, it became a massive problem. I had already psyched myself up for the day's duties and any change in that was enough to make me cry. Why all of a sudden could I not remember the most basic names for things? Why did I start crying for no reason? Why did I want to separate my husband's head from his shoulders on a daily basis? Fatigue was my worst symptom. There were many occasions where I shouldn't have been driving or even at work, but, I didn't want to let my group down. Brain fog is awful. It makes you feel anxious and incompetent and my self-esteem plummeted. I thought I had early onset dementia. I was terribly afraid and very scared. My marriage was in jeopardy, as was my job. Was I going mad? Nope! It was perimenopause. I diagnosed myself after 3 failed attempts to get help at my local



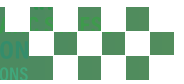
GP Practice. HRT has been my life-saver and I consult with an incredibly talented naturopath.

My lowest point came in early January 2023. One of my Comms Inspectors assumed I had taken a break over the holiday period and asked me how my holiday break was. He said how great his 2 weeks away on his fishing holiday was, and I completely lost the plot. I love fishing and I hadn't had a decent break for several months and couldn't get leave for another couple of months. I started swearing and yelling at him that I hadn't had a break for ages, didn't have leave for ages and that I was super happy for him that he had such a fabulous break and stormed off down the corridor. The 'F bomb' was used multiple times. I was mortified and certain I had lost my job. I absolutely do not speak to people like that. That same day, I summonsed the courage and sent him an email requesting a meeting to apologise for my appalling behaviour. I cried, he was lovely. I told him about my perimenopause issues and he totally got it.

There are 3 men to whom I owe my deepest gratitude. My husband Shane,

for putting up with me, loving me and not giving up on me or our marriage despite some incredibly tough times. The above mentioned Comms Inspector, Greg Cottam, who encouraged and supported me to finish the guidelines and other important mahi in this space away from my dispatch duties, and my Team Leader Sergeant Scott McMurtrie. He's been with me every step of the way on this rollercoaster ride. It's not been the easiest of journeys for him as my TL, but his support has kept me coming back to work through some pretty tough times. Gentlemen, I thank you.

**The takeaway from ALL of this is that it gets better. There is light at the end of the tunnel. Reach out if you need support. ASK FOR HELP, you are not alone!**



# Policing and the menopause: 'I thought I was losing my mind!'

Former detective Carol Ann Kinley-Smith explores the challenges policewomen face during menopause and suggests steps the police service can take to support and retain experienced female officers.

**Carol Ann Kinley-Smith, Investigations Consultant and Lecturer**

Former detective Carol Ann Kinley-Smith's menopause journey began while she was still in the job, and she decided to focus on the experiences of policewomen working through their menopause for her Master's dissertation; in this article she discusses the findings of her research, the challenges women can face in relation to support and understanding, and what steps the service could take to ensure older female officers remain a valued and effective part of the workforce.

The title of this article is something you may have said or heard someone else say; but in the context of this piece, it is linked to a subject that has gathered much interest in the last few years, in particular due to some high-profile individuals in the public eye.

My own menopause journey had started when I was still a serving officer, but I had no idea that I was in the perimenopause phase. And why would I? I had never heard of the perimenopause!

I am referring to the menopause, a word that conjures up any number of feelings – from horror to polite curiosity, inappropriate humour to sympathy, and of course 'distancing' (my own take) – I simply didn't have time for it!

The reality is that it really does affect all of us (as my husband will attest to), because aside from the person undergoing the menopause and its symptoms and effects, those same symptoms and effects also impact to a lesser or greater degree upon other family members, partners, siblings and colleagues.

Which is one reason why it's so important to consider how this may impact upon a police officer's role, and their performance.

My own menopause journey had started when I was still a serving officer, but I had no idea that I was in the perimenopause phase. And why would I? I had never heard of the perimenopause!

This article is not specifically about my own experiences, but suffice to say it really hit me, having retired from the police and working full-time again in a very demanding and sometimes inhospitable environment. It was at that point I realised, actually, I had been going through it for quite some time.

So when I got the chance to embark on an MSc in Legal and Criminological Psychology, I was clear right from the start on the subject matter for my dissertation – exploring the experiences of policewomen working through their menopause.

## LONG-EMBEDDED CULTURES

The word 'menopause' describes a 'point in time' when a woman has had no periods for 12 months. It's a term used widely by the medical profession and media alike, and covers the perimenopause and menopause.

The symptoms – which are numerous – happen when the production of hormones (oestrogen, progesterone and testosterone) declines and they become out of sync. Approximately 75% of women experience symptoms, which usually start between 45 and 55 years of age.

It is a highly idiosyncratic process and, according to the British Menopause Society, more than 25% of women will suffer severe symptoms which can affect every aspect of life including their work.

In previous research it was recognised that the workplace can exacerbate symptoms, particularly so in male-dominated working environments that can be inhospitable to women – especially older women. I believe the police service, in which I served for 30 years, is such an organisation.

There are over 4 million women aged between 50 and 64 years in the UK in paid employment and the workforce

is still ageing. In a 2021 survey of over 1,132 women, 90% said their symptoms impacted their work and 10% actually left work as a result.

Another 2021 survey of 3,800 women through an online questionnaire found that 21% did not apply for advancement, 19% limited their working hours, and 12% resigned due to the impact of their menopause experience.

The importance of the subject matter is highlighted by the fact that menopausal women are the fastest-growing demographic in the workplace; yet in a 2019 survey 75% of respondents stated there was no menopause support in place.

Although it is a shared and expected experience, many women are unknowingly experiencing symptoms of the menopause. Historically there has been little research on the subject and an overall reluctance to discuss it, which for some has resulted in isolation.

In previous research it was recognised that the workplace can exacerbate symptoms, particularly so in male-dominated working environments that can be inhospitable to women – especially older women. I believe the police service, in which I served for 30 years, is such an organisation.

The service is ageing – partly due to the pension reforms of 2013, which effectively increased the retirement age from 50 to 60 – and the numbers of women are on the increase.

From personal experience I know that there are long-embedded cultures in which, historically, it has been challenging enough for women to work even before reaching menopausal age. The police service recognises there is a need for support for older women; the question is, is that either wanted or needed?



	MAIN THEME	SUB-THEME
1	<b>“What the hell is happening to me?”</b>	“The menopause is when period stop and the hot sweats start, isn’t it?”
		“It’s not just the hot flushes, it’s everything else. It’s hard enough to get on as a women in ‘the job’ as it is.”
		Feelings associated with the menopause, pre/post diagnosis “...and then there’s the GP!”
2	<b>“To disclose or not disclose, that is the question.”</b>	“I don’t want to reveal any weakness, be labelled or written off.”
		The double-edged sword: “Do i say anything”
		“What am i going to say and when? “
3	<b>Experiencing organisational response to menopause.</b>	“What is there? Now you’re asking!”
		“Who’s ‘she’ when ‘she’s’ at home?”
		“It’s down to managers.”

### INFORMING CHANGE

The main aim of the research was to focus on the ‘lived experience’ of individual serving policewomen undergoing the menopausal process, with a view to highlighting the real and potential impact on the individual and potentially help the police, as an organisation, to respond to this change of demographic.

With the spotlight being shone on the perceptions, thought processes and decisions of the participants as individuals, I hope it will further inform the drive to change the culture and rhetoric surrounding the more mature policewoman.

My hope was that the study would increase the understanding of the impact of the menopause on policewomen and in particular inform the police service, helping it to build upon the work already being done by adding to the current modest repository of research concerning the menopause experience for all women, not just policewomen.

There has been little research to date that has concentrated

on the individual’s perspective. With the spotlight being shone on the perceptions, thought processes and decisions of the participants as individuals, I hope it will further inform the drive to change the culture and rhetoric surrounding the more mature policewoman, creating a more comfortable and understanding workplace.

My approach to the study was one of reflexive thematic analysis from a critical realist perspective, collecting data via semi-structured one to-one interviews, a method participants would be familiar with – albeit from the other side of the table.

By adopting this approach, I was able to share some of my own personal detail to build a rapport with the individuals who were sharing some intimate personal experiences with me.

I interviewed a total of eight policewomen, seven from a rural force and one from a metropolitan force, aged between 40 and 60 years, all of whom were menopausal.

### ANALYSIS, IDENTIFIED THEMES AND EVALUATION

When analysing the data gleaned from the interviews I identified three main themes, each with three sub-themes. See above diagram

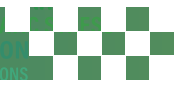
The first theme focused on the symptoms of menopause and explored the challenges associated with experiencing them, but also experiencing them without realising what they were, and interactions with GPs.

Some examples of relevant quotes from participants around this theme include:

I couldn’t sustain the hours... when you are on call for seven days and getting woken up to go to a death at 2am, I just couldn’t recover the next day... I felt I was failing.”

#### Interviewee, menopause research

- “I suppose I have always felt so strong and capable and expected that I would just sail through it whenever that was [pause] but OMG was I in for a shock! Suddenly I was crying for no reason and I couldn’t bloody remember anything [sighing], looking back I wish I had known.”
- “Yes, the sweats at night and then getting back to sleep was a real problem... I couldn’t sustain the hours... when you are on call for seven days and getting



woken up to go to a death at 2am, I just couldn't recover the next day... I couldn't manage... I felt I was failing."

- "I said to the doctor 'I can only describe myself as somebody in a movie who is hanging off a cliff edge by a rope that is fraying, and I am on that last little bit before it snaps.'" Interestingly the doctor's response to this was that they were already on the maximum dosage of tablets!
- "The doctor was testing me for everything, to the extent they thought I had multiple sclerosis because I was having really bad headaches and numbness in my arm like tingling in my fingers, and they were really struggling to find out what was wrong with me. I kept saying my periods are all over the place and they kept saying it is the stress of work that is, and then the very last blood test that we did... I still remember the phone call: 'It's not like you are going into the menopause, you've probably been in it for years!' I felt almost immediately like an old woman [pause], past it."

The second theme concentrated on perceptions, attitudes and talking about the menopause, with participants sharing their thoughts, feelings and reasons for either disclosing information related to their personal experience to a manager/supervisor, or not. Some examples of relevant quotes from participants include:

- "I had to work bloody hard – in fact twice as hard – as the men to get myself to where I am. I would not have done that [disclosed my struggle with both physical and hidden symptoms] because you know particularly at my rank it just would not have been the done thing – and I think older senior officers would be more judgemental."
- "I don't think for a minute, even though the rhetoric might indicate otherwise, that it would be viewed in any way other than negative. I think it would be held against you and I think it's hard enough to get on as a woman in the job without bringing that sort of thing into the picture."
- "I would liken it to admitting to suffering from stress or depression – it is all seen as very negative and a bit, you know, weak. I would not want a doctor to write 'stress' on a sick note, I would rather it said 'Suffered broken leg on duty whilst arresting a burglar!' That would be far more acceptable."
- "I broke down in front of my manager and told them that I was going through

the menopause. They were brilliant, absolutely brilliant... they understood because their partner was going through it too."

- "I've been open about the flushes 'cos that was just too obvious... all the meetings I was in were full of men and they were brilliant, but I still didn't reveal everything because to say I keep forgetting things... that would have brought questions around my competency."
- Because I happened to be a woman in my early 40s... they rocked up and told me I could happily discuss my menopause with them. I was rather annoyed as I was actually pregnant and went on to give birth!"

**Interviewee, menopause research**

The third theme concerned what the police service was providing and the participants' reactions to that. Some examples of relevant quotes from participants include:

"It's all very well putting posters up... to be honest sometimes I think we [police] oversimplify it and think 'oh well, we'll get some focus groups or an awareness session on that and all of a sudden it's all gonna be OK'... it's got to be more than that."

"It's getting the right people to speak about it, because you'll know what I mean when I say this. So [pause] in the police there are people who get on every [expletive] focus group going... they are not always the right people that carry the right operational credibility. It's like 'bloody hell, she's on that focus group and that one and that one'... I've always avoided stuff like that. Yes, I am a woman in policing, but I am a police officer and I'll stand or fall by merits as a police officer; but there are certain people [rolled eyes], well, it's their bag."

"My manager was so good, they reduced my workload, and changed my shift pattern so I did not have to work through the night; they are very approachable, did not knock my confidence and kept in touch with me every couple of days. They were brilliant and I really appreciated it... their partner was going through it too and so they understood. It could have been really difficult but they really supported me so I was able to manage." This manager would appear to have successfully demonstrated exactly what the police service would require line managers to do as outlined in the publication by NPCC (2021).

"Some internal sort of awareness of the menopause was done. And just because I happened to be a woman in my early 40s they [the line manager]

decided that they could... [pause] you know [pause] just put it out there; they rocked up and told me I could happily discuss my menopause with them.

I was rather annoyed as I was actually pregnant and went on to give birth!"

In evaluating the study it must be borne in mind that the participants were individuals who were willing to talk openly about their menopausal experiences, albeit with a degree of confidentiality. The voices of those who weren't have not been heard, and the research is subsequently limited by this.

This study being conducted by not only a former police officer, but a menopausal one, helped develop trust and confidence with the participants, leading to very open and honest exchanges throughout the interview process.

Despite this, the findings of this study will be useful to supplement the increasing interest in the challenges faced by older policewomen and women more generally.

This study being conducted by not only a former police officer, but a menopausal one, helped develop trust and confidence with the participants, leading to very open and honest exchanges throughout the interview process.

The study sought to present a synthesised and unique phenomenological perspective where participants were able to talk in a familiar environment requiring minimal explanation to position their account or set the scene.

**SO WHAT NEXT?**

There are risks to the police service of not responding appropriately to the menopause issue. These include the fiscal impact to the individual and organisation as well as the service losing the experience of mature policewomen.

As with any study of this nature, I needed to provide an outcome in the form of recommendations. I viewed these from the position of what do they – the individuals – need, what do they want, and whether the police service as an organisation was 'testing' to see if this was being achieved.

It goes without saying that the police service needs to create an environment that is even more inclusive. The positioning of 'champion(s)', mandated to lead the service response both at strategic and local levels, highlighted by the participants of this study, need to possess operational credibility and the respect of the service as well as being someone with whom they can identify and trust.



It is suggested that the service consider canvassing the views of all its policewomen with a view to appointing such people (not necessarily female) into dedicated roles, with the appropriate resources to advocate and lead on this wide-ranging and important issue.

Such an approach would need to be led at strategic level; however, to be inclusive across all levels and departments, each with their own subculture, the champions must be representative of both the organisational structure and hierarchy.

Such an approach would need to be led at strategic level; however, to be inclusive across all levels and departments, each with their own subculture, the champions must be representative of both the organisational structure and hierarchy.

All of these roles should include a remit to educate the whole service, not just older women and managers, with a view to destigmatise, normalise and positivise the menopause experience for all staff so as to reach those who will be menopausal in the future and those who may manage or indeed live with them, remembering that we are all touched by the menopause in some way.

All the participants in this study were in agreement regarding the value in the job providing easier access to menopausal expertise within the workplace.

The service should also test for culture change through qualitative questionnaires for the whole organisation – not just as a one off, but with a more protracted approach across all areas of the service.

Research must endure and focus on how women feel as the menopause continues to affect more police officers, with a view to establishing if the rhetoric and attitudes are changing, if the subject is becoming normalised, and whether a more menopause-friendly environment is evolving.

This could be facilitated through a repetition of the current study using semi-structured interviews with a group of menopausal or post-menopausal policewomen and posing similar questions to those asked, as this format successfully elicited rich, honest and pertinent data.

Additionally, as the participants of this research alluded to, the role a manager occupies is pivotal; given that most police managers are male, it would be useful to conduct research with a similar sized group of men, to encourage engagement, with a view to establishing their level of knowledge of menopause symptoms and highlight any challenges or successes experienced working with older policewomen.

## VALUABLE SUPPORT

It is recognised that such approaches would only reach a modest number of participants and could still be limited in terms of perspective, so it is further suggested that police officers of all genders, including younger age groups, are invited to take part in research to ascertain levels of knowledge of the menopause and to test the success of organisational communication.

This could be facilitated using an online anonymous, qualitative questionnaire across the entire organisation, accompanied by a menopause information sheet including reference to responsibilities of employers under equal opportunities legislation.

This would ensure that opportunities to further educate and reaffirm police service commitment to supporting older women are not missed.

Some of the findings are clearly not peculiar to policewomen and therefore could be extrapolated across all women in respect of symptom awareness so that they know what to expect and can be better prepared.

To maximise the value of the exercise, inclusion of data concerning the number of women who are unaware they are symptomatic will highlight to colleagues, managers, partners and family members who are 'menopause aware' that they can provide valuable support not only in the workplace, but also to their loved ones.

It is also noted that the Home Office refers to the ages of serving police officers with no differentiation between the sexes; although there is a differentiation when it comes to sickness statistics, no age bands are included.

It would be useful if future scholars had access to this information to support further study on the impact that age-related sickness in women has on the police service, and the effectiveness or otherwise of increased workplace support.

Limited research has been done concentrating on individuals' personal accounts; combined with the raising of the retirement age of police officers, and the increasing number of women joining, the lived experiences of older women in the service context adds to the paucity of previous research and will contribute to improving the understanding of the individual policewomen working through their menopause.

Some of the findings are clearly not peculiar to policewomen and therefore could be extrapolated across all women in respect of symptom awareness so

that they know what to expect and can be better prepared.

This could potentially reduce fear, and better equip them when consulting with GPs, dealing with the menopause while in the workplace, and seeking help when needed.

A final quote which I think speaks for itself: "It's really important that we don't hang up the membership to the human community at menopause." I passed my Master's with Distinction at the age of 58 years old – so don't write me off, or any other women, simply because we've reached the age of 50 and are experiencing the menopause.



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Carol Ann Kinley-Smith is a retired Metropolitan Police detective having specialised in the investigation of sexual offences and management of offenders. Latterly she was the Head of the Fixated Threat Assessment Centre where her interest in criminal psychology grew. She now provides an independent investigation service for the public sector and is a part-time lecturer in Criminal and Forensic Psychology. Carol Ann holds an MSc in Legal and Criminological Psychology from Cumbria University, where her dissertation – Exploring the experience of policewomen working through the menopause – demonstrated her passion for supporting women to continue achieving in spite of the menopause.

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# Support For Queensland Police Service Employees



## START A CONVERSATION



### PEER SUPPORT OFFICER (PSO)

nil cost | internal service

A key social support for members experiencing personal or work-related difficulties, PSOs provide an empathetic ear and a link to professional services.

**Search:** PSO contact lists on QPS SharePoint



### QPS CHAPLAIN

nil cost | internal service

Confidential counselling available 24/7 to QPS employees, their families and former employees.

**CALL 0447 425 058**

**Search:** Police Chaplains on QPS SharePoint



### MANAGER / OIC

Managers and OICs can assist with navigating issues (work or personal) and can connect you with a range of supports.

**Search:** Middle Managers Toolkit on QPS SharePoint for practical resources for leaders.



### GP

fees apply | external service

Your GP can offer advice, assessments, treatment options and referrals to specialised health professionals (including subsidised sessions with a psychologist through a Mental Health Treatment Plan).



### HEALTH START

nil cost | internal service

Evidenced based exercise, nutrition and wellbeing support available to all QPS employees.

**Search:** HealthStart on QPS SharePoint



### SELFREFER PHYSIO

QPS funded (3 sessions) | external

Anonymous and confidential self-referral to a physiotherapy service of your choice, for 3 QPS funded sessions.

**Visit:** SelfRefer.org.au

## SUPPORT NOW



### 1800 SPEAK SAFE

QPS funded | external service

Confidential support for workplace bullying, unlawful discrimination and sexual harassment.

**CALL 1800 773 257**



### 1800 ASSIST

QPS funded | external service

Confidential counselling available 24/7 to QPS employees, their families and former employees.

**CALL 1800 277 478**



### 1800 4QPS DFV

QPS funded | external service

Confidential counselling available 24/7 to QPS employees, their families and former employees for domestic and family violence concerns.

**CALL 1800 4777 338**



## MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING SUPPORT



### **INJURY MANAGEMENT** nil cost | internal service

Working in consultation with treating health professionals to support members with work or non-work related injuries and illnesses.

**Search:** injury management on QPS SharePoint



### **PSYCH HEALTH SCREEN** nil cost | internal service

Confidential check into your psychological health, with follow up by a QPS psychologist available to discuss your needs and/or referral to other supports.

**Search:** psych health screen on QPS SharePoint



### **SELFREFER PSYCH** QPS funded (6 sessions) | external

Anonymous and confidential self-referral to mental health and physiotherapy services.

**Visit:** SelfRefer.org.au



### **INTERNAL WITNESS SUPPORT** nil cost | internal service

Guidance and support for members who identify, report or are named as a witness to breaches of discipline, mis or corrupt conduct.

**Search:** internal witness support on QPS SharePoint **E:** Internal-Witness-Support@police.qld.gov.au



### **HUMAN SERVICES OFFICERS (HSOs)** nil cost | internal service

Confidential mental health and wellbeing counselling and referrals (24/7) with QPS psychologists and social workers (known as HSOs).

**Search:** HSO contact list on QPS **SharePoint P:** 3046 4774 **E:** hsorequestforservice@police.qld.gov.au



### **EITP** QPS funded (6 sessions) | external

The Enhanced Intervention Treatment Program (EITP) provides 6 QPS funded consultations with an accredited mental health professional of your choice.

**Search:** HSO contact list on QPS **SharePoint P:** 3046 4774 **E:** hsorequestforservice@police.qld.gov.au



### **CAREER TRANSITION** nil cost | external service

Supporting career transition, or separation from the QPS, for injured/ill employees unable to return to pre-injury/illness duties.

**Search:** career transition on QPS SharePoint



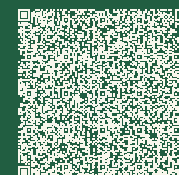
### **SUBSTANCE SELF REPORTING** nil cost | internal service

Confidential, QPS funded treatment and support for members who self-report an issue with alcohol or drugs.

**Search:** self reporting on QPS SharePoint. **P:** 3015 5900 or 0418 830 730

### FURTHER INFORMATION

Scan the QR code or search **Support Options** on QPS SharePoint for full details and contact lists.





### SUPPORTING DIVERSITY



**QUEENSLAND TRANSCULTURAL MENTAL HEALTH CENTRE**  
Specialist, culturally responsive mental health care and support for people from culturally and linguistically backgrounds.  
**CALL 1300 789 978**



**13 YARN**  
Free and confidential service, with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Crisis Supporters available 24/7 to yarn to.  
**CALL 13 92 76**



**DIVERSE VOICES**  
Peer counselling service for LGBTQ+ people, their families and friends. Phone lines are open from 3 pm to midnight.  
**CALL 1800 184 527**

### QPS DIVERSITY NETWORKS



**QPS PRIDE NETWORK**  
Advocacy, support and networking opportunities for LGBTQ+ members and allies.  
**Search: QPS Pride Network on QPS SharePoint E: QPS.PrideNetwork@police.qld.gov.au**



**QPS LEADING WOMEN NETWORK**  
Providing professional development, networking opportunities and a forum for raising issues affecting women to senior executive members.  
**Search: QPS Leading Women Network on QPS WorkplaceQPS SharePoint**



**QPS ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY NETWORK**  
Advice, education, engagement and connections for people who have permanent or progressive impairments.  
**Search: QPS Accessibility Advisory Network on QPS Workplace**



**QPS MULTICULTURAL NETWORK**  
Advocacy and support for cultural inclusion and capability within the QPS.  
**Search: QPS Multicultural Network on QPS Workplace**



**QPS FIRST NATIONS NETWORK**  
Culturally appropriate support for Indigenous members.  
**Search: QPS First Nations Network on QPS SharePoint**

### UNION SUPPORT



**QPCOU**  
Assistance, advocacy, advice, and representation for members.  
**P: 3236 4050 E: qpcoue@bigpond.net.au**



**QPUE**  
Assistance, advocacy, advice, and representation for members.  
**CALL 1800 015 000**



**TOGETHER**  
Assistance, advocacy, advice, and representation for members.  
**CALL 1800 177 244**



**HEALTH AND WELLBEING APPS**



**EQUIPT**

Free wellbeing app for current and former QPS employees and their families to strengthen your physical, emotional and social wellbeing.

**Search: EQUIPT (Google Play or App Store)**



**SMILING MIND**

Free wellbeing app for current and former QPS employees and their families to strengthen your physical, emotional and social wellbeing.

**Search: SMILING MIND (Google Play or App Store)**



**CALM**

Personalised content to manage stress and anxiety, improve sleep, and feel more present in your life.

**Search: CALM (Google Play or App Store)**

**SUPPORT NOW – MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING**



**MENTAL HEALTH ACCESS LINE**

**external service | nil cost**

Confidential mental health triage service (available 24/7), linking callers to their nearest Queensland Public Mental Health service.  
**CALL 1300 MH (1300 642 255)**



**LIFELINE**

**external service | nil cost**

Nationwide service (available 24/7), providing professional crisis support and suicide prevention services.  
**CALL 13 11 14**



**BEYOND BLUE**

**external service | nil cost**

Information, support and telephone counselling for mental health issues.  
**CALL 1300 224 636**



**MENSLINE AUSTRALIA**

**external service | nil cost**

Free telephone and online counselling service offering support for Australian men.  
**CALL 1300 78 99 78**

**GOV RESOURCES**



**HEAD TO HEALTH**

Connecting people with mental health services based on their needs and preferences.

**Visit: [headtohealth.gov.au](http://headtohealth.gov.au)**



**YOUR MENTAL WELLBEING**

Easy, everyday mental wellbeing activities you can try right now.

**Visit: [mentalwellbeing.initiatives.qld.gov.au](http://mentalwellbeing.initiatives.qld.gov.au)**

**EMERGENCY ACCOMMODATION AND FINANCIAL SUPPORT**



**COMMUNITY SUPPORTING POLICE**

**external service | nil cost**

Confidential mental health triage service (available 24/7), linking callers to their nearest Queensland Public Mental Health service.  
**Visit: [csp.asn.au](http://csp.asn.au) or E: [info@csp.asn.au](mailto:info@csp.asn.au)**



**HELPING HAND**

**external service | nil cost**

Financial assistance for QPS members and their families facing terminal, life threatening injuries or significant personal trauma.  
**Search: Helping Hand on QPS SharePoint**

**FURTHER INFORMATION**



Scan the QR code or search **Support Options** on QPS SharePoint for full details.



# POLICE



## Western Australia Police Force Psychology Unit



In September 2021, Dr Janelle Hawes was appointed as Chief Psychologist for the Western Australia Police Force.



**H**er initial work included gaining an in-depth understanding of agency frameworks, expanding internal psychological services, and building relationships with internal and external stakeholders.

Janelle received her training in Forensic Psychology in Perth, Western Australia from Edith Cowan University. In Perth, she worked for the Department of Justice in various positions with both adult and youth offenders in community and custodial settings. This also included specialised forensic assessment and treatment for life and indeterminate sentenced offenders.

In addition, she was also trained in managing mass crisis/trauma and has worked alongside medical and police personnel in response to major disaster events such as the Bali bombings.

In 2008, Janelle was seconded to the Correctional Service of Canada and her work in Canada commenced with the provision of assessment, treatment, and consultation for federal offenders with violent or sexual offending behavior. She also joined the largest trauma centre in Canada as a member of the Emergency Medical Assistance Team who respond to mass crisis/disaster incidents in Ontario.

In addition, Janelle was the Clinical Director of a provincial forensic mental health facility and oversaw clinical service delivery for youth within the Secure Treatment, Youth Justice and Ontario Review Board system. Janelle was appointed a psychologist member of the Ontario Review Board in 2019 and has also worked in private practice conducting court ordered psychological assessments and providing offence specific treatment.

Within the WA Police Force Health, Welfare and Safety Division, Janelle's current focus is on increasing proactive and prevention-based health and wellness practices across the agency. Her priorities include the implementation of agency wide mental health education training, an infrastructure review to mitigate psychosocial risk in the workplace, support resources for police families, and streamlined mental health assessment and monitoring for officers across the policing lifespan.

### ***Here Dr Hawes reflects on her role since returning home to Perth.***

Since commencing my role as Chief Psychologist for the WA Police, I have observed a significant, positive cultural shift in normalisation and encouragement of help-seeking behaviour and a reduction in stigma around mental health across the agency. In addition, I often hear similar reports from our officers of all ranks seeking out mental health education, leaders requesting consult on how to better support their teams, and from our psychologists that work more directly in this space every day.

***“Within this climate of change, our focus at the Psychology Unit has been on continuing to strive to provide excellence in what we do, delivering gold standard, contemporary, and evidence based mental health support to our workforce.”***

Within this climate of change, our focus at the Psychology Unit has been on continuing to strive to provide excellence in what we do, delivering gold standard, contemporary, and evidence based mental health support to our workforce. Additionally, we have been working hard to focus on increasing preventative and proactive initiatives and early intervention, with the goal of keeping our workforce healthy and excelling in their policing roles.

Over the past two years, we have designed and implemented a number of projects with these proactive and early intervention principles held in mind. One recent initiative includes the addition of a wellbeing component into probationer appraisals at a time we know is crucial in terms of adjustment and transition from a controlled learning environment, into the unpredictable operational policing world. This review was designed to identify common difficulties related to psychological functioning, coping,

and supports and facilitate ongoing monitoring and early intervention.

Another area of work that we have focused on is increasing our internal capability to provide advanced level trauma treatment in house for officers, in acknowledgement of extended wait times and shortages that exist in our industry and the broader healthcare system. Our focus has again been early intervention and symptom reduction, with the aim of working with our officers compassionately, effectively and efficiently to improve functioning and support their return to work. The psychologists within our unit have been trained in utilising these interventions for single incident trauma such as a critical incident or for cumulative trauma exposure across the life or work span. These interventions can also be delivered either face-to-face, or via telehealth, helping assist officers even in the most regional and remote policing locations of Western Australia. Our team has also focused on developing an intensive treatment protocol, providing evidence-based treatment, that often allows officers return to work in under one month.

Training our new and emerging leaders in mental health awareness and equipping them with the tools and resources to monitor their team's mental health has also been a priority. Recognising that true change needs to start at the top has led to the inclusion of mental health modules in the curriculum of our leadership series of training conducted through the Australian Institute of Management. The unit also receives frequent requests to present at leadership gatherings such as OIC Conferences and to design and deliver mental health training sessions, psychological assessments, and well-being reviews that address the nuances and unique risks and exposure associated with different areas of policing. The increasing demand for support in this area and embedding of psychological considerations alongside operational training and practices provides good evidence of a genuine commitment from our leaders to the health and wellbeing of our officers and staff.

Looking forward, myself and my team at the Psychology Unit continue to seek out additional opportunities to increase our learning and expertise and contribute to teaching and research to ensure an innovative and quality clinical service for our people.

# Finding Strength Beyond the Badge:

## Addressing Burnout and Compassion Fatigue in Policing

In the demanding world of law enforcement, officers often find themselves at the crossroads of duty and personal wellbeing. Former NSW police officer Kate Kilby's journey from the depths of compassion fatigue to a place of healing and empowerment highlights the mental health challenges faced by those in law enforcement.

### UNDERSTANDING THE STRAIN

Kate served diligently in the police force until her life took a transformative turn. Kate recalls confronting the harsh realities of crime and trauma: "Officers are exposed to secondary trauma throughout their careers and sometimes experience primary trauma. Mixed with the stress of the job, this trauma can produce symptoms of compassion fatigue," Kate explains. Compassion fatigue is a pervasive issue in policing, combining elements of secondary traumatic stress and burnout, often leading to severe emotional and physical exhaustion.

Kate's journey was no exception. The relentless exposure to traumatic incidents, combined with the pressure to maintain emotional neutrality, took a toll on her mental health. "I began noticing changes in my physical health, mental state, and even my relationships," she shares. "It felt like I was carrying the weight of the world, and no one could see it - not even myself."

### A NEW BEGINNING

Kate's journey took a transformative turn when she discovered Quest for Life, an organisation dedicated to providing holistic support for those dealing with trauma. "Quest for Life became my lifeline," says Kate. The organisation's approach, rooted in compassion, resilience, and holistic healing, offered her the tools and support she desperately needed.

Quest for Life's programs integrate emotional, physical, psychological, and community support, embodying a nurturing and empowering environment. Kate describes her experience as life-changing. "The comprehensive support from Quest helped me rebuild my life, heal from the inside out, and regain my strength."

The transition away from law enforcement was challenging, but with Quest for Life's guidance, Kate found her footing. "Quest provided me with the emotional and practical support to navigate this new chapter. Their compassionate approach made me feel understood and valued," she emphasises.

Kate's story is a testament to the profound impact of holistic support programs. Her journey underscores the urgent need for law enforcement agencies to prioritise mental health and provide robust support systems for their officers.

### A CALL TO ACTION

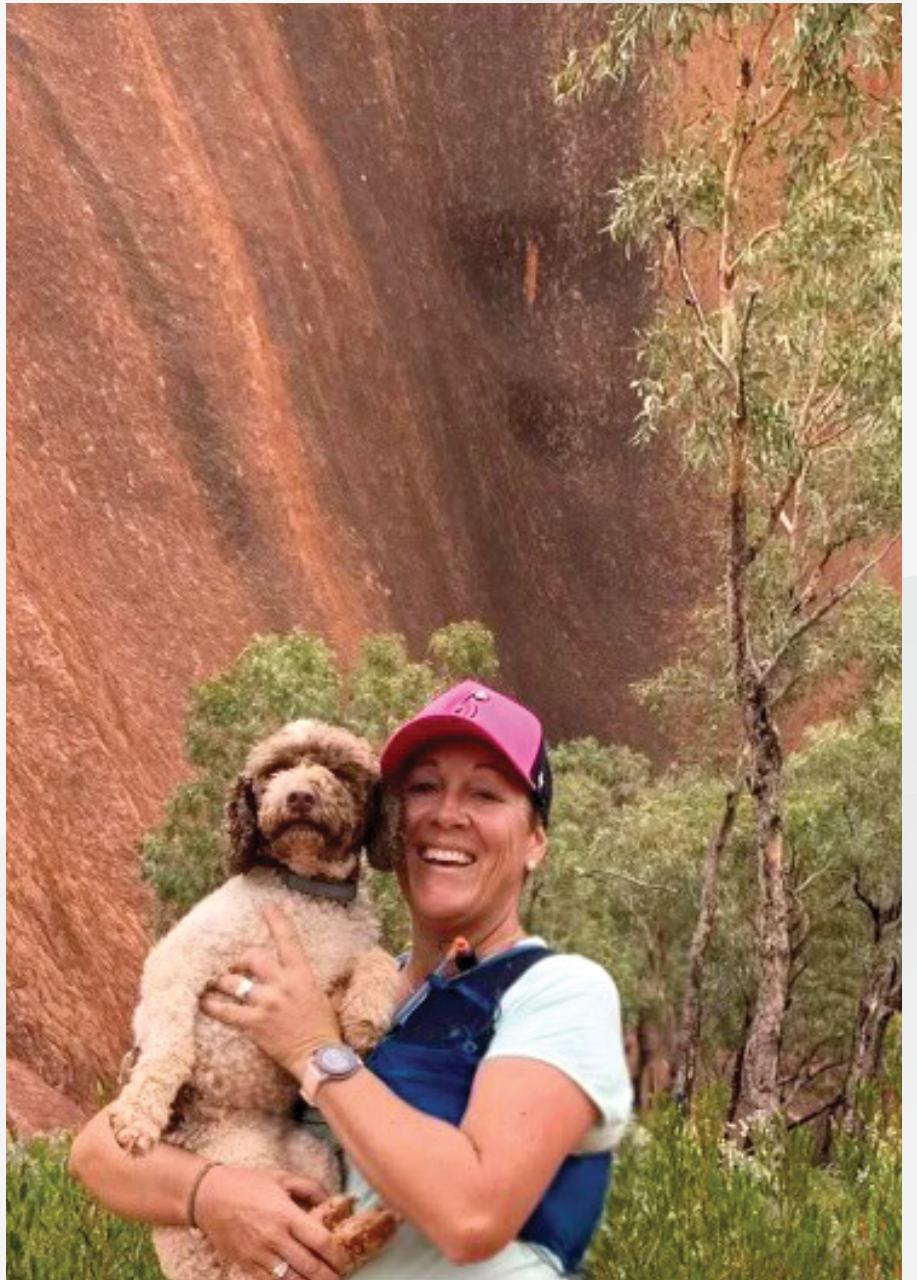
For those still serving, Kate offers heartfelt advice: "Don't wait until it's too late. Seek help early. Programs like those that Quest for Life offer are there to support you through your toughest times. Your mental health is as important as your duty."

Kate's transformation is a beacon of hope for many in the force. As she concludes, "The culture within law enforcement is slowly changing, with more awareness about mental health. But we need to do more. Quest for Life showed me that healing is possible, and I hope others can find the same support."

For officers facing the relentless demands of their roles, Quest for Life stands ready to help. Their holistic and evidence-based programs, including online courses and specialised workshops for first responders, offer the healing and resilience that many need to reclaim their life and thrive.

If you or your team are facing challenges or need support, please reach out to Quest for Life at [questforlife.org.au](https://questforlife.org.au) or **1300 941 488**.







# Psychophysiology of Performance and Health among Individuals in High-Risk Occupations



By Brittani Schroeder

Blueline Editor Brittani Schroeder spoke with Judith Andersen, an Associate Professor at the University of Toronto Mississauga, about her studies of the psychophysiology of performance and health among individuals in high-risk occupations.

## Q: HOW DID YOU COME TO RESEARCH POLICING AND USE-OF-FORCE?

I maintain a research program as the Director of the Health, Adaptation, Research on Trauma (HART) lab. For the past decade, I've teamed up with academics and police agencies in North America and Europe to conduct a variety of studies—for example, randomised controlled trials and those with long-term follow up.

What we quickly realized during these studies is that stress not only impacts health over time, but it really can influence the application of skills, including de-escalation, the use-of-force and lethal force decision-making during critical incidents. Of course, these findings have strong implications for police and public safety. As well, my team and I have had the honour of working on provincial and federal policy on use-of-force and de-escalation.

## Q: CAN YOU TELL US ABOUT YOUR RECENT STUDY?

Our study examined police lethal force errors and stress physiology during simulated evaluation scenarios that were presented in video and live formats. In a sample of 187 police officers, we examined the rate of use-of-force errors during video and live scenarios, and we measured their heart rates in real time as a reflection of stress response activation. Although there were low error rates overall, it's important to note that any errors made during an evaluation may have direct professional consequences for the officer (e.g., loss of authorities). Thus, it's very important to make sure that error rates are not caused by the design or delivery of the scenarios, but rather reflect the officer's skills.

It's important to note that these simulations reflected realistic calls for service in a large, representative police agency in Canada. The research was an observational field study of current police practices, not a lab-based experiment. That is an important distinction – while the live and video scenarios were not identical in their content, using observational methods is an important and valid approach to learning about behaviour in the environment in which it occurs. This method enhances 'ecological validity', increasing the confidence that the conclusions of the study are relevant to police scenario-based training and evaluation.



Assoc Professor Judith Andersen

## Q: WHAT WERE THE RESULTS OF THE STUDY?

We noticed that there were significantly fewer lethal use-of-force errors in live versus video scenarios. While there may be multiple factors that impact errors, we believe the data indicates two likely reasons:

1. The officers were more engaged during the live scenarios, as evidenced by greater physiological reactivity—change in Heart Rate (HR) from rest—compared to the video scenarios.
2. Neuroscientific research indicates that two-dimensional video encounters, similar to the video scenarios used by the police agency in this study, are processed by different brain networks than live interactions, which may impact the person's sensory awareness and subsequent responses to a virtual versus live encounter.





**Let me expand upon each of these in turn.**

For the first factor, when a person faces a challenging situation with potential threat (as is the case in police encounters), the brain sends signals to the body to prepare to meet the demands of the situation, whatever they may be. This means that the stress response system is activated. Not all activation is bad – in fact, a moderate amount of activation increases cognitive and sensory awareness, attention and vigilance, and is advantageous to meeting the demands of the situation.

Medical science research on real-time HR, in combination with direct observation of a person’s actions, show that about a 10-point increase in HR in the absence of significant physical movement indicates psychological and physiological engagement of the stress response system. While overactivation of this system (known as ‘flight or flight’) is helpful when survival is on the line, it can interfere with social and verbal skills when activation is excessive or prolonged.

In both the video and live scenario conditions, we observed a significant increase in stress response engagement; not overactivation, but instead, a sign that officers were paying attention and in a state of ready to perform their skills. However, we did observe a higher amount of reactivity in the live condition that indicates even more engagement compared to the officers’ own HR in the video condition. It may be the case that the live scenarios better reflected the full sensory context in which an officer applies their skills in the real world, and therefore raised their physiological activation in preparation to meet the demands of the live simulation.

**This notion is supported by the second factor I raised.**

Neuroscientific research shows that subtle facial muscle expressions, movements and speech patterns are processed more effectively during live versus virtual interactions; you can reference Redcay et al., 2010, and Tomasello et al., 2005. The human brain is finely tuned to detect visual information like direction and speed. When this information doesn’t match with other senses like sound, or doesn’t match the direction and speed of an officer’s own movement, virtual simulation environments may feel ‘unnatural’ or even induce negative effects like cybersickness; look at Giessing, 2021, and Kleygrewe et al., 2023. This lack of realism may account for the relatively higher errors observed in our study, as officers may have been more cautious in their behaviours towards a ‘real’ person standing before them.

**“This lack of realism may account for the relatively higher errors observed in our study”**

Anecdotally, officers have mentioned to our research team that they do not prefer video simulations when they are more basic (e.g., video projections on a wall versus immersive virtual (VR) or augmented reality (AR) systems). Officers noted that they would rather do live scenarios in order to have the whole context be more real and use all of their senses and skills as they would in the field. Although officer-reported preferences were not a part of this study, they are an important aspect to consider in future research.

**Q: WHAT CAN POLICE AGENCIES TAKE AWAY FROM THIS STUDY?**

Many virtual simulation configurations used by police agencies (including the one used in the current study) are relatively ‘basic’ compared to advanced VR and AR systems and may influence performance outcomes by presenting physical and perceptual limitations that do not exist in live simulations or real-world interactions. Therefore, agencies must be mindful of whether learning or evaluation goals could be influenced by the way scenarios are delivered (either for training or assessment purposes), especially if virtual equipment (e.g., Taser, firearm) is incompatible with officers’ duty equipment.

Top of the line VR requires financial investment, technical expertise and time resources to keep it running effectively, including continuous updates to software and hardware. These are barriers for some services in Canada and can limit accessibility to the use of more realistic virtual training and evaluation platforms. The good news is that live scenarios delivered in more simplistic settings (e.g., agency training rooms, facilities, empty buildings in the community) do test a full range of skills, including de-escalation and use-of-force decision-making.

In line with international police researchers, my team and I would recommend that scenarios are delivered in a format (either virtual or live) that: a) most accurately represents the context in which the skill or competency of interest will be demonstrated in the field, and b) leverages agency resources to be most efficient. Prioritizing the latter does not prioritize officer learning, evaluation or operational safety.



# Lancashire's Police Bleep in the Community Provides Guidance and Inspiration to Aspiring Female Recruits

Breaking Barriers! How Lancashire Police's 'Bleep in the Community' Initiative is Boosting Female Representation and Success Rates.

**W**ith police forces in England and Wales facing challenges around building female representation in the service – particularly from seldom-heard communities – Sgt Mussa Meman and PC Nikki Nabi of Lancashire Police identified that the way the police fitness test was administered was leading to a disproportionate number of failures among female applicants. Recognizing the critical need for a solution, they developed a new community-focused approach that has significantly improved pass rates and helped to increase female representation within the force.

By taking the bleep test directly into communities and providing support, guidance and inspiration to aspiring female candidates, we have achieved outstanding results.

In the male-dominated field of policing, the need for gender equality and representation cannot be overstated. Recognising a significant disparity in fitness test results between male and female candidates, we created the Police Bleep in the Community initiative.

Spearheaded and driven by PC Nikki Nabi, this project not only addressed the fitness test challenge but also became a catalyst for positive change, empowerment and community engagement. By taking the bleep test directly into communities and providing support, guidance and inspiration to aspiring female candidates, we have achieved outstanding results.

The aim of this article is to explore the journey, impact and lessons learned from this ground-breaking initiative.

## IDENTIFYING THE DISPROPORTIONATE GAP

Through careful analysis of candidate data, it became evident that a disproportionate number of female candidates were failing the fitness test when compared to their male counterparts.

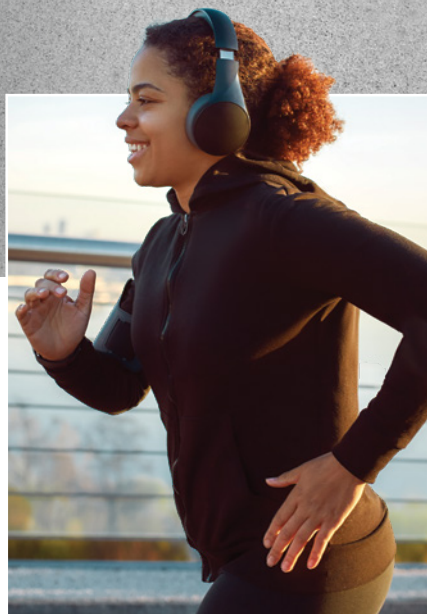
The failure rate among females reached an alarming 25%, while males achieved a 100% pass rate. We decided to delve into the data and take action to rectify this imbalance.

Having recognised that the short time between final interviews and the fitness test hindered adequate candidate preparation, we looked to create an extended preparation period as a solution.

We organised mock fitness tests for all female candidates immediately after their Online National Assessment Centre (ONAC) completion.



**“The initiative aimed to showcase the variety of roles available within the organisation and encourage attendees to ask questions and engage in a fun, informative manner.”**



By adopting a positive mindset and providing candidates with an extra four weeks of preparation, we aimed to boost their confidence and enhance their chances of success.

### **TAKING THE BLEEP TEST INTO THE COMMUNITY**

This led us to bring the bleep test directly to the heart of the communities we serve, a decision that was motivated by several key factors.

As a female officer who resembled the diverse communities we served, Nikki understood the power of visibility in inspiring others to consider careers in policing.

Firstly, the inaccessibility of police headquarters posed a challenge for many candidates, particularly those from seldom-heard communities. By conducting the bleep test in various community locations, accessibility

barriers were removed, making participation easier and more inclusive.

Additionally, we recognised the importance of representation and role modelling. As a female officer who resembled the diverse communities we served, Nikki understood the power of visibility in inspiring others to consider careers in policing.

The initiative aimed to showcase the variety of roles available within the organisation and encourage attendees to ask questions and engage in a fun, informative manner.

### **DRIVING ENGAGEMENT AND EMPOWERMENT**

Police Bleep in the Community extended beyond fitness tests and recruitment. It provided a platform for all females, regardless of their aspirations in policing, to interact with us and gain insights into the profession.

Attendees had the opportunity to explore different roles within the organisation, leading to increased interest and subsequent applications for various positions.

Even those who were unsuccessful in their initial endeavours became advocates for our organisation, breaking down barriers and fostering a sense of empowerment among women.

### **COLLABORATION AND IMPACT**

The success of Police Bleep in the Community owed much to our collaborative efforts. We focused on fitness test preparation, and provided



invaluable expertise in nutrition planning and physical training.

Colleagues from police forces nationwide have sought our advice and guidance. Academics have also reached out to learn from our experience and implement similar programmes in other forces.

Together, we developed an information pack encompassing guidance on exercise, nutrition, and the impact of physiological changes and medications on women's bodies. By combining our respective strengths and shared experiences, we delivered a comprehensive and impactful initiative.

Recognising the initiative's achievements, colleagues from police forces nationwide have sought our advice and guidance. Academics have also reached out to learn from our experience and implement similar programmes in other forces.

The project's impact can be quantified by the substantial reduction in the failure rate, from 25% to an impressive 8%. Moreover, the increased representation of women in police officer roles, rising from 33% to 38% since we commenced the project, demonstrates the long-lasting influence of this initiative.

## BREAKING DOWN BARRIERS

The Police Bleep in the Community initiative stands as a shining example of how dedication, innovation and collaboration can lead to transformative results.

By identifying a significant gender disparity in fitness test outcomes and taking proactive measures to address it, we not only improved the success rate of female candidates, but also ignited a wave of empowerment and engagement within communities.

The extension of the preparation period through mock fitness tests and the decision to bring the bleep test directly into communities has opened doors for aspiring female candidates who may have faced barriers due to limited accessibility.

This inclusive approach has not only allowed women to better prepare for the fitness test but has also provided them with a unique opportunity to explore the diverse roles available in policing, fostering interest and subsequent applications.

This project has not only transformed the prospects of aspiring female candidates but has also paved the way for a more inclusive and representative future in policing.

Beyond the fitness test itself, Police Bleep in the Community has created a platform for dialogue and interaction between aspiring candidates and officers.

It has broken down barriers, challenged stereotypes, and empowered women to consider careers in policing.

Our collaborative efforts, combining our expertise in fitness training, nutrition planning and comprehensive guidance, have been pivotal in delivering a well-rounded and effective programme.

The recognition we have garnered from colleagues in police forces across the country and academics seeking to implement similar initiatives attests to the project's significance and influence.

As the representation of women in police officer roles continues to increase, thanks to the sustained efforts of initiatives such as this, the impact on policing as a whole becomes apparent. The diverse perspectives, skills and experiences that female officers bring to the field contribute to a more inclusive and effective policing organisation.

In conclusion, the Police Bleep in the Community initiative serves as a testament to the power of proactive problem-solving, community engagement and collaboration. Through Nikki's exceptional leadership and unwavering commitment, this project has not only transformed the prospects of aspiring female candidates but has also paved the way for a more inclusive and representative future in policing.

## ABOUT THE AUTHORS



### SGT MUSSA MEMAN

Sgt Mussa Meman has more than 21 years' service with Lancashire Police, and has actively contributed to various initiatives aimed at enhancing community safety throughout his career. He played a key role in the force's Police Uplift Programme, which focused on strengthening the force organisation and improving public services, and worked alongside PC Nikki Nabi on the successful implementation of the Police Bleep in the Community initiative. These initiatives have earned recognition as best practice locally and nationally.



### NIKKI NABI

PC Nikki Nabi has 24 years' service within policing, recently focusing on increasing representation within the organisation, firmly believing that "if you can see it, you can be it". She contributed to the success of Lancashire Police's Police Uplift Programme, and is the visionary behind the Police Bleep in the Community initiative. She is currently working on enhancing the uniform policy to further create a space where everyone can bring their authentic selves to work, and is also engaged in efforts to comprehend and address the under-reporting of VAWG from under-represented communities.

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# Not so Shy, and Retiring



NEW ZEALAND  
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Ngā Pirihimana o Aotearoa

New Zealand Police Inspector Wendy Spiller isn't afraid to speak her mind - so when people used to ask her if she was going to follow in her father's footsteps and join Police, the answer was an emphatic No.

## Credit – New Zealand Police Ten One

New Zealand Police Inspector Wendy Spiller isn't afraid to speak her mind - so when people used to ask her if she was going to follow in her father's footsteps and join Police, the answer was an emphatic No.

However, after being encouraged to join by members of her basketball team who were in Police, Wendy had a change of heart.

"It was 1987 and I was teaching at Farm Cove Intermediate in Auckland. I applied and six weeks later I was in".

Wendy was one of 14 women in a group of 100 in Wing 111, which they affectionately called the 'Who you gonna call?' wing.

As today, times were fiscally tight leading to strict budget constraints during the six-month course.

"During the last three months at college there were no other courses there at all," says Wendy.

"Wing 111 recruits staffed the bar, the Munro canteen, and had the run of the

college which had both its advantages and disadvantages - short queues for meals, but the college staff only had us to focus on."

There were four women on Wendy's section and remarkably all of them are still in Police - Deputy Commissioner Tania Kura and Senior Constables Michele Richardson and Debbie Smalley, as well as Wendy. "We were a group of strong resilient women who all wanted to make a positive difference for our communities, which I am sure we all have."

After graduating, Wendy was posted to Auckland City District, where she worked on section before moving into Team Policing and then Enquiries before starting her journey in the CIB.

After taking promotion in 1997, Wendy worked as a section sergeant before being seconded to work alongside future Commissioner Peter Marshall on operations for APEC in 1999 and the America's Cup in 2000.

"It was an awesome job - we had 2500 staff working with us and it was an invaluable experience".

Wendy was also a very proud member of the Police Negotiation Team (PNT) - a role she held for a decade.

"I'm quite an impatient person so it was a great opportunity for me to learn to slow down, breathe and take time to get a positive result".

After two years at Harlech House at CIB Training, she was then promoted to senior sergeant at Wiri ER.

From there Wendy took the role of OC Station at Newmarket. During this time, she and her husband Harry welcomed their daughter Aliana, and Wendy took eight months' maternity leave before heading back to work.

After the team at Newmarket were centralised to Mt Wellington station, Wendy was Counties Manukau-bound again, this time as Employee Practices Manager - "an incredibly busy and challenging role," she says.



Wendy bows out after 37 years in Police

After that role was disestablished, she took the opportunity to head up Team Policing for Auckland City - a job that she really enjoyed.

"We were a fit squad that were committed to keeping Auckland safe, particularly the city centre, and worked mainly night shifts and beat work to keep on top of any demand."

Taking promotion to inspector, Wendy was once again back in Counties Manukau in the role of Prevention Manager for the East area, before taking the helm as Area Commander.

"I was there for eight years. I love the community, the team and the culture out east. Although it was challenging at times, it was definitely a highlight in my career."

After leaving her Area Commander role, Wendy spent time in Operations, planning and managing the Southern COVID-19 checkpoints. "That was certainly a unique environment to work in," she says.

"The logistical challenges we faced were unlike anything I have ever experienced in Police, and I was very happy and relieved, like most of us when we opened the borders prior to Christmas 2021."

With her vibrant personality and wide web of contacts, Wendy was a natural fit to take on the role of heading the team setting up the International Women in Policing Conference in Auckland.

"It took a lot of organisation, planning and a fantastic team to get the job done," she says.

"For me, this was an amazingly positive role where we were able to showcase New Zealand's Police and women on an international scale.

"We couldn't compete with some of our international counterparts by offering massive venues, but we did compete by using our culture, hospitality, ethos, and authenticity. That's what made us different."

The conference was a huge success, with 850 attendees from 75 countries heading to the event in September 2023.

At around this time Wendy started thinking about retirement. "When I joined Police, we had to retire at 55, so I always thought I would leave then, but when it came to it, I didn't feel the time was right".

Now, after 37 years she feels that the time has come.

"I have two sayings that I love - 'if you're healthy, you're wealthy' and 'there are no pockets in coffins' so I think it's time to leave and spend more time with friends and family and at our bach on Waiheke Island".

Travel is also on the cards, with a trip to the United States in August to speak at the next International Women in Policing conference in Chicago.

Looking back on her career Wendy is typically people-focused. "I will miss not being part of a team, because I'm an absolute people person and I really hope that I've had a positive influence in the community and with our staff".



# Women Police Leading the Way in Cyber Awareness in the Pacific



*Constable Uluheua and Inspector Veibete during the Palau training*

Three female Pacific Island police officers have been taking a lead role in increasing cyber safety awareness and education of their Pacific Island communities.



Cyber Safety Pasifika (CSP) is a Pacific Islands Chiefs of Police program, sponsored and delivered by the Australian Federal Police (AFP) and strategic partners across the Pacific region including New Zealand Police, Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), Australian Cyber Security Centre (ACSC), Asia Pacific Network Information Centre (APNIC), Meta (Facebook), and Women's Services Network (WSTNET). It is aimed at increasing cyber safety awareness and education of vulnerable communities in the Pacific region, and has recently been updated to maintain pace with the rapid changes in technology.

Constable Taililigo Tinoifili from Samoa Police Prisons and Corrections Service was chosen to lead the redesign of the Cyber Awareness and Education (CAE) Community Trainer Program, to ensure the program remains relevant and fit for purpose.

Detective Superintendent Kathryn Polkinghorne from the AFP's Pacific Police Development Program – Regional (PPDP-R) said over the past

13 years the AFP-led CSP has delivered ongoing awareness and education training to officers from Pacific policing organisations.

"The updated program provides invaluable information to police officers in the Pacific about the digital landscape to comprehensively understand cyber threats and provide proactive advice and assistance to improve cyber posture and resilience across the communities." Detective Superintendent Polkinghorne said.

CSP supports Pacific policing organisations to develop capability in both investigating cybercrime as well as helping police build cyber resilience in their communities through delivering cyber awareness and education presentations to schools, elders and community groups.

In July 2023, Constable Tinoifili participated in the CAE Community Trainer Program in Samoa, and on completion, she became an active presenter in the Samoan community. Her current experience as a CSP presenter provided invaluable knowledge

and an in-depth understanding to contribute to redesigning and updating the program with AFP members in Canberra.

To ensure she had captured the consensus across the Pacific, Constable Tinoifili presented the redesigned program in a workshop, held in Tonga, to 10 experienced police members from Pacific policing organisations. This approach helped validate and value-add to the refreshed material. At the end of the week the workshop participants gave the new program their support and endorsement.

The training program was then launched in Tonga in November 2023 to 24 Pacific Island participants, and the delivery of the program was led by Constable Tinoifili in conjunction with the CSP team.

Constable Tinoifili stated "CSP has provided a safe space and platform for Pasifika women to develop leadership skills by empowering them to lead delivery of their programs. I am grateful to the CSP team for the opportunity, and I hope that I have given confidence





Constable Tinofili during her time in Canberra

to other women to take up the opportunity if offered."

Two participants from the new program were selected to lead the next CSP training delivery in Noumea in March 2024.

Constable Soana Uluheua from Tonga, and Constable Noelani Taharagi from French Polynesia, came together in Noumea and undertook a 3- day workshop to work on a co-delivery of the CAE Community Trainer Program in English and French. This was a huge undertaking and the first dual language delivery for CSP.

This tradition was again continued in Palau in May 2024, with Constable Uluheua and Inspector Marica Veibete from Fiji leading the delivery of the CAE Community Trainer program.

When asked about the impact of her participation in the training, Constable Veibete reflected: "The participation of women in CSP programs as trainers is a testament to the commitment of gender equality and breaking down of barriers of gender norms in a Pasifika

setting. I am personally grateful to the AFP-CSP team, for recognising potential and capabilities of women in Pacific policing, and for providing the platform for us to demonstrate inherent unique and beautiful qualities of our Pasifika people".

The new CSP programs have been extremely well received by all participants.

**"Cyber Awareness Trainings has transformed my perspective on technology and every small effort contributes to a safer digital environment for everyone."**

Constable Uluheua noted that "Cyber Awareness Trainings has transformed my perspective on technology and every small effort contributes to a safer digital environment for everyone."

Detective Superintendent Polkinghorne said the female police officers did an outstanding job in presenting and working with the participants of the courses, providing them with the confidence to go back to their communities and deliver Cyber Safety presentations. "It is a privilege and an honour to have the opportunity to support talented Pacific police officers to deliver priority training to their peers. Building capabilities "by the Pacific, for the Pacific", in the Pacific way, is a key principle for CSP."

The CSP team has seen a marked increase in participants of the recent courses being actively engaged and excited to go out to their communities and deliver. One participant commented that she loved seeing her fellow female Pacific police officers delivering the course, they gave her the knowledge and the confidence to go back to her community and deliver the program.



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