

Media Release

The Hon Lisa Neville MP

Minister for the Coordination of Environment, Land, Water, and Planning – COVID-19
Minister for Police and Emergency Services
Minister for Water



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MORE PLACES, MORE OFTEN: PSOs TO DRIVE COMMUNITY SAFETY BOOST

Protective Services Officers (PSOs) will be able to be deployed to shopping centres, sporting precincts and other highly populated areas to help prevent crime and support community safety, under new laws introduced into Parliament today.

Minister for Police and Emergency Services Lisa Neville said the *Police and Emergency Legislation Amendment Bill 2020* cemented the Victorian Government's commitment to expand the role of PSOs so they can be deployed to support the community when and where they are needed most.

The legislation will allow the Chief Commissioner to declare areas such as shopping centres, malls and other crowded areas to be 'designated places' – in addition to maintaining their role on the public transport network.

This will allow PSOs to support police in places beyond the transport network where a highly visible police presence can help prevent crime and provide reassurance to the public.

Victorians have embraced the critical role mobile, flexible deployment of PSOs can play across the public transport network and now with Operation Shielding during the coronavirus pandemic - they have been vital in assisting police to slow the spread of the virus.

This is a key commitment of the Community Safety Statement 2019/20 and made possible as a result of the government's investment in 100 mobile PSOs.

The new laws will also give the Chief Commissioner power to deploy PSOs right across the state during disasters or emergencies, supporting police to maintain public order in the event of incidents like fires, floods and other incidents.

Under reforms introduced in the Bill, Sheriff's officers will trial serving family violence intervention order applications, with officers to receive additional training to support them in this role.

This will support police to focus on family violence victims and holding perpetrators to account, while also delivering on one of the key recommendations from the Royal Commission into Family Violence.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Police and Emergency Services Lisa Neville

"These common-sense changes give Victoria Police the resources and flexibility to deploy PSOs to places where they're needed most – whether that's patrolling the transport network, managing large events, or providing support at shopping centres."

"With thousands more police and hundreds of new PSOs, we will continue to ensure our police and PSOs have the powers, resources and tools they need to serve the Victorian community."