

Media Release

The Hon Lisa Neville MP

Minister for Police

Minister for Water



Thursday, 24 February 2022

ENSURING ALL POLICE CAN CONTINUE KEEPING US SAFE

The Victorian Government is drafting legislation to fix an error arising from amendments to the Victoria Police Act in 2013 that resulted in a number of graduating police officers being sworn in under incorrect delegation.

Between July 2014 and August 2021 Deputy Commissioners appointed acting Assistant Commissioners without the required delegation, with those acting Assistant Commissioners swearing in some graduating police officers.

Under changes made to the *Victoria Police Act* by the former Government in 2013, acting Assistant Commissioners needed to be appointed by the Chief Commissioner or by a Deputy Commissioner whom the Chief Commissioner had delegated authority to.

A review of this period has identified that 1076 police officers were sworn in by Acting Assistant Commissioners. A further 157 Protective Services Officers and 29 Police Custody Officers were sworn in by Acting Assistant Commissioners during this time.

Affected police members, PSOs and PCOs are being contacted today and Victoria Police will urgently swear in these officers again over the coming days and weeks.

The changes to the *Victoria Police Act* will operate retrospectively and will ensure that the work of the police officers is not affected by this issue.

Bipartisan support for the legislation will be vital to giving the affected police members certainty and ensuring criminals continue to be held to account.

This issue has had no impact on the training or work of these officers who remain highly valued and vital members of the force.

The Government will urgently introduce legislation to fix the administrative error, with legislation expected to be introduced into the Parliament at the next sitting week.

Quotes attributable to the Minister for Police Lisa Neville

"We've acted swiftly to address the issue after it was uncovered by Victoria Police last week and confirmed by legal advice in recent days."

"We'll continue working closely with Victoria Police to ensure the work of officers in keeping us safe is uninterrupted."

Quotes attributable to the Chief Commissioner for Victoria Police Shane Patton

"Victoria Police will be re-swearing in or re-affirming impacted employees over the coming days and weeks."

"There is no doubt they have acted in good faith by performing their duties in the belief they were correctly sworn in or affirmed and they have my full support."

"We are confident this administrative error will be corrected next month and there will be no ongoing ramifications for impacted staff or any of their court matters."

Media contact: Rania Spooner 0436 019 993 | rania.spooner@minstaff.vic.gov.au