

Media Release

The Hon Lisa Neville MP

Minister for Police

Minister for Water



Tuesday, 8 March 2022

LEGISLATION TO ENSURE POLICE CAN CONTINUE KEEPING US SAFE

The Andrews Labor Government has today introduced legislation to ensure dedicated police and Protective Services Officers have the authority and certainty they need to get their job done and keep Victorians safe.

This legislation will fix an error arising from the *Victoria Police Act*, introduced in 2013 under the former Liberal Government, that resulted in a number of graduating police officers being sworn in under incorrect delegation.

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

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.

A review conducted by Victoria Police identified that between 1 July 2014 and August 2021, more than 1,200 officers were sworn in by Acting Assistant Commissioners (AACs) without the required delegation.

In total, 1,057 police officers, 156 Protective Services Officers and 29 Police Custody Officers were invalidly sworn in by AACs during this time.

To date nearly 1,000 officers have been re-sworn by Victoria Police since the error was identified to ensure they can continue working to keep the community safe. The remaining officers have not worked a shift due to leave or other reasons and will be considered correctly sworn when the Bill passes Parliament and receives royal assent.

The new legislation will amend the Act to retrospectively validate the appointment of police officers as AACs by Deputy Commissioners between 1 July 2014 and 31 August 2021.

It will also validate all exercises of power by AACs pursuant to their appointments, including to administer the oath or affirmation.

The changes will ensure that the work of the identified officers and any related legal cases are not affected by this issue.

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 Bill is expected to pass the Legislative Assembly today. It will then go straight to the Legislative Council where we expect it to pass with the support of the Opposition.

Quotes attributable to the Minister for Police Lisa Neville

"We've moved quickly to fix this issue and introduced legislation at the first possible opportunity to provide certainty to the affected officers and to the Victorian community."

"We will continue to back the work of our hardworking police, and this ensures they can get on with the job of serving the community and keeping Victorians safe."