

**Hon Anthony Carbines MP – Minister for Police**

Saturday, 15 November 2025

## MORE LOCAL POLICE, WHEN AND WHERE THE PROBLEMS ARE

To reduce violent youth crime, Victorians will see more local, visible police and Protective Services Officers (PSOs) patrolling their communities, and they will be deployed based on data and intelligence – targeting crime when and where it's likely.

The new Chief Commissioner Mike Bush has requested more powers and more investment as part of the next phase of his major overhaul of Victoria Police – and the Allan Labor Government is backing it 100 per cent. It includes:

- rolling out the active PSOs program, which allows police at low-or-no-crime station platforms to also patrol on trains and around streets and shopping strips, at different times of the day
- a targeted policing operation which will see PSOs and Police inside major shopping centres over summer, for a visible police presence in the busy places where families and kids shop and spend time
- filling desk jobs with reservists to free up hundreds more frontline police, so they spend less time at their desk and more time in the community
- providing police with 800 handheld metal detectors to find more knives and machetes in public

### Crime is changing – so should the way we fight crime

Victoria has more than 1,400 PSOs who keep us safe. But the community and even PSOs tell us they're not deployed in a common sense or responsive way. Crime moves around – so should PSOs.

Crime trends of today are not the same trends of 13 years ago, when the policy of static PSOs was first implemented – a policy that glues officers to their seat, even if crime is happening down the street.

- Police data shows the busiest time for crime on the transport network is morning and late afternoon, especially at 3pm. Currently, PSOs are only deployed from 6pm.
- Police data also shows that stations experience change in crime levels over time, and that some consistently higher-risk stations are underserved by only two PSOs.
- Around four in five stations experience limited criminal activity:
  - In 2024, 79 of Melbourne's 200-plus train stations experienced no recorded crimes against the person, and a further 101 experienced 5 or fewer.
  - During Night Network operations, over a 2-year period, 98 stations recorded zero incidents and 198 stations recorded 3 or fewer.

Meanwhile, Victorians tell us they want to feel safer on trains and nearby bus interchanges – where PSOs currently have a very limited and irregular presence – and in the shopping centres they use every day. The community also want PSOs when most crime on the network occurs, in the day time.

Crime is also increasing at shopping centres, including retail theft – and we know how shocked the community is by the brazen, knife-crime incidents at shopping centres around Victoria where families spend time.

### More PSOs where the problems are – with the active PSOs program

The active PSOs program will use data and police intelligence to target areas in our communities where a more visible local uniform presence is needed. That could be on the train platform, roving in groups on trains, or patrolling shopping precincts and other busy areas where crimes are increasing – at any hour of the day.

The active PSOs program will involve:

**Media contact:** Max Resic 0435 256 250 | [max.resic@minstaff.vic.gov.au](mailto:max.resic@minstaff.vic.gov.au)

- more visible PSOs including travelling on trains, not just stuck on the platform
- PSOs deployed according to data and intelligence, resulting in longer coverage at stations if needed
- safeguards including maintaining the existing presence at the end of each train line

Under the program, high-risk train stations will have static PSOs from 9am until the last service, instead of from 6pm. Medium-risk stations plus four regional stations will have static PSOs from 5pm until the last service – a one-hour extension into the peak crime time.

Mobile patrols of low-or-no-crime stations will occur from 5pm until the last service, with police riding trains regularly and patrolling platforms.. PSOs servicing Night Network trains will continue.

The risk framework takes in crime data, patronage numbers and nearby locations where people congregate.

The active PSOs program was designed by Victoria Police, who make independent operational decisions. As this is a matter of statewide policy, police require the Government's support to proceed – and they have it in full.

The program will be fully in place in 2026 after a planning and training period, with police communicating in advance with the public to inform them about when and where they should expect to see PSOs on their train line.

### **More presence where the problems are – with PSOs in shopping centres**

Shopping centres are where we've always felt safe, but it's clear both from data and from some brazen, shocking incidents that shopping centres need a stronger and more visible uniform presence to fight and deter crime.

That's why PSOs and Police will also patrol major shopping centres over the summer, in a new 90-day targeted police operation starting before Christmas. This is on top of the active PSOs program.

As part of this \$2.3 million investment from the Allan Labor Government, Victoria Police will select four shopping centres to conduct the operation based on data and intelligence – with the operation providing key insights to consider for a potential future model supporting more shopping centres.

### **More local police where the problems are – by filling low-risk desk jobs with police reservists**

To redirect more frontline police officers to the streets, Victoria Police will recruit up to 200 police reservists to fill important but lower-risk desk jobs – such as performing administrative duties, helping with public enquiries and taking statutory declarations.

Having up to 200 reservists working in administrative functions allows up to 200 more frontline police to be deployed out in the public, enhancing the visible police presence on our streets.

To support this Victoria Police initiative, the Government will introduce legislation to formally reinstate the Chief Commissioner's power to appoint police reservists, and fund the recruitment of the new reservist pool. Recruitment will start as soon as possible, including among retired officers.

This boost to frontline policing is in addition to the first stage of the Chief Commissioner's overhaul of Victoria Police announced last month. As part of that overhaul – the biggest restructure of the force in a decade – more police will be redirected to the frontline, amounting to 1.4 million additional personnel hours per year.

### **More local police where the problems are – with more hand-held detectors to search for machetes**

Machetes are banned and police have the powers to search for them in public without a warrant. What police tell us is that they need better equipment.

That's why the Government will invest almost \$1 million to procure 842 additional hand-held metal detectors, to significantly expand the ability of frontline police to conduct these searches, and get these dangerous weapons off the street.

Between April and November 2025 – since the Government toughened police search powers – 36 areas have been designated by the Chief Commissioner of Police for special weapons searches.

### **What else we're doing**

Supporting the next phase of the Chief Commissioner's overhaul of Victoria Police is the third major reform announced in Victoria's *Serious Consequences – Early Interventions* plan to reduce violent youth crime.

A visible police presence in the community not only maintains public order. It reminds potential youth offenders that serious consequences are always near.

#### **Quotes attributable to Minister for Police Anthony Carbines**

*"We're backing the second phase of the Chief Commissioner's overhaul of Victoria Police, with new powers and resources to get reservists behind the desk, expand the visible policing out in the community, and search for machetes without a warrant."*

*"PSOs are a crime-reduction tool, but right now they're hamstrung by the past and glued to their seat, even if crime is occurring down the street. As a result, police can't properly respond to changes in criminal activity."*

*"We need to put more local police where the problems are. Now, they won't just be on platforms. They'll also be riding the trains and patrolling interchanges, and shopping areas – protecting people from morning to night."*