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Queensland Police Service and Queensland Human Rights Commission begin diversity and inclusion review

The Queensland Police Service and Queensland Human Rights Commission have today announced the commencement of a review into diversity and inclusion within the QPS.

The review is a direct response to a recommendation by the recent Commission of Inquiry into Queensland Police Service responses to domestic and family violence. The inquiry's final report was handed down in November last year and found widespread cultural issues including racism and sexual harassment in the QPS.

The review will focus on the recruitment and retention of police members who are women, First Nations people and from culturally diverse backgrounds.

It will examine issues including barriers to applying to become a police officer that some communities may face, whether current recruitment practices are in line with Queensland's Anti-Discrimination Act, steps the QPS should take to prevent discrimination happening within its ranks, and how QPS retain police from diverse backgrounds.

The review will run across a four-year period, with the initial consultation phase beginning this month. A report will be published in late 2024 detailing the Commission's recommendations for improving recruitment and retention of women, First Nations, and culturally and linguistically diverse police.

The review will be advised by an independent and external advisory panel which will be co-chaired by the Police Commissioner and Human Rights Commissioner. Members of the Advisory Panel are:

- Kristen Hilton, former Commissioner, Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission
- Linda Williams, Deputy Commissioner, South Australia Police
- Thelma Schwartz, Principal Legal Officer at Queensland Indigenous Family Violence Legal Service, former member of Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce
- Peter Forday, Consultant and Board Member of Multicultural Australia, former chair Police Ethnic Advisory Group.

More information about the Review can be found on the Commission's website at www.qhrc.qld.gov.au.

Quotes attributable to Queensland Police Commissioner Katarina Carroll:

“Last year’s Commission of Inquiry was an opportunity for our service to understand and reflect on what we can do within our organisation to create a more inclusive workplace now and into the future.”

“Since the report was handed down, we have continued to renew our focus on what needs to be done to restore the community’s trust and create a workplace where our people can have their voices heard.”

“I welcome the beginning of the diversity and inclusion review being led by the Human Rights Commission - this is just the next step towards a more modern organisation, focusing on its people at the core.”

Quotes attributable to Queensland Human Rights Commissioner Scott McDougall:

“In actioning this recommendation from last year’s Commission of Inquiry, the Queensland Police Service leadership are signalling their commitment to grappling with these issues to achieve meaningful change.”

“The purpose of an exercise like this is to support police to implement required change, and make sure they have the right people there to do the job. That includes ensuring that the criteria for recruiting police are about the skills and experience needed to do the work. Our role is to provide independent guidance to make the necessary change.”

“Achieving a safe and equal workplace will require the collective effort of Queensland Police Service leadership, critical partners, and police across all levels of the organisation. There are no quick fixes. There is a need for systemic long-term change to build a culture of diversity and inclusion”.

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