



**Police Federation  
of Australia**

The National Voice of Policing

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## **Inquiry into criminal activity and law enforcement during the COVID-19 pandemic**

The Police Federation of Australia (PFA) thanks the Committee for the opportunity to make a supplementary submission to this Inquiry. As the Committee is aware, the PFA represents the professional and industrial interests of in excess of 64,000 police officers across every police jurisdiction in the country.

In our initial submission in August 2020, we made a number of recommendations including:

- The pandemic's impact on crime;
- The police preparedness for the pandemic;
- The pandemic's impact on police resourcing;
- Police workers compensation issues;
- The creation of a dedicated national independent service provider network for police mental health & well-being issues;
- A research proposal from Charles Sturt University; and
- Issues of the education and training of public safety, first responders.

In respect to the education and training of public safety, first responders, in our August 2020 submission, the PFA highlighted the importance of interoperability across public safety agencies and how such interoperability is dependent on comprehensive and robust

education and training systems to prepare our personnel to perform effectively and together in emergencies.

The police and partner agencies have been working cohesively for over 20 years in the development of national training packages, qualifications and competency standards, many of which complement one another. Through collaboration and sharing professional expertise and knowledge, these agencies have improved their understanding of each other's systems of work and have come together to share their education and training expertise and resources. This cooperative work has reaped significant benefits, particularly during COVID 19.

As previously advised. The PFA is a member, and in fact Chairs, the Public Safety Industry Reference Committee (PSIRC), which is the body through which public safety agencies collaborate in the Vocational Education and Training (VET) sector. The PFA has identified some shortcomings in the VET sector arrangements as they apply to public safety, with the PSIRC making a presentation to the Australian Industry Skills Committee (AISC), where we elaborated on a number of these issues. We have been subsequently invited to a meeting with representatives of the Department of Education Skills and Employment. However, no date for that meeting has yet been set.

As we pointed out in August, all the agencies within the public safety grouping, including police, are required to continue to make significant financial and in-kind contributions to the development of the relevant training packages. Funding to progress this increasingly demanding and crucial work is essential. However, the requirement for us to fund our own development and review work is costing public safety agencies several million dollars annually.

In policing, we are also very keen to work on how we can integrate the police training package in the VET system, into policing's rapidly developing work in the higher education sector. We are keen to explore opportunities with the Government in this space and would welcome any support from this committee.

The two recommendations we included in our August 2020 submission in respect to education and training (see below), continue to be relevant to this supplementary submission.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

**That the Committee support public safety stakeholders through key identified agencies reviewing the current model of funding VET training package development with the view of identifying a better, fit for purpose model.**

### **Further**

**That the Committee support an appropriate process, involving approved national bodies from the police, public safety and emergency services agencies, co-operating with the university sector, in the establishment of a pool of Commonwealth Supported Places (CSP)**

**in the university sector, to encourage the filling of specific skills gaps and the continuing professional development of members of those agencies.**

We thank the Committee again for the opportunity to make this submission on behalf of Australia's Police and I again offer any further support that the Committee deems appropriate, including appearing to give evidence if requested.

Sincerely yours

Scott Weber APM  
Chief Executive Officer  
05 February 2021