



NSW POLICE FORCE

MEDIA RELEASE



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NSW POLICE FORCE CREATES A SAFETY CULTURE AND REDUCES STRESS

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The NSW Police Force has moved to create a new safety culture with a senior officer training program and new measures to address the growing issue of work stress among police in the field.

Commissioner Ken Moroney says a pilot program began in late March dealing with stress and depression, recognising that these conditions present a risk to all levels of the Force, including general duties police.

The initial officer welfare program was run by the Black Dog Institute. This program was delivered to the Commissioner, Deputy Commissioners, and a number of Assistant Commissioners.

A total of 20 such programs will be rolled out to all Superintendents and above before the end of the year. Further programs aimed at Inspectors and Sergeants will also be delivered.

Commissioner Moroney says the Force currently offers a range of support programs and is committed to safe work practices, however there is a pressing need to develop a genuine safety culture and adopt additional measures to combat the issue of stress.

“It’s important that these safety and wellbeing issues are addressed by senior police as leaders in our organisation. This new program is the first step in an important cultural change for the NSW Police Force. It is critical that commanders and managers recognise the signs and symptoms of mental ill-health and stress,” he said.

“Police are so often engaged in dangerous and stressful work. It is a job in which risk is a by-word. Police often joke that policing is a contact sport, but the reality is that safety issues in our organisation need to be in the front of everyone’s minds.

“In the past we have focused particularly on those high risk areas of policing, such as undercover work, but there are clearly issues which affect police in the broader area of field operations.”

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As well as the new arrangements with the Black Dog Institute, for some years the NSW Police Force has had in place a range of services to assist our people. These include:

- Employment Assistance Program (EAPS)
- Wellcheck (for specialist services)
- Peer Support Officers (PSO)
- Critical Incident debriefs
- Rehabilitation Services
- Chaplaincy programs

The Wellcheck program, which is aimed at police in high risk specialist areas such as child abuse and crash investigation, will also be extended to general duties police.

In addition to programs focused on stress and depression, the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology has also won a tender to deliver a Safety Science Course for Assistant Commissioners, as well as a course for Commanders focused on safety tactics. That program has already begun.

The safety initiatives addressed in the RMIT program include:

- Safety issues in police
- OH&S legislation
- Incident causation and investigation
- Safety risk management
- Managing safety change
- Human factors

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