



Western Australian Auditor General's Report

New Recruits in the Western Australia Police

Report 8 – June 2012





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**Office of the Auditor General
Western Australia**

7th Floor Albert Facey House
469 Wellington Street, Perth

Mail to:

Perth BC, PO Box 8489
PERTH WA 6849

T: 08 6557 7500

F: 08 6557 7600

E: info@audit.wa.gov.au

W: www.audit.wa.gov.au

National Relay Service TTY: 13 36 77
(to assist persons with hearing and voice impairment)

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WESTERN AUSTRALIAN AUDITOR GENERAL'S REPORT

New Recruits in the Western Australia Police

Report 8
June 2012



**THE PRESIDENT
LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL**

**THE SPEAKER
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

NEW RECRUITS IN THE WESTERN AUSTRALIA POLICE

This report has been prepared for submission to Parliament under the provisions of section 25 of the *Auditor General Act 2006*.

Performance audits are an integral part of the overall audit program. They seek to provide Parliament with assessments of the effectiveness and efficiency of public sector programs and activities, and identify opportunities for improved performance.

The information provided through this approach will, I am sure, assist Parliament in better evaluating agency performance and enhance parliamentary decision-making to the benefit of all Western Australians.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. Murphy'.

COLIN MURPHY
AUDITOR GENERAL
20 June 2012

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Auditor General's Overview

Policing is a challenging job and the community relies on its police officers to deal with many difficult and often dangerous situations on a daily basis. Police officers also have significant powers and so it is vital that the community has trust and confidence that those powers will be used responsibly and with good judgement.

Finding the right people to be police officers and training them well is critical to achieving safe and effective policing. Western Australia Police (WAP) needs to recruit enough suitable people to address both turnover and government targets for more police officers. This is a difficult task in a tightening labour market, and it needs to be achieved without compromising the quality of either recruits or their training.

Generally, WAP have delivered the right number of appropriately trained officers. But there are emerging risks which, if not addressed, will hamper WAP's ability to continue to do so. Current application rates are insufficient to meet recruitment targets for the next two years while aspects of both Academy training and probation need to be tightened to make sure that those who reach the front line have all the necessary skills and experience.

I am pleased that WAP has begun taking action to address some of the findings and recommendations in my report, and hope the attention and action will be sustained. Doing so is essential to the continued safety and effectiveness of police officers and the trust and confidence of the community.

Executive Summary

Background

The Western Australian community relies on its police. The job of a police constable is diverse, challenging and not 'nine to five'. The situations and people police deal with are often dangerous but the community expects police will turn up and deal with them. This can include a fatal car crash, a violent out of control party or walking the beat in Northbridge on a Saturday night.

Western Australia Police (WAP) is one of eight police jurisdictions in Australia and is responsible for policing the world's largest single police jurisdiction covering 2.5 million square kilometres. In 2011, WAP had 5 866 sworn police officers in its staff, ranging from recruits through to commanders. Thirty-seven per cent of those have been serving the community for over 15 years.

Recruiting and training are important functions for WAP. WAP recruits and trains new police constables to maintain its operational strength and increase police numbers in response to government commitments.

In order to train new recruits, WAP built a new training facility in Joondalup in 2002, at a cost of \$46 million. This facility is equipped with many up-to-date technologies including an interactive tactical training simulator and full scale scenario village, allowing new recruits to learn the skills needed to become a general duties constable. In the past five years around 2 000 new recruits have trained at the Joondalup Academy.

The process to recruit and train a qualified and operational police officer for the front line takes a minimum of 20 months. WAP runs an ongoing recruitment process, so applications are welcome at all times. In order to be appointed as a constable, applicants need to complete three main steps; the recruitment process, Academy training and probation (Figure 1). This process gives WAP three points of control to ensure only those suitable make it through to becoming a qualified officer.

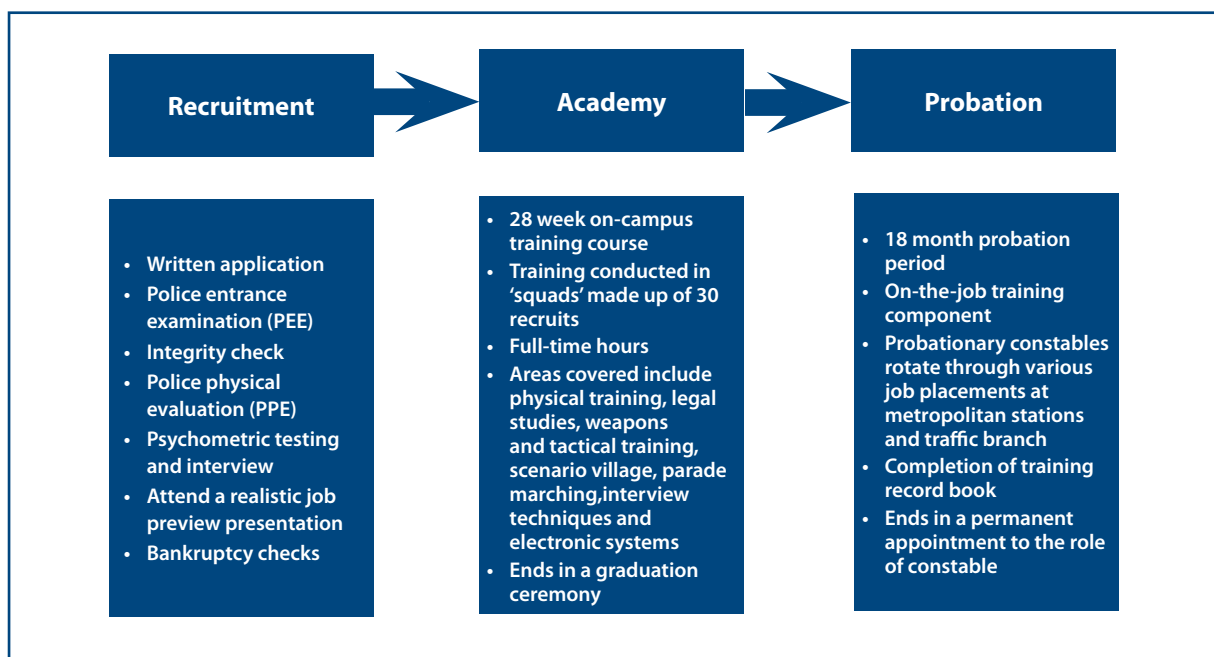


Figure 1: WAP's process to become a police constable

Once an application is received, the assessment process begins, with applicants sitting a police entrance exam, psychological assessment and interview, physical assessment and integrity check. This process ensures those selected have the essential psychological standards including emotional stability, self-control, resilience to stress and meet academic, integrity and physical standards before they are accepted by WAP as suitable applicants.

Following completion of the assessment process suitable applicants are placed into a recruitment pool and commence Academy training as needed (Attachment 1). Academy training occurs when the number of officers required is around 30 so a squad with an appropriate mix of age, gender and personality can be formed.

All constables commence their career with six months Academy training. The Police Academy provides recruits with training towards a Diploma of Public Safety (Policing); a national Vocational Education and Training (VET) qualification. In addition to completing training for this qualification, the Academy provides recruits with 'agency specific' training in WA legislation, policies and procedures.

This VET adult learning approach allows recruits to demonstrate competency in each unit of learning. If competency is not achieved on the first attempt, recruits are able to continue to receive remedial training and be reassessed until competency is reached. Some achieve competency the first time, for others it can take several attempts, sometimes taking months.

Training at the Academy is the first step in recruit training. It is followed by an 18 month probationary period of on-the-job training. Probation is intended to build competency by providing each probationary constable with the training, support and guidance needed to develop the skills, knowledge and experience required to finally 'graduate' and attain the rank of constable. These constables all become frontline police officers.

Currently there are around 400 probationary constables being supervised in 69 police stations across Western Australia. Only after the completion of probation is a constable considered qualified and able to work unsupervised, often supervising the next set of probationary constables.

Our audit assessed whether the recruitment and training of new recruits in WAP is efficient and effective. We focused on three questions:

1. Are WAP's recruitment and selection processes effective?
2. Are new recruits adequately trained and supported?
3. Is WAP using its resources to deliver police officers into the force efficiently and effectively?

The audit focused on new sworn general duties constables. This included the Academy training as well as on-the-job training provided during probation. The recruitment and training of police cadets, police auxiliary officers and police in specialist areas were not included in the audit scope. We also did not examine any ongoing training provided to constables once appointed.

Audit Conclusion

WAP understands the importance of having a well trained workforce. It invests significant resources into training new police recruits and built a state of the art training facility, the Police Academy, in Joondalup. As a Registered Training Organisation the WAP Academy provides a Diploma standard training program to all new recruits, allowing them to gain a tertiary qualification in Public Safety (Policing).

In order to ensure WAP has 'the right' people serving as police officers there are three controls in place. These are selecting the best applicants during the recruitment process, only allowing capable officers to graduate at the end of Academy training and allowing only those officers considered an acceptable standard to complete probation. However, WAP is not making full use of these controls to identify those who may be struggling to meet the demands of being a police officer and to minimise the risk of inadequately trained recruits becoming operational. Very few recruits are removed during Academy training or probation. Under the current selection and training processes, only one recruit has been dismissed from the Academy solely for poor performance in the past five years. This places significant pressure on the recruit selection process, and there are indications that this is not reliably identifying only suitable candidates.

Academy training is aimed at delivering appropriately trained and skilled officers to the field. For many recruits this training is adequate. Some new recruits, however, graduate from the Academy without all the skills, knowledge and attitudes required to immediately perform on-the-job as probationary constables. This increases the likelihood that recruits leave the Academy with issues that need to be resolved. It is anticipated that these are addressed and corrected during the probationary period. But probation is not consistently structured, constables are spending less time completing probation and supervision is inconsistent. These all increase the risk that gaps in recruits' skills and training are not adequately addressed before they become operational police officers.

WAP needs to know that it is producing the best police officer it can for the level of its investment. WAP could make better use of its information to understand whether its recruitment and training are effective and to identify opportunities to improve.

Key Findings

- WAP recruits and trains new police officers in response to attrition in its workforce and the requirements set by government to increase the number of police officers. In 2009-10, WAP was set a target by government to increase its police numbers by 500 by 2013-14. So far, WAP has achieved its interim targets. In order to achieve the overall target WAP needs to recruit 200 officers in the next two years. Based on current application rates WAP is unlikely to meet this target. WAP is considering alternative recruitment options including reinstating its overseas recruitment strategy, to increase its application pool.
- WAP's process to deliver general duties officers to the frontline relies heavily on selecting the right applicant. This is because almost no one is removed from WAP once chosen for Academy training. In the past five years 2 140 recruits have been trained and 12 recruits or probationary constables were removed. Only one of these was dismissed on the grounds of poor performance in training.
- WAP uses its '22 dimensions of a police officer' developed in 1987 as the basis for selecting suitable police recruits. They include broad attributes such as 'adherence to authority', 'personal impact', 'endurance' and 'written communication'. The environment and issues faced by police have changed since 1987, but WAP has not reviewed the relevance and use of the 22 dimensions and needs to do so.
- WAP is not meeting its diversity targets for recruiting from indigenous and culturally diverse backgrounds despite having strategies in place to do so. Only 1.7 per cent of the WA police force currently identifies themselves as coming from an indigenous background. This is significantly less than its target of three per cent, and the percentage has declined since 2007 when 2.4 per cent of the sworn officer workforce identified themselves as indigenous.
- WAP has increased the percentage of women officers from 13 per cent in 2001 to almost 21 per cent in 2011. This has been achieved in part by removing selection tools which were biased against women. However, its proportion of female police officers falls short of its target of 30 per cent and is one of the lowest compared to other Australian and New Zealand police forces.
- Psychological testing is a key element of WAP's recruitment, but there is inconsistency in how the results of these tests are reviewed. WAP reviews applicants rated as 'marginal' or 'not yet acceptable' in psychological assessments, but not those rated as 'acceptable' or 'recommended'. Psychological assessment results often do not match final recruitment decisions. Since 2006, 38 per cent of candidates have been accepted after their psychological test results were reviewed. Since our audit WAP has begun reviewing all candidates.
- WAP invests significant resources to bring its weaker performers up to standard, by providing continuous remedial training. In our sample, the proportion of recruits achieving competency without additional training has fallen since 2007. Less than half of the recruits in the squads we reviewed since 2007 gained competency in all areas of training on their first attempt. This has an impact on the training costs and efficiency for WAP. WAP has a process for dismissing recruits but it is currently not used for recruits who do not gain competency after repeated attempts. The WAP Academy is a Registered Training Organisation and all new recruits are trained to a nationally accredited standard.
- For most recruits Academy training is adequate, but some recruits move on to probation from the Academy requiring further development of the skills, knowledge and attitudes required for probationary constables.

- The experience recruits gain on probation varies because the number and location of placements are not consistent and levels of supervision vary. Some recruits miss out on spending time in key areas they may later work in. There are often not enough experienced supervisors for all recruits so some probationers are supervised by recently appointed constables. The lack of training and guidelines for supervisors reduces the assurance about the quality and consistency of supervision and training for probationers.
- In the squads we reviewed, the percentage of probationary constables coming off probation early had grown and the average length of probation served had decreased since 2007. 'Early-off probation' (EOP) was introduced as a reward for high performers, however this has now become the norm. Although completing early enables the officers to be fully deployed, and to supervise other probationary constables, it reduces the time for them to build skills, confidence and experience. EOP has been awarded in some instances when training records indicated that constables may not have been ready. In the five squads we reviewed six probationary constables were granted EOP with serious issues on probation, including two not considered ready by their supervisors.
- Communication between the Academy and police stations about probationers is limited. Better feedback and information sharing about the performance of recruits in the Academy and during probation may increase the chance that probationary constables receive more effectively targeted on-the-job training, supervision and support.
- WAP invests a significant amount of resources into its recruits, and more than some other jurisdictions. WAP spends over \$240 000 and two years to train a general duties constable. This includes between \$80 000 and \$154 000 on training at its purpose built Academy as well as \$90 000 on probation. WAP could make better use of its existing information to ensure that this investment is effective, part of which could be to evaluate constables' post probation performance.

Recommendations

To improve the effectiveness of its recruitment WA Police should:

- consider strategies to increase its application rates in order to meet future recruitment targets
- give equal levels of review to the organisational psychologist's recommendation for all applicants being considered for training in the Academy
- review whether its 22 dimensions are still the most relevant criteria for selecting police officers and whether they should be equally balanced
- review its diversity strategies and consider initiatives that are working in other policing jurisdictions to improve its performance in this area.

To improve the effectiveness and efficiency of recruit training in the Academy WA Police should:

- review its approach to managing its weaker performers, including how it uses its removal (505A) process
- use the data and information currently collected to establish benchmarking for competency
- consider introducing additional assessments for recruits who have difficulty attaining competency in critical skills, to be confident that all recruits graduate with the expected level of competency.

To improve the effectiveness and efficiency of probationary training WA Police should:

- review its probationary placements to ensure all probationary constables are receiving an appropriate exposure to all required areas of training
- consider introducing training and guidance materials for supervisors of probationary constables so that they are better supported and equipped to perform this role and supervision is consistently applied
- review how it applies its 'early-off probation' policy to ensure the policy intention is adhered to
- implement formal information sharing between the Academy and police stations about the performance and behaviours of recruits to better tailor probationary training.

WAP should make greater use of its information to evaluate whether its current training approach and investment is effective and to identify further areas for improvement.

Response from Western Australia Police

From 2007 to 2011, the WA Police has successfully recruited and trained 2 140 police officers to meet the needs of the Western Australian community and deliver crucial capacity for the 2011 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting. We have done so through an era of historically high employee attrition and some of the most challenging labour market conditions ever seen in Western Australian.

In addition to meeting attraction and recruitment targets, WA Police Professional Development Portfolio has successfully met unprecedented challenges with in-service training in the areas of *use of force*, *investigative practices* and *driver training*. In all three areas, the Professional Development Portfolio has innovatively delivered at an international best practice through investment in its trainers and training methodologies. It is for these reasons that the WA Police Academy was awarded the *National Employer of the Year Award (Australian Training Industry Award – Government)* in 2008.

The review conducted by the Office of the Auditor General (OAG) has identified a number of recommendations that will improve the recruitment, training and development of probationary police officers. The WA Police recognise and welcome the benefits that come from rigorous external scrutiny, and we have and will continue to implement the recommendations of the Report.

Recruiting and training police officers is a complex and demanding task set against the backdrop of change driven by the national police professionalisation agenda, a challenging labour market and an ever growing list of expectations in relation to police recruit curriculum. The recommendations of the OAG audit will assist the WA Police on meeting these challenges, equally however, the findings and recommendations should not diminish the outstanding achievement of the WA Police in this area over the past five years.

Audit Focus and Scope

The objective of this audit was to assess whether the recruitment and training of new recruits in the Western Australia Police (WAP) is efficient and effective. We focused on three questions:

1. Are WAP's recruitment and selection processes effective?
2. Are new recruits adequately trained and supported?
3. Is WAP using its resources to deliver police officers into the force efficiently and effectively?

The audit focused on new sworn general duties constables. These officers have direct contact with the public and are involved in all areas of non-specialist police work. General duties constables undergo six months training in the Police Academy, followed by 12 to 18 months probation and on-the-job training. After completing recruit training and probation these constables are awarded a Diploma in Public Safety (Policing) and considered fully qualified, permanent police officers.

Our audit also included transitional officers who were police officers from other jurisdictions who completed WAP's Academy training and probation. It did not include the recruitment and training for police cadets, police auxiliary officers or specialist positions such as the dog squad, forensics or mounted police. In-service and ongoing training for frontline constables was also not included in the audit scope.

Our findings and conclusions are based on information gathered from WAP police officers and staff. In addition to document review, data analysis and conducting interviews, an extensive on-line survey was sent to all sworn officers to gather their views. 1 162 responses were received, representing a 20 per cent response rate.

The audit team also analysed information for one squad of recruits through the Academy in each year between 2007 and 2011. From these 148 recruits, a more detailed analysis was then conducted on 50 of these recruits. This involved reviewing selection documentation, personnel files, training and appraisal information and complaints and internal affairs records.

This audit was conducted in accordance with the Australian Auditing and Assurance Standards.

WAP’s process to deliver frontline officers relies heavily on choosing the right candidate because it rarely removes recruits once selected into the Academy

WAP’s recruitment and selection processes have provided the number of sworn officers needed but is unlikely to meet future targets based on current application rates

WAP recruits in order to maintain operational strength. In the past five years WAP has had between 4.2 per cent and 7.2 per cent of its sworn officer workforce leave each year. This has meant it has had to recruit an average of 290 new police officers per year in order to maintain its operational strength.

The number of additional police officers WAP is required to recruit is set by the government. In its 2009-10 State Budget, the government committed \$208.5 million for 500 additional police personnel and 200 expert civilian staff over five years (Figure 2). The 500 additional police personnel were planned to be made up of 350 sworn general duties officers and 150 police auxiliary officers. WAP is currently in the third year of delivering this program.

Number of additional police officers required per year	
2009-2010	30 additional
2010-2011	60 additional
2011-2012	60 additional
2012-2013	100 additional
2013-2014	100 additional
Total	350

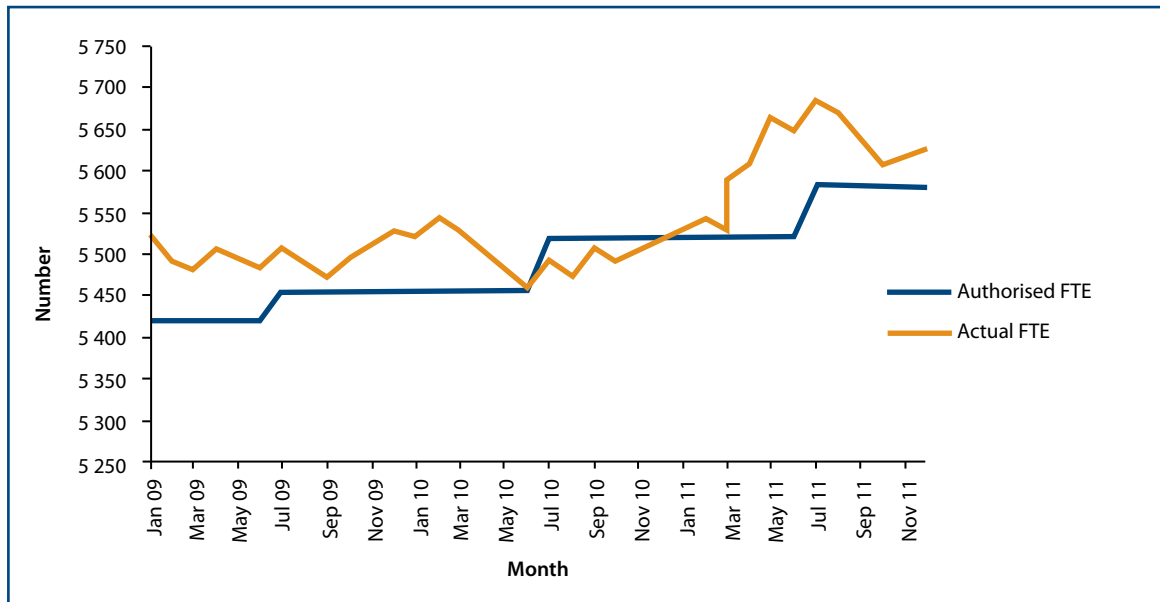
Source: OAG and WA Police

Figure 2: Number of sworn police officers required by WA Police to meet government’s 2009-10 budget commitment

In the 2009-10 financial year, WAP met both its requirement for additional police officers and those needed to cover attrition (Figure 3). WAP have advised that a need for only 30 additional officers combined with a low attrition rate meant that they had enough applications to cover the additional police numbers as well as attrition. WAP fell below its authorised strength between June and December 2010. This is because it increases its authorised full time equivalent (FTE) number at the beginning of the financial year, rather than using a gradual increase. An advertising campaign and recruitment drive enabled them to meet the required numbers prior to the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in October 2011.

Based on current application rates, WAP is unlikely to meet its target to deliver 200 additional officers over the next two years. This is because WAP is currently not receiving enough applications to fill the additional 100 positions per year as well as coping with a rising attrition rate. WAP has advised it is currently receiving approximately half the number of applications it needs per month, and therefore needs to increase application rates in order to meet its target. WAP is considering alternative recruitment options including reinstating its overseas recruitment strategy.

WAP's process to deliver frontline officers relies heavily on choosing the right candidate because it rarely removes recruits once selected into the Academy



Source: OAG and WA Police

Figure 3: The number of police officers currently employed by WA Police (actual FTE) versus the number required (authorised FTE)

WAP has not reviewed the relevance or weighting of its selection criteria for 25 years

WAP defined its 'ideal recruit' through research conducted in 1987 which resulted in the '22 dimensions of a police officer' (Appendix 2). These are broad, high level attributes that WAP believe police officers need to fulfil their role. WAP has continued to use these dimensions as the basis for its selection of suitable applicants. The environment that police work in and the issues they face are very different than those faced 25 years ago, but WAP has not reviewed the 22 dimensions to ensure they remain appropriate.

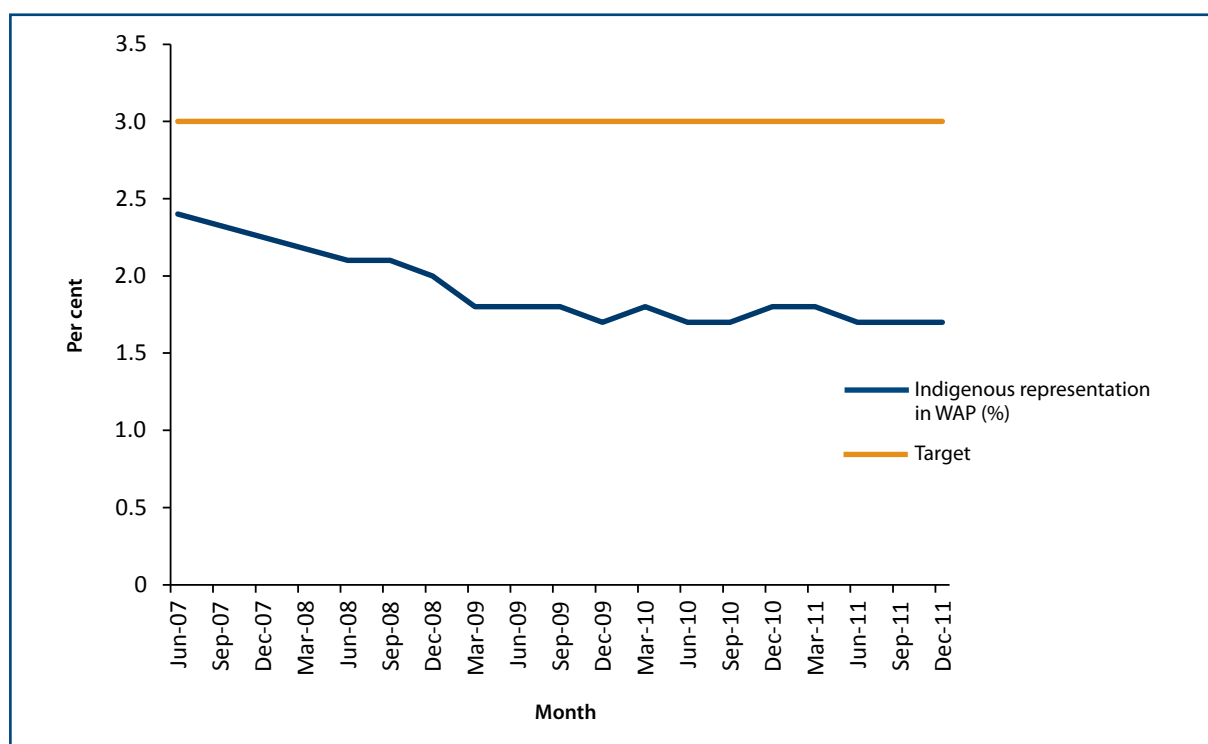
For example, the introduction of complex legislation such as the *Telecommunications (Interception) Western Australia Act 1996* and other legislation amendments means that there is an increased need to apply and understand legal studies. Advancements in technology have also changed the skills police require. In current policing constables must also be able to operate hand held PDAs and computer based equipment in their vehicles which were not required in the 1980s and 1990s. Advice from station managers also shows the changed police context, with many suggesting that there has been an increase in the amount of interactions constables have with people with mental illnesses and people from culturally diverse backgrounds. This diversity requires constables to have excellent communication skills.

WAP's selection process assesses applicants against all 22 dimensions. These are treated equally throughout the process and no dimension is weighted. However, we would have expected WAP use these 22 dimensions more flexibly to enhance its ability to recruit officers with skills required more in the current policing environment. For example, communication skills and conflict resolution may benefit from increased weighting as it is these areas that supervisors report are inadequate in many of the probationary constables who make it through.

WAP's process to deliver frontline officers relies heavily on choosing the right candidate because it rarely removes recruits once selected into the Academy

WAP is not meeting its diversity targets for recruiting women or indigenous people

WAP are not meeting the diversity targets set, particularly for indigenous people. Since 2007 WAP has been below the public sector average in relation to its representation of indigenous employees. In 2007, when WAP set its target of three per cent of officers being indigenous, 2.4 per cent of sworn officers identified themselves as indigenous. This percentage has declined to 1.7 per cent (Figure 4). Since 2007, WAP has received 6 296 applications to become a police constable. Forty-eight of these applications (0.75 per cent) were from indigenous people, and only four were successful. The remaining 30 were rejected during various stages of the selection process, and 14 withdrew their applications.



Source: OAG and WA Police

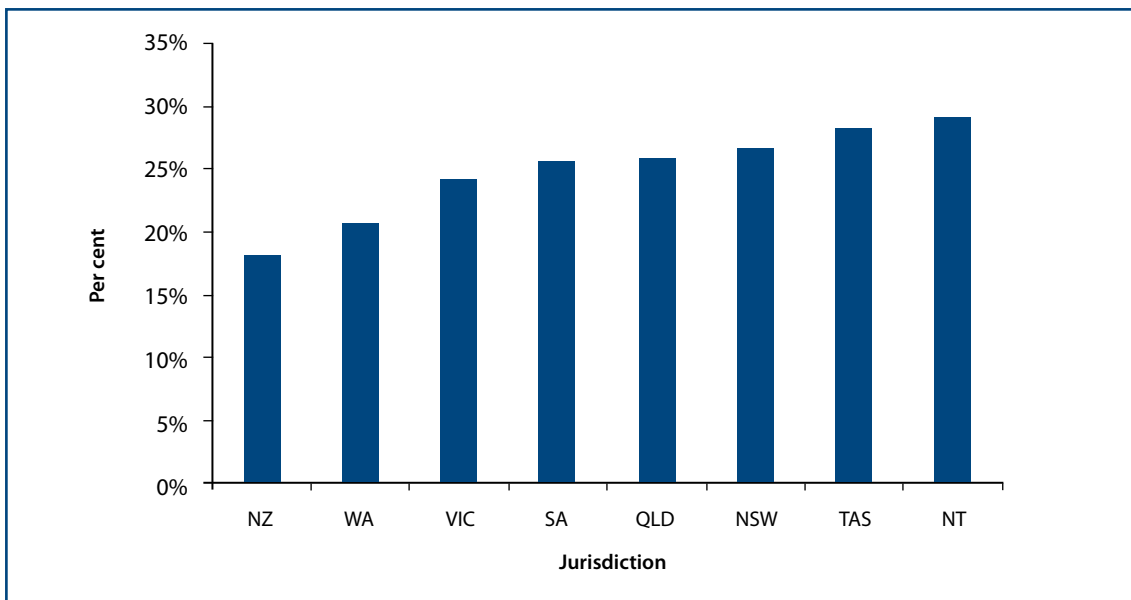
Figure 4: Percentage of indigenous officers in the WA Police against its target

Most jurisdictions find indigenous recruitment into the police force challenging, but some have better success with their strategies than others. For example, New South Wales (NSW) Police are achieving better results in recruiting indigenous police. This may be due to it having a different Aboriginal demographic, a targeted entry pathway for these applicants and additional support. Currently WAP has no specific pathways to encourage indigenous people to apply or enter its police force. WAP relies on the same 22 dimensions and entrance requirements for everyone and no changes have been made to increase the chance of recruiting for its target diversity groups. In the past it had a position specifically dedicated to indigenous staff, the Aboriginal Police Liaison Officer. With the abolishment of these positions, WAP are now developing strategies to attract more indigenous and culturally and linguistically diverse applicants.

WAP's process to deliver frontline officers relies heavily on choosing the right candidate because it rarely removes recruits once selected into the Academy

WAP's recruitment of women is growing. In the 10 years between 2001 and 2010 WAP increased representation of women from 13 per cent to almost 21 per cent. This was helped by WAP changing its physical entry requirements to remove testing that discriminated against women such as the requirement to lift a 70 kilogram body bag and jumping a high wall. Ensuring equity in the measurement of different gender's physiological capacity has allowed more women to pass through the selection process.

Despite this improvement, WAP is still some way from achieving its target of 30 per cent women officers, and has one of the lowest representations of women compared to other police forces (Figure 5). Women represent about 20 per cent of the WAP workforce, compared to approximately 27 per cent in New South Wales Police and 30 per cent in Northern Territory Police.



Source: OAG and WA Police

Figure 5: Representation of women in sworn or uniform positions in New Zealand and Australian state and territory police workforces at 30 June 2010

WAP's process to deliver frontline officers relies heavily on choosing the right candidate because it rarely removes recruits once selected into the Academy

WAP's approach to reviewing the results of its psychological assessment of recruits is inconsistent and the results often do not match final recruitment decisions

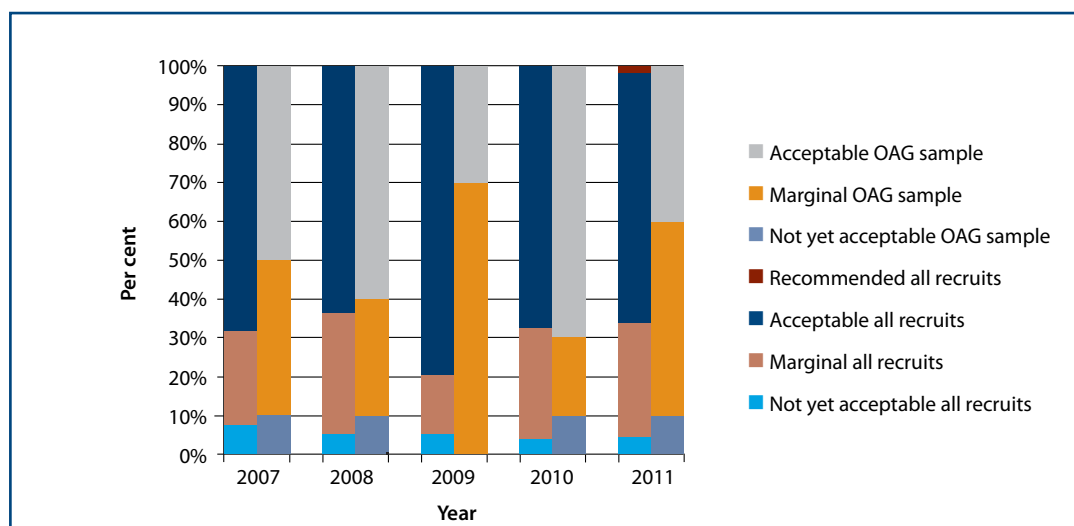
WAP's recruitment process is based on eliminating unsuitable applicants, leaving only those suitable. Identifying and removing unsuitable applicants at the recruitment stage is a critical risk management strategy as very few recruits are removed from training once accepted into the Academy. This places extra importance on ensuring all selection tools are working as well as they should be.

WAP uses psychometric assessments and interviews as one part of its selection process. Unlike other selection tools, which are definitive – an applicant either passes or fails – the results of psychological testing are indicative. The organisational psychologist (OP) makes a recommendation on an applicant's suitability. This opinion is based on the risk the applicant poses to the agency. Applicants are rated as recommended when the psychologist has no concerns and consider they pose minimal risk to WAP in terms of overall psychological functioning and their ability to cope with the demands of the Academy and policing in general. Psychologists rate an applicant as 'acceptable' when they have no significant concerns and consider them to be an acceptable risk. Psychologists rate applicants as 'marginal' when they have concerns about the applicant in terms of general functioning, which are not considered significant enough to be rated as 'not yet acceptable'. Those rated as 'not yet acceptable' are considered such a risk to the agency that the OP believes they should not be employed by WAP at this time.

The recommendation by the OP should be considered along with all other information when determining if an applicant is suitable to become a police constable. However, WAP is not using the results of its psychological testing consistently. Applicants assessed as 'marginal' or 'not yet acceptable' have their applications reviewed by the Recruitment Review Panel. It reviews all information relevant to the applicant, including the psychologist's recommendation, when making the final selection decision. However, applicants assessed as 'suitable' or 'recommended' by the OP have no further review and WAP accepts the OP's recommendation as the selection decision. Within our sample the few recruits who were dismissed from the Academy had been rated 'acceptable' by WAP psychologists. During the audit WAP started a new process to have all acceptable ratings reviewed by its Principal Psychologist. However, this review process only confirms the OP's rating, rather than reviews all applicant material to determine overall suitability.

We note that a number of applicants rated as 'not yet acceptable' or 'marginal' are selected for training at the Academy. Since 2006, 1 744 applications were reviewed made up of 985 applications rated 'not yet acceptable' and 720 rated as 'marginal'. The remaining 39 were reviewed for other reasons including integrity and behavioural concerns. Six hundred and fifty-eight (38 per cent) of these applications were placed in the recruitment pool and 32 per cent were selected for a squad in the Academy. Our sample confirms this with the five squads made up of between 30 and 70 per cent of applicants rated as 'marginal' or 'not yet acceptable' (Figure 6). We expected there would have been a closer alignment between the OP's recommendation and the Recruitment Review Panel's decision. WAP should review its assessment tools to ensure they are giving the best results possible.

WAP's process to deliver frontline officers relies heavily on choosing the right candidate because it rarely removes recruits once selected into the Academy



Source: OAG and WA Police

Figure 6: Organisational psychologist ratings for police recruits accepted into the Academy between 2007 and 2011

This graph includes data on all recruits accepted into the Academy and the OAG sample of 50 recruits.

WAP invests significant resources in its weaker performers and only one recruit in the last five years has been dismissed solely on the basis of poor performance in training

WAP has a process for removing unsuitable recruits but rarely uses it

WAP has a process to remove candidates whilst in the Academy or on probation. In the last five years WAP has only removed one recruit based on poor performance. This was in 2008. The removal process (known as '505A') has mainly been used to remove recruits on the grounds of integrity. This may include where recruits or probationary constables have had criminal charges laid against them and other integrity issues arise. These are rare. In the past five years, only 12 recruits or probationary constables were removed. Six of these were served with a '505A' notice, and the other six chose to resign after a '505A' notice was discussed with them.

There is significant variation in the amount of training that recruits need to achieve competency. While most progress well, some struggle. Rather than remove those poorer performers, WAP invests as much time and money in them as needed to achieve competency, referred to as 'overlearning'. This can be expensive and obscure unsuitability which may be a problem once a recruit leaves the Academy. We identified examples in our sample where recruits struggled to achieve competency in key areas which subsequently led to difficulties during and after probation.

While the competency based approach to Academy training implies and allows recruits multiple attempts to demonstrate competency, some recruits require significant 'overlearning' to demonstrate basic skills and WAP should consider whether ensuring all of these recruits 'get through' the Academy offers the most efficient and effective approach. WAP agreed that there may be benefits in reviewing its application of the '505A' process.

WAP's process to deliver frontline officers relies heavily on choosing the right candidate because it rarely removes recruits once selected into the Academy

WAP has not established a benchmark for the number of attempts a recruit should take to gain competency in critical skills

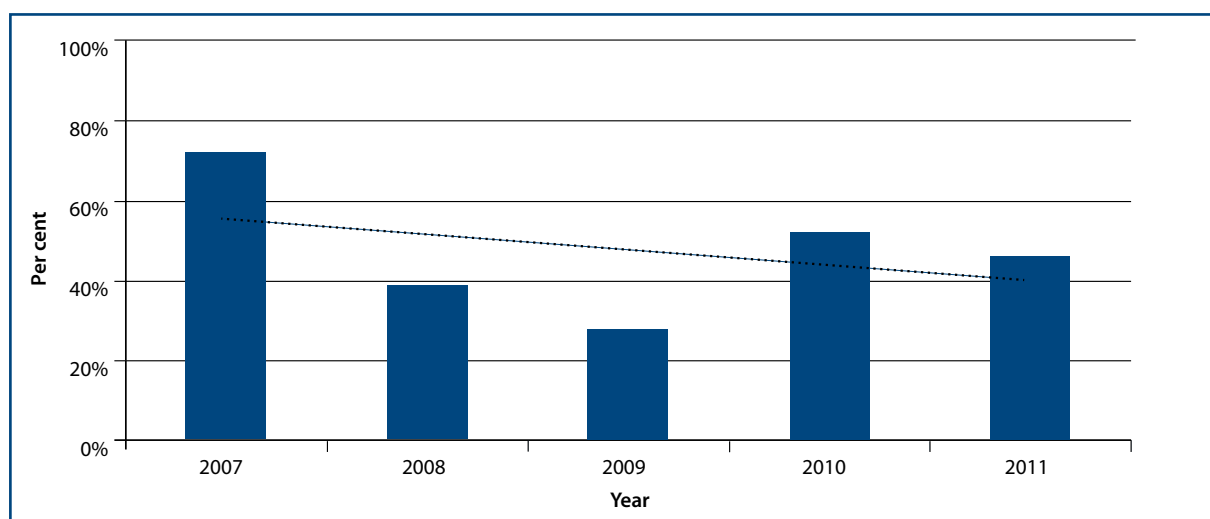
WAP has not established 'norms' for how many attempts a recruit should take to gain competency in each area of training. This makes it difficult for WAP to check if a recruit's performance is below average, to assess if continued training for some recruits is cost effective, or to evaluate the effectiveness of its training.

The Academy is a competency based learning environment. This means that recruits are allowed to keep trying, for months at a time if necessary, to gain competency. Recruits are given three opportunities (three tries) to be assessed as competent during each 'attempt'. If they fail all three they are then given remedial training and allowed to re-attempt the next day.

The 148 files we reviewed showed that for three years out of five, less than half of each squad gained competency on the first attempt (within three tries). On average, over the five year period, 47 per cent of officers we reviewed gained competency in all areas of training on their first attempt (Figure 7).

Twenty-one of the recruits (14 per cent) we reviewed took three or more attempts (nine tries) to gain competency in critical areas such as weapons and physical fitness, including empty hand training. This included one recruit who took 13 attempts (39 tries) in weapons (on the firing range) and two recruits who took nine attempts in their fitness assessments.

Most faculty heads indicated to us that one attempt should be sufficient for most recruits, and for the recruits in our sample the average number of attempts was two (four to five tries) for different units. Despite having the information that shows that most recruits require relatively few attempts at competency and so being able to identify obvious outliers, WAP has not established benchmarks beyond which it may reconsider continued training for recruits who are clearly struggling to demonstrate the competencies they need.



Source: OAG

Figure 7: OAG analysis showing percentage of recruits we reviewed who gained competency in all areas of training on their first attempts

In 2007 the percentage was the highest, at 72 per cent. The lowest percentage was in 2009, with 28 per cent.

WAP's process to deliver frontline officers relies heavily on choosing the right candidate because it rarely removes recruits once selected into the Academy

Recruits are not required to demonstrate continued competency regardless of how poorly they perform in training

Some recruits who struggle to demonstrate competency in one or more skills over the duration of their Academy training need only achieve one successful attempt to be considered competent. They are not required to demonstrate sustained competency before graduating from the Academy. In the absence of using the 505A process to remove poorer performers, we expect WAP would require that recruits who take many attempts to achieve competency are required to demonstrate this competency on more than one occasion. This is not the case.

The Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF) competency requirements to gain a Diploma in Public Safety (Policing) span the whole length of the traineeship which is two years. There is no re-testing to assess sustained competency in any areas of training while in the Academy or on probation. Some other police jurisdictions are seeking to introduce mandatory fitness testing as part of the probation process, but WAP do not require its police to maintain specific fitness levels.

WAP has advised that it is confident that the training it provides in weapons is robust and its recruits are highly qualified. In the Operational Safety and Tactical Training Unit (weapons) there is a requirement for all police officers to undertake annual requalifying assessments on the firing range and interactive scenarios.

Inconsistencies in what probation covers, how long it lasts and how it is supervised means not all probationers get all the support, training and experience they need

Probation is the on-the-job component of recruit training and is a key part of the training required for the Diploma qualification. It is delivered in an operational environment at police stations. Probation is the third control in the recruitment and training process that WAP have available to ensure only those suitable for the job make it through to the frontline. This on-the-job training should be consistent in coverage and include close and consistent supervision, training and mentoring in order to reduce the risk of getting inadequately trained or unsuitable recruits making it through to being operational. This is often not the case due to time and resource constraints. This can lead to inconsistency in the experience recruits get on probation and the extent and quality of the supervision they receive. WAP seek to achieve consistent coverage of activities and experiences through the use of a probationary constable training record book which is used to demonstrate that all the activities have been experienced. However, the level of oversight around the completion of these activities also varies.

The Police Academy is a Registered Training Organisation and all new recruits are trained to a nationally accredited standard

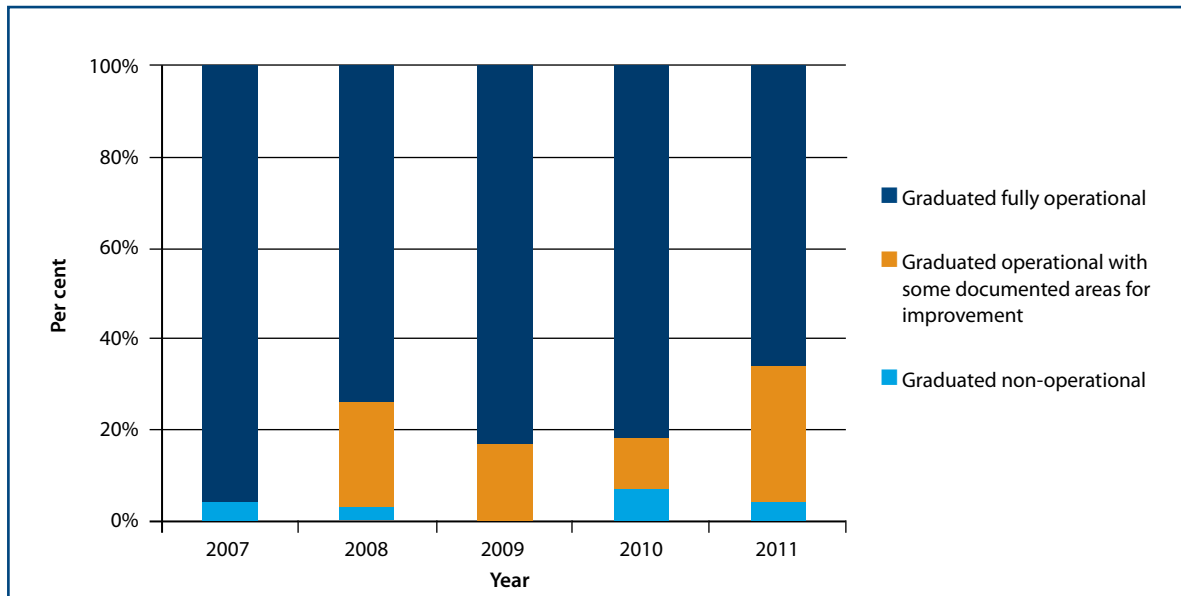
The Police Academy is a Registered Training Organisation (RTO) and currently facilitates training for the Diploma of Public Safety (Policing). All new recruits through the Academy receive this nationally recognised qualification after completing their probation. The Diploma is considered by the Australian and New Zealand Policing Advisory Agency (ANZPAA) to be the benchmark standard for policing in Australia. Some jurisdictions require other qualifications. For example, NSW Police require its police officers to have an Associate Degree, which is a university qualification.

Changes to the Diploma requirements are agreed on a national level, but the way the training is delivered is up to each jurisdiction. In addition to the Diploma competencies, WAP recruits are also trained in aspects of policing that are unique to WA. This includes WA legislation, policies and procedures.

The number of recruits graduating from the Academy without some of the skills, knowledge or attitudes needed as probationary constables has grown over the last five years

Recruits can graduate from the Academy as 'non-operational' meaning they have been assessed as 'not yet competent' in some area of their training. This may be in weapon skills and they are therefore unable to carry all 'use of force' equipment. Approximately four per cent of recruits graduated 'non-operational' in 2011. All other recruits graduate as operational and are deemed fully competent to perform all baseline duties of a police officer. However, our review of training records for a sample of 148 recruits over five years showed that many graduating as 'operational' still have gaps in their competency and areas for development which can affect their capacity to perform all the baseline duties of a police officer. Our sample also showed that the proportion of recruits graduating from the Academy as 'operational' but with areas for development is increasing (Figure 8).

Inconsistencies in what probation covers, how long it lasts and how it is supervised means not all probationers get all the support, training and experience they need



Source: OAG

Figure 8: Police Academy graduating status. OAG analysis showing proportion of recruits graduating operational and non-operational. This is based on a review of 148 recruits

The orange section shows those recruits with documented areas for improvement but deemed competent in weapons and use of force.

We reviewed the training records of one squad from each year since 2007, a total of 148 recruits. Of these, seven did not complete Academy training, five graduated non-operational and 136 graduated operational. For those 136 recruits we identified areas where the recruits had gaps in their skills or competencies or where training officers had documented concerns about the recruit's capacity to perform as a police officer on the 'running sheets'. In reviewing the sample of recruits we specifically identified those who did not have the P2 driving competency (allowing them to drive 20km above the speed limit with lights and sirens). We identified the P2 driving competency as a key area because although recruits can graduate as 'operational' from the Academy without it, the police stations managers we interviewed said that P2 is an essential skill and should be required of all officers. Not having it can limit a probationer's experience.

In 2011, 30 per cent of recruits (eight of 27) graduating as operational from the Academy had gaps or concerns. This was the highest proportion over the five year period and up from none in 2007. In 2007 no issues or gaps were recorded on the sample squad's running sheets. In 2008 the number rose to 23 per cent, dropped in 2009 and 2010 and then increased again in 2011.

Of those we reviewed, 12 recruits (eight per cent) did not hold a P2 licence on graduation from the Academy. Some of these were unable to obtain their P2 licence as they had not yet completed the training, due to either injury or being on P plates (probationary driver), while others completed the training but were deemed not yet competent. It can be difficult for a probationary constable to get remedial training once on probation and three of those graduating without P2 took seven months or more to gain their P2 competency.

Managers at the police stations we visited had experienced cases where new recruits did not have some of the baseline skills, knowledge and attitudes they would have expected. Forty per cent (380 people) of supervisors in our survey did not believe that the training at the Academy provides probationary constables with the

Inconsistencies in what probation covers, how long it lasts and how it is supervised means not all probationers get all the support, training and experience they need

skills and competencies they need. Supervisors consider probationers need additional development prior to graduating from the Academy in written communication, oral fact finding, oral communication and attention to detail. Fifty-two per cent of probationary constables who responded to our survey said they felt capable and confident to perform most aspects of police work during probation, but 32 per cent felt confident in only a few aspects.

Eleven per cent of the recruits we reviewed graduated from the Academy with areas in need of improvement, such as a lack of adherence to authority, low personal impact and not achieving critical skills or competency in areas. This included at least nine who had difficulty performing skills under pressure or had shown inappropriate attitude and behaviour. Another recruit had serious psychological issues that had been referred for assessment by WAP's Clinical Psychologist, Health and Welfare, and two recruits had multiple serious ongoing issues prior to graduation. Since 2007, WAP has had five recruits referred to Health and Welfare in relation to psychological issues.

Issues identified at the Academy can impact performance on probation. At least three constables in our sample had serious difficulty performing skills under pressure or inappropriate attitude and behaviour. Two had multiple issues during probation and a further three were referred for assessment by WAP's Clinical Psychologist, Health and Welfare. Two recruits with concerns raised during their Academy training continued to have the same issues during their probation.

The number and location of placements during probation varies so some probationary constables miss out on valuable training experiences

The number of placements probationary constables in our sample received varied between one and six. There is no mandatory requirement that all probationary constables should have a consistent number and type of placements on probation. This means probationers may not be receiving consistent training and experience, and some may not receive the appropriate breadth of on-the-job training and get less exposure to a variety of police work than others.

Probation involves recruits being rotated through placements at metropolitan police stations and the Traffic Enforcement Group (TEG). TEG placements allow probationary constables an opportunity to gain experience in 'booze bus' and general traffic work as well as gain further qualifications in hand held radars. Placements at the various police stations provide probationers with hands-on experience in different types of frontline police work and a variety of station management styles, policies and procedures.

Some probationary constables do not receive any TEG training. It is not mandatory but managers at TEG advised us that all officers would benefit from at least three months at TEG where they are provided with specific traffic training. Between 25 per cent and 60 per cent of the recruits in the squads we reviewed did not receive a TEG placement.

Responses from recruits to our survey also highlighted the variations in probation placements and experiences:

- *"Some recruits get easy going locations to work in while others have harder environments, so how do you performance manage them objectively?"*
- *"Going to TEG/booze bus straight from the Academy some probationers can forget important knowledge learned at the Academy that they need for general duties police work at police stations."*
- *"My first station placement the sergeants were brilliant!! However, since moving to my new station I have received little assistance from any sergeants etc."*

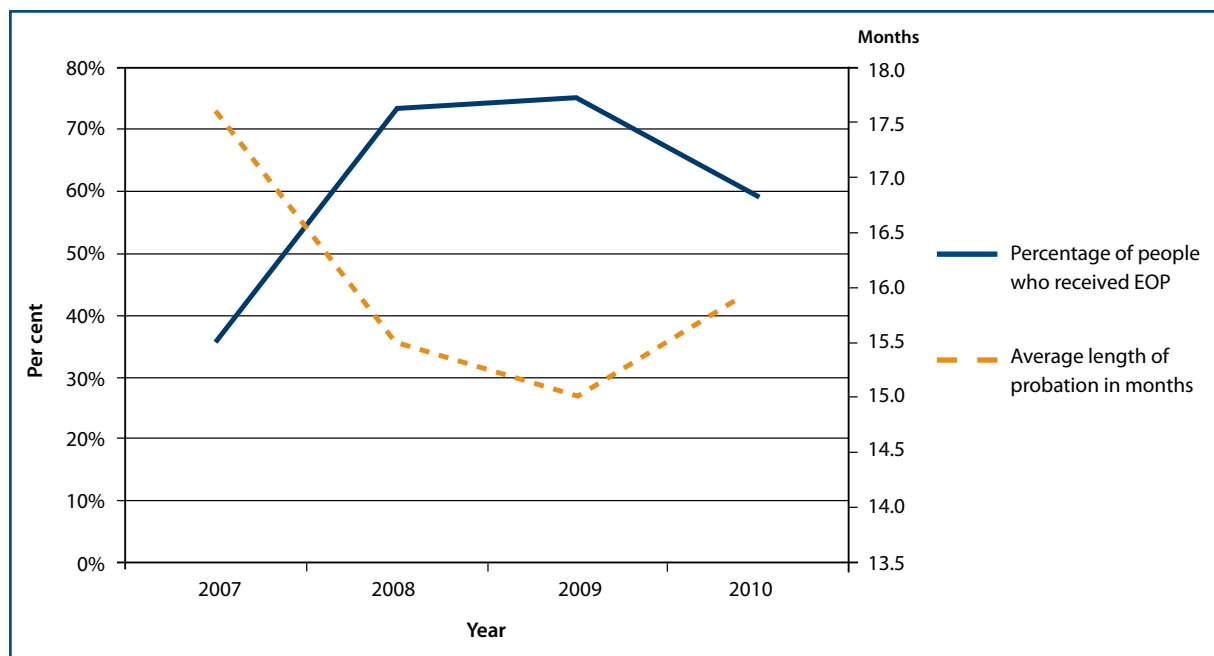
Inconsistencies in what probation covers, how long it lasts and how it is supervised means not all probationers get all the support, training and experience they need

Probation is intended to last 18 months but more probationary constables are now coming off probation early and some are not ready to do so

Probation is a key component of police training. It is intended to last 18 months allowing constables to gain real job experience while having an experienced officer for support and guidance. It can also minimise the risk that an inexperienced officer is required to manage a situation, by themselves, that they are not equipped or ready for.

In 2008, WAP introduced the 'Early-off probation' (EOP) policy providing discretion to shorten this period by up to six months. The rationale for this policy was to allow outstanding, competent and confident probationers an opportunity to complete probation early. It also catered for probationary constables, who were placed in a busier station being exposed to a broader range and larger volume of issues. However since the introduction of the EOP policy in 2008, over 60 per cent of probationary constables have been granted EOP indicating that it has become the norm, not the exception.

In our sample most officers completed the full 18 months of probation in 2007, but the number of recruits gaining EOP has risen to around 62 per cent since 2008. Our sample showed that the average length of probation has also decreased. In 2007 the average length was just over 17.5 months, but this had decreased to 16 months by 2010 (Figure 9). This means that more constables are spending less time gaining supervised experience and on-the-job training.



Source: OAG and WA Police

Figure 9: Percentage of probationary constables gaining EOP and average length of probation (in months) in OAG sample between 2007 and 2010

Inconsistencies in what probation covers, how long it lasts and how it is supervised means not all probationers get all the support, training and experience they need

Of the supervisors who responded to our survey 60 per cent (554 people) said that EOP granted was not justified by probationers' performance on the job. Many expressed concerns over how the EOP policy was being applied:

- *"Some are justified but others have many areas that need to be developed."*
- *"The problem is that many probationers are not put on front line positions fast enough and therefore don't have the skills required to come off probation."*
- *"Constables are coming off probation too early and this means they are forced into supervisors roles when clearly not capable."*

Probationers also expressed concern about the EOP policy. Close to 25 per cent of probationary constables in our survey did not feel confident to perform the role of constable at the end of their probationary period and expressed concern at potentially finishing probation early:

- *"Still on a learning curve, have a couple of months left on probation and even though finished book still feel very inexperienced."*
- *"I am in no rush to come off probation early, I feel I need as much practical experience as possible before being responsible for anyone else, let alone myself."*
- *"...my greatest concern is being graduated to full constable and sent out on patrol with another probationer whose safety might be threatened by my own lack of experience...."*

A few probationary constables we interviewed did not want to come off probation early as they felt they were still not ready, particularly to provide direct supervision to new probationers. Constables, once off probation, are paired with a probationary constable on their shift and provide direct supervision. This means a constable can get EOP and be supervising the next day.

We also found a small number (six) of instances where EOP had been granted despite it not being supported on their running sheet because of documented psychological, behavioural and attitude issues. These included an officer who had been issued a management action plan for an integrity issue, an officer with multiple serious issues including competency and psychological issues referred to the Clinical Psychologist, and an officer charged with a 0.05 drink drive offence off duty.

There are incentives for both WAP and probationary constables to complete probation early. The benefit to police stations is that they have more 'supervisors' for probationary officers. At some stations a probationer may come off probation one day and be responsible for 'direct supervision' of a new probationer the next. This can create an incentive for station managers to sign off books and appraisals as quickly as possible. There is also an incentive for probationers to request EOP as the completion of probation is linked to permanency and a pay rise.

Inconsistencies in what probation covers, how long it lasts and how it is supervised means not all probationers get all the support, training and experience they need

However, the EOP policy was introduced to progress and recognise exceptional recruits, not to provide a means to address local workforce issues. The benefits provided by EOP should be weighed up against the potential impact for police and service delivery to the community when probationers are granted EOP before they have received adequate on-the-job training. This is reflected in concerns expressed by survey respondents:

- *"When they get off early they may then be the 'senior' patrolling in the van without the experience they need, this is not a fair deal for them either."*
- *"Most probationary constables are yet to 'find their feet' at 12 months in and they are still trying to cope with the job and still need supervision."*
- *"A constable granted EOP is then available to take out a probationer themselves, this happens too often and is a high risk work practice."*
- *"At 12 months they still do not have the experience to communicate with people in stressful situations."*
- *"Although not technically probationers, EOPs are still learning the role of a constable and this can cause issues with the quality of policing outcomes."*

The extent and quality of supervision of probationers is affected by a shortage of experienced supervisors and a lack of formal training or guidelines about supervising probationary constables

Effective supervision from experienced officers during probation is a key element in making sure recruits are consistently well trained and to address areas where recruits need to improve after leaving the Academy. The approach to, and quality of supervision, also needs to be consistent for all probationary constables. However, there is a shortage of experienced supervisors, meaning WAP often operates outside the optimal ratio of one experienced supervisor for every five recruits. For example, at the time of our audit 50 per cent of the officers at one large metropolitan police station were probationary constables. WAP had advised that this is due to it having extra probationary constables due to CHOGM. To overcome this limitation in supervisor numbers, inexperienced officers in some areas are instructed to contact their station when they are on patrol and are unsure how to deal with a situation. In some instances, where a situation escalates quickly, there may not be time to do this.

The comments from probationary constables in responding to our survey reflected the shortage of experienced supervisors:

- *"Too many probation staff so sergeants have not got time to help."*
- *"They don't listen you are basically just a number."*
- *"A lack of senior staff to mentor me so you have to literally work it out for yourself."*
- *"I have been routinely rostered on duty with a single other probationer and advised to contact the duty sergeant by phone if there are any issues."*

Inconsistencies in what probation covers, how long it lasts and how it is supervised means not all probationers get all the support, training and experience they need

Supervisors receive no specific training on how to supervise and support probationary constables. WAP provides a 45 minute session on the principles of human resource management for probationers during its in-service training for promoted officers, but the officers we spoke to said this did not address supervision of probationary constables in sufficient depth. We also expected that WAP would provide formal guidelines about training, assessing and supporting probationary constables, but this is not the case. WAP currently relies on police station staff, and a four person team, the Probationary and Cadet Development Unit (PCDU), based at the Academy to give advice. This leads to a significant risk that probationary constables are not receiving a consistent high standard of supervision.

The PCDU provides a link between the Academy and probationers by visiting police stations to review probationers' progress of tasks completed in their training record books, as well as appraisals. The PCDU is the only conduit between stations and the Academy. To ensure that the probation period is optimised, we would expect the PCDU to have a more active role in providing assistance to the Officers in Charge of police stations (OICs) as well as the probationers. However, only 41 per cent of probationary constables surveyed felt supported by the Academy once they started probation. The role of the mobile unit appears to be limited to ensuring that training record books are completed. The size of the unit and spread of probationary constables may also be limiting its ability to provide more support.

Other jurisdictions, including NSW and the United Kingdom have dedicated Field Training Officers. Their role is to provide continuous on-the-job supervision and support to probationers. These positions are provided over and above normal police strength to ensure Field Training Officers are able to provide supervision, rather than become another officer conducting daily police work. Currently WA Police do not have these officers.

Communication between the Academy and police stations about recruit performance needs to be improved to ensure probationary constables get appropriate training

There is no formal feedback process from the Academy to police stations about how probationary constables have performed during their six month Academy training. As a result, OICs and supervisors are not advised of key areas where probationary constables need extra support or key areas of training they have struggled with. Unless OICs approach the PCDU once they have identified issues with a probationary constable's performance no information is provided. Providing upfront information about probationary constables' strengths, weaknesses and any serious concerns would help supervisors and OICs to provide more tailored and focused on-the-job training and supervision.

WAP provides opportunities for recruits in the Academy to experience police work during placements at police stations and by deploying them during major events or incidents where extra resources are needed. Large groups of recruits can go out with a supervisor and provide extra resources for things like missing persons searches. However, in some instances these training opportunities could be improved through better communication between Academy staff and police station OICs. For example, while some recruits we interviewed said that these placements were worthwhile and provided valuable insight into police work, others said they had not been given meaningful tasks as the police stations were not prepared when they arrived.

Inconsistencies in what probation covers, how long it lasts and how it is supervised means not all probationers get all the support, training and experience they need

WAP documents issues relating to performance and behaviour of recruits and probationary constables however the process could be improved

'Running sheets' are a useful tool to identify areas of concern or improvement and track a recruit's progress. However, we found that they are not updated in a systematic way so not all concerns are captured for all recruits and probationers. Running sheets are a confidential document used during Academy training to document training progress, any adverse issues or behaviours and the recruit's status at three stages as assessed by the Operational Evaluation Review Panel (OERP). A running sheet is also used during the probation period to document issues such as when a recruit is not performing well or has personal issues to address. The running sheets we reviewed also lacked consistency in how competency and issues impacting performance were assessed and managed at the Academy and on the job. This makes it difficult to track a recruit's improvement, and limits the ability for WAP to use this information to identify trends in training as a way of proactively improving training content and delivery.

We found inconsistencies in the way the running sheets are completed. While some officers provided sufficient details for a third party to understand the key issues, actions required and resolution, most adopted the approach of "call Snr Sergeant xxx for further details". This makes it difficult for other police officers or staff to gain a complete picture of a probationer's performance, and means the use of the running sheet is less effective than it should be.

The lack of specific detail could not be explained by a requirement to keep information confidential as running sheets are confidential documents only accessible to a limited number of staff. Academy recruit running sheets are updated and accessed only by senior Academy staff as well as the PCDU. The probationary running sheets are updated and accessed by station supervisors and the PCDU.

WAP invests significant resources into its recruits but could make better use of its information to ensure its investment is effective and to identify opportunities to improve

WAP spends over \$240 000 and takes two years to train a police officer; some states use other models and spend less or take less time

In 2009-10 WAP trained 146 recruits at an average cost of \$154 000 per recruit. In 2010-11, 360 recruits were trained, costing \$80 500 per recruit on average. This cost includes the police officer's salary during the Academy training and other fixed costs incurred. Adding to this figure, the average salary for a probationary constable during their 18 months' probation (\$90 000), it costs WAP over \$240 000 to deliver a trained general duties constable to the frontline. This excludes the cost of supervision and the PCDC costs.

Each state takes a different approach to recruiting and training police officers. For example, NSW Police uses a university model (Attachment 4). It requires potential recruits to invest in their own tertiary studies in policing before being accepted into its Academy. If an applicant fails a unit or their fitness assessments, they do not progress through to the Academy. The Victoria Police focus is on-the-job training with linked learning back to studies in the Academy (Attachment 5). Under this approach recruits spend more time in the field, and less time in the Academy.

NSW Police spend around two-thirds less than WA to train their recruits with a similar period in the Academy but more time learning on the job. The lower cost in part reflects that their recruits are not sworn in or paid until eight months into their training. While the NSW model may not be appropriate for WA, and we are unable to confirm the accuracy of the costing information provided by NSW, this level of difference in cost indicates that WAP may wish to look at other jurisdiction's approaches to see if they may offer efficiencies.

WAP has a purpose built training facility that recruits would like to use more

The WAP Academy was built in 2002 at a cost of approximately \$46 million. It is a purpose built facility used for recruit training as well as 'in-service' training. One of the main features of the Academy is a full scale scenario village. Currently, recruits spend up to four days during the six months Academy training in this facility. However, close to 50 per cent of survey respondents indicated they would benefit from more time training in the scenario village. This was also confirmed by the recruits we interviewed. The need for this was also highlighted by supervisor survey respondents who indicated that recruits would benefit from more realistic training about real life policing 'on the beat'.

Recruits advised us that they are not always fully occupied on training days at the Academy. These same recruits also commented that areas of the curriculum that they had difficulty with were condensed down with little time to learn. Feedback from police stations suggest it is not easy to get recruits back into the Academy for training they have missed or failed. This can be because operational requirements do not allow them to be released for more training or because there are no places currently available for training at the Academy.

WAP has advised that it is aware that most recruits would benefit from more time in realistic training but its current curriculum requires a large proportion of theoretical desk based training.

WAP invests significant resources into its recruits but could make better use of its information to ensure its investment is effective and to identify opportunities to improve

WAP collects a lot of information on recruit's performance, competency and behaviour and could make better use of it to evaluate the effectiveness of its training

While WAP makes sure that the training delivery continues to meet the accreditation requirements of the Diploma, it does not use the information to identify opportunities to improve its training either through shifting the focus of its training or improving its efficiency. WAP has advised that since our audit it has established a Training Management Review Group whose role is to identify and make these improvements. In 2009, WAP completed an evaluation correlating performance results in recruitment to Academy performance. It has indicated a desire to further this study to evaluate its effectiveness, but at the time of our audit this had not commenced.

As an RTO, WA Police is regularly audited by the Training Accreditation Council (TAC) to ensure its training meets the curriculum requirements. This means when changes are made to the national Diploma qualification, WAP are required to prove its training meets these changes, or make amendments. For example, in June 2011, WAP introduced a new on-road driver training package, to ensure it continued to comply with Diploma requirements. This training allows officers to train in real life traffic situations, rather than just on a raceway.

WAP seeks feedback from recruits on its training courses. At the conclusion of each session, recruits are requested to complete a 'course critique', however giving feedback is not mandatory. A 'learner questionnaire' is also used at the end of the recruit training program and its results are provided to TAC to meet its requirements as an RTO. However, to date WAP has not systematically analysed the feedback and assessment results to identify trends and areas for improvement.

Recruits that we interviewed suggested areas for improvement in training content, structure and course length. For example, recruits indicated they would benefit from more time training in the scenario village and on police IT systems, including the in-car system, TADIS. The results of our survey showed that 49 per cent of recruits and probationary constables wanted more training in the scenario village, 28 per cent more weapons training and 40 per cent more on crime scene skills. Our audit sample on recruit performance confirmed that these are all areas where recruits needed multiple attempts to gain competency.

WAP invests significant resources into its recruits but could make better use of its information to ensure its investment is effective and to identify opportunities to improve

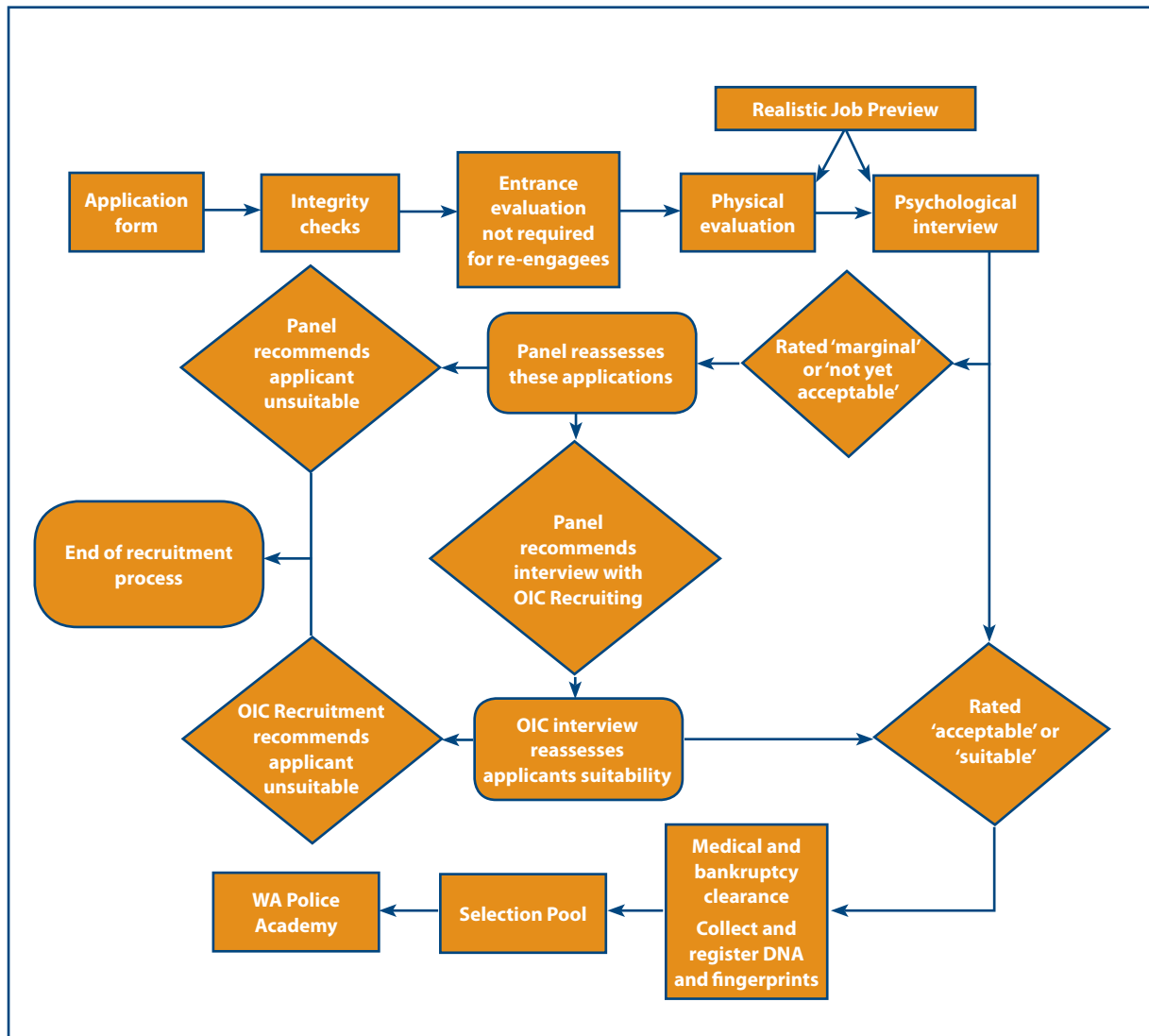
WAP recruitment and training documentation is mainly paper based; electronic documentation would improve accessibility for applicants and efficiency and usability for WAP

WAP's recruitment process for police officers is currently paper based. Moving to an electronic format would increase efficiency and allow recruitment staff easy access to all information, but would require an additional investment by WAP. WAP's recruitment for civilian positions is electronic, and the reasons for retaining a full paper based system for sworn officers is not clear.

Under its current process applicants must complete a hard copy application form and then post it back. These are then manually placed in recruitment files for assessment. The majority of this process could be delivered in an electronic form. This would allow WAP to keep up with the current technology that most of its target applicants would be expecting. WAP advises that they have explored online application options, but moving this way may prevent them from assessing some integrity issues and communication skills.

Similarly, the majority of assessment documentation for recruits and probationers is also paper based and held by different areas. This makes it difficult and time consuming to track back a police officer from when they lodged their original application through to the present and understand why decisions have been made.

Attachment 1 – WAP recruitment for police officers



WAP recruitment process for police officers

Attachment 2 – 22 dimensions of a police officer

Research has identified the following 22 job dimensions related to successful performance by a police officer:

Adherence to authority

Perseverance

Attention to detail

Person relations

Controlled demeanour

Personal impact

Endurance

Physical efficiency

Initiative

Practical intelligence

Integrity

Problem confrontation

Interpersonal sensitivity

Resilience

Job knowledge

Technical proficiency

Observation

Tolerance of stress

Oral communication

Vigilance

Source: WA Police

Attachment 3 – OAG’s summary of Western Australia Police recruitment and training processes

Entrance requirements

Applicants must:

- be 18 years of age and an Australian Citizen, permanent resident or New Zealand Citizen
- hold a manual WA drivers licence – probationary plates acceptable
- have no more than six demerit points – applicants are still eligible if they have previously had a loss of licence due to fines suspension
- be physically fit and medically cleared, and meet specific distance vision requirements
- declare criminal and traffic convictions. The severity and amount of convictions will be taken into consideration during the application process.

Application process

The application process is outlined in Attachment 1. The steps involved are:

1. Application Form – applicants complete the form in hard copy and return it to WAP
2. Integrity Checks – this includes checking associations and past criminal history
3. Police Entrance Evaluation – designed to test an applicant’s academic ability. Based on a year 10 comprehension
4. Police Physical Evaluation – applicants are put through a series of physical tests. This includes the beep test, push pull test, obstacle course and grip strength test. These are designed to detect any physical weaknesses that exist that may affect an applicant’s ability to pass the six months Academy training, or may pose an injury risk once on police duties
5. Psychological Evaluation – this includes a one-on-one interview with an organisational psychologist as well as written psychological testing. Following the psychological interview the psychologist makes a recommendation on the applicant’s suitability.
6. Realistic Job Preview – compulsory for all metropolitan applicants. This provides WAP applicants an opportunity to ask questions about Academy training and police work in general.
7. Recruitment Panel meets to reassess applicants rated marginal or acceptable by the organisational psychologist. The recruitment panel at this stage can decide to accept one of these applicants into the Academy pool, seek further information from the applicant, refer the application to the Inspector Recruitment for a further interview or uphold the original rating. A medical clearance is obtained for the applicant.
8. Bankruptcy clearance conducted to ensure applicant is currently not declared bankrupt

Acceptance into the Academy

- Successful applicants are placed in a selection pool for Academy Squad Members. Once in the select pool all applicants are considered suitable and can be removed from the pool at any time and invited to commence Academy training.
- Those in the selection pool must maintain physical fitness. If in the selection pool for more than three months they are required to re-sit the physical tests, and over 12 months, the psychological tests. However, if they fail these assessments they remain in the Academy pool.

Training

- 26 weeks training course towards a Diploma of Public Safety (Policing).
- 18 month probation on the job. Probationary constables are rotated through police stations during this time.
- Probationary constables can apply for early-off probation after 12 months.

Attachment 4 – OAG's summary of New South Wales Police recruitment and training processes

Source: OAG – information based on publically available information

Entrance requirements

Applicants must:

- be 18 years or over and an Australian citizen (or permanent resident) or a New Zealand citizen with a Special Category Visa (SCV)
- have a provisional (red) or full driver's licence (or equivalent)
- have no criminal convictions (with some exceptions)
- have no more than one traffic infringement for every two years of driving
- not have been the subject of an Apprehended Violence Order (AVO) in the past 10 years
- have a high level of English language skills
- be medically cleared and be fit (engage in regular physical activity)
- meet vision standards and pass the Ishihara colour vision test
- have a BMI of 30 or less (and a waist measurement of no more than 100cm for men and 88cm for women)
- be deemed academically eligible by Charles Sturt University.

Note: In order to be deemed academically suitable you must have successfully completed any one of the following criteria,

- ATAR > 66
- Trade Certificate (Certificate of Proficiency)
- Tertiary Studies (Min 2 subjects)
- TAFE – Min of Cert IV (aged under 21) or Min of Cert III (aged over 21).

Application process

Applicants must pass through three processes. These are the academic entrance requirements, the professional suitability application and the physical fitness and psychometric assessment.

- Academic entrance requirements – Police recruits may complete an Associate Degree in Policing Practice. This is conducted by Charles Sturt University, on behalf of NSW Police. There are three intakes into this qualification each year being January, May and September. In order to commence the Associate Degree, potential police recruits must meet all of the academic requirements of this university course.
- An alternate pathway for entry into policing is through the Bachelor of Justice Studies (Policing) at Charles Sturt University. The University of Western Sydney also offer a graduate pathway through the Bachelor of Policing Degree, Both of these modes of studies takes a total of three years to complete.
- Professional suitability test – These tests assess an applicant's behaviour and background to determine if they have the qualities NSW Police require of its police service. There are two stages to these tests. The first includes checking the applicant has the appropriate behavioural background (based upon assessment of criminal, traffic, employment and any evidence of inappropriate associations). It is also required of the applicant to hold a current first aid certificate, have the ability to swim 100 meters unaided and type 25wpm with a 98 per cent accuracy. The second stage of these tests are for medical suitability and test that the applicant has the required level of health and fitness to perform the requirements of operational policing duties, and has commenced their Hepatitis B immunisation through the NSW Police external provider Recovre.
- Physical fitness and psychometric assessment – To assess an applicant's ability to meet the physical requirements of the role as well as an assessment of the risk they present to the agency. The NSW Police website contains Physical Testing Requirements and Standards.

Acceptance into the Academy

- Once an applicant has satisfactorily passed through all of the professional suitability tests, their application will be considered on a competitive basis for offer into the next available Associate degree intake. Both academic and professional suitability rankings are considered when identifying potentially suitable applicants for each intake. The offer to study is generated by Charles Sturt University on a needs basis.
- Applicants are not offered employment with NSW Police until they have successfully completed two units of the Associate Degree in Policing Practice. Prior to an employment offer by NSW Police students must also participate in a two week (80 hours) field placement at a police station, and must also maintain their professional suitability requirements.
- Until employed by NSW Police students do not receive a paid salary, and are required to contribute towards their university qualification.
- Scholarships may be available to some successful applicants and vary in value to \$12 000

Training

- In addition to the above, NSW recruits are then required to undertake 12 months distance learning towards their Degree before being 'confirmed as a Constable of Police. This can only occur if all physical and academic requirements are met.
- Once confirmed as a constable the officer remains at the same police station for another two years before being eligible for further employment opportunities with the Police Force.

Qualification

- Associate Degree in Policing Practice
- Bachelor of Policing Studies – UWS
- Bachelor of Justice Studies – CSU

Attachment 5 – OAG’s summary of Victorian Police recruitment and training processes

Source: OAG – information based on publically available information

Entrance requirements

Applicants must:

- Be 18 years of age and an Australian Citizen, permanent resident or New Zealand Citizen
- Over 21 years of age – no minimum education requirement
- 18 to 21 years of age – minimum of Year 12 VCE (secondary education)
- Be physically fit and medically cleared, and meet specific distance vision requirements
- Declare criminal and traffic convictions. The severity and amount of convictions will be taken into consideration during the application process.
- Be available for posting anywhere in the State.

Application process

- Online Suitability and Eligibility Test (available on their website)
- Police entrance exam
- Application form
- Finger prints taken
- Background checks
- Medical, fitness and psychological assessment
- Selection Panel Interview

Acceptance into the Academy

- Successful applicants are placed in a merit selection pool, which means the most suitable in the pool are placed before those who are less suitable. Some of those who are the least suitable may remain in the selection pool for some time until the numbers of additional police needed is high.
- Those in the merit selection pool for more than 12 months may need to re-sit their first aid qualification and fitness must be maintained as this will be reassessed on entry to the police Academy.

Training

Academy training course - 33 weeks (including three months consolidated on the job training). Includes:

- Fundamentals of policing
- Role of police in society
- Ethics
- Importance of uniform presence
- Safety
- Police administration /IT applications
- Station procedures
- Report taking

Recruits are paid a salary on commencement in the Academy and the amount paid increases after week 13.

On being sworn in as a constable, completion of week 12, members are subject to two years probation.

Qualification

Diploma of Public Safety (Policing)

Auditor General's Reports

REPORT NUMBER	2012 REPORTS	DATE TABLED
7	Pharmaceuticals: Purchase and Management of Pharmaceuticals in Public Hospitals	13 June 2012
6	Victim Support Service: Providing assistance to victims of crime	16 May 2012
5	Audit Results Report – Annual Assurance Audits completed since 31 October 2011 including universities and state training providers and Across Government Benchmarking Audits: Accuracy of Leave Records; Act of Grace and Like Payments; and Supplier Master Files	16 May 2012
4	Supporting Aboriginal Students in Training	2 May 2012
3	Beyond Compliance: Reporting and managing KPIs in the public sector	19 April 2012
2	Opinion on Ministerial decisions not to provide information to Parliament on the amount of funding Tourism WA provided for some events	22 February 2012
1	Working Together: Management of Partnerships with Volunteers	22 February 2012

The above reports can be accessed on the Office of the Auditor General's website at www.audit.wa.gov.au.

On request these reports may be made available in an alternative format for those with visual impairment.

Office of the Auditor General Western Australia

**7th Floor Albert Facey House
469 Wellington Street, Perth**

**Mail to:
Perth BC, PO Box 8489
PERTH WA 6849**

T: 08 6557 7500

F: 08 6557 7600

E: info@audit.wa.gov.au

W: www.audit.wa.gov.au