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## AUDITOR GENERAL FINDS GAPS IN THE TRAINING AND SUPPORT FOR JUSTICES OF THE PEACE

Auditor General Colin Murphy has raised concern that Justices of the Peace (JPs) may not be receiving adequate training and support to carry out their duties.

Mr Murphy said the Department of the Attorney General (DotAG) does not know if JPs need more training because it does not collect and assess information about the duties they perform in the community.

“This is concerning because JPs have authority to make important decisions such as issuing search warrants and authorising bail – and mistakes can have a big impact on individuals and the community,” he said.

Almost 3 000 JPs currently perform duties in Courts and in the community. All prospective JPs must complete and pass training on their Court and community duties before they can be appointed. However, while all JPs are offered ongoing training, only the small number of JPs that perform Court duties are actually required to complete ongoing training.

“DotAG has improved the breadth and depth of JP training as well as its accessibility in recent years. However it needs to take the next step and better target its training activities based on the duties performed by individual JPs and the potential impact if they make a mistake,” Mr Murphy said.

“The voluntary work performed by JPs can ease the burden on our justice system and can have a significant impact on the lives of those they serve.

“I encourage DotAG to act on the recommendations of my report to ensure JPs are completing an appropriate level of training and are fully supported so they can confidently carry out their duties.”

The Auditor General’s report ‘*Training and Support for Justices of the Peace*’ (Report 21 – November 2014) can be downloaded from the Office of the Auditor General website at [www.audit.wa.gov.au](http://www.audit.wa.gov.au)

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