



VICTORIA POLICE

# **Independent review into sex discrimination, harassment and predatory behaviour: challenging and driving change in culture**

**AC Luke Cornelius APM  
VEOHRC Review Response, Partnerships and Innovation  
July 2016**

# Session Outline



VICTORIA POLICE

- Introduction
- Recognising need for culture change
- Scoping the culture challenge for Victoria Police
- Review Recommendations and Action Plan
- Victoria Police Response
- Measuring success
- Role of Leaders
- The future for women in Victoria Police

# Recognising need for culture change



VICTORIA POLICE

Independent Review Commissioned by Victoria Police in 2014.

Key drivers for the review were:

- History of repeated instances of harassment and predatory behaviour by police on colleagues and community members,
- Confidence in Victoria Police in leading community response to violence against women was seriously at risk
- Community confidence in Victoria Police responding appropriately to violence against women was being compromised
- Ken Lay recognised, after many failed attempts at fixing this, we needed help to understand the causes.

# Scoping the culture challenge for VicPol



VICTORIA POLICE

Building the evidence base:

- Confidential all-staff survey
- Confidential interviews with victims: in response to newspaper advertisements and referral by word of mouth
- Interviews with senior staff and key staff involved in operating the current policy / practice / systems which related to the terms of reference
- Site visits and engagement with staff at every level
- Global literature review

# Scoping the culture challenge for VicPol



VICTORIA POLICE

The VEOHRC review has found:

*An entrenched culture of everyday sexism, coupled with a tolerance for sexual harassment, has left many current and former Victoria Police employees harmed, sidelined and deeply disillusioned, In addition to the serious consequences for safety and welfare, sex discrimination and sexual harassment carries significant cost for the organisation*

# Scoping the culture challenge for VicPol



VICTORIA POLICE

Survey **5000** Victoria Police employees (30% of our workforce);

- **40%** of respondents have **experienced** sexual harassment, sex discrimination, or predatory behaviour over the course of their working lives

In the **last five years**;

- **68%** of women and **57%** of men have **witnessed** at least one incident of sexual harassment

# Scoping the culture challenge for VicPol



VICTORIA POLICE

The most commonly witnessed behaviours (in the last 5 years) were;

- sexually suggestive comments or **jokes** (24%)
- Inappropriate **staring** or leering (13%)
- Intrusive **questions** or comments (12%)
- Actual or attempted rape or **sexual assault** has been personally witnessed by 10 survey respondents

# Scoping the culture challenge for VicPol



VICTORIA POLICE

Of the **40%** of respondents who have **experienced** sexual harassment, sex discrimination, or predatory behaviour over the course of their working lives:



Only **11%** of those respondents have made a formal complaint



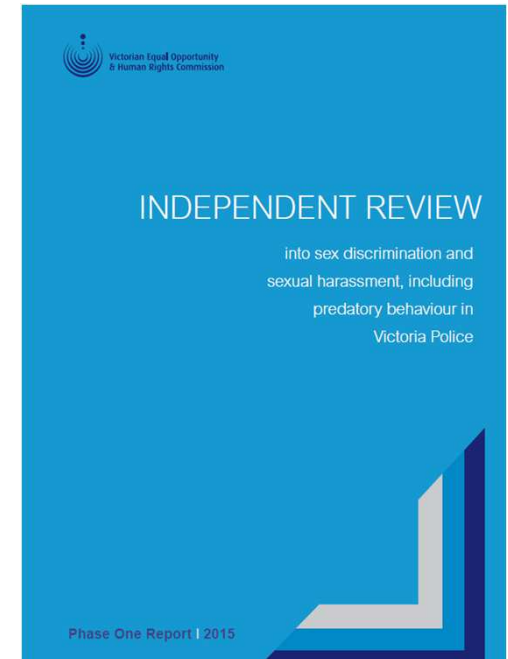
# Review recommendations & Action Plan



VICTORIA POLICE

Analysis and defining the problem: The review makes **20** recommendations in relation to the following themes:

- Leadership
- Recruitment and retention of women
- Education and knowledge development
- Supporting local managers / supervisors
- Ensuring workplace safety and welfare
- Addressing barriers to reporting and disclosure
- Improving actions and outcomes of formal processes



## Review recommendations & Action Plan



VICTORIA POLICE

- VEOHRC recognised that our response required a long term strategy which would support and drive deep and substantive culture change
- The VEOHRC report outlines a three year action plan which identifies clear progress indicators, which will be used to measure our effectiveness in delivery on each of the 20 recommendations
- Three phases
  1. Getting ready
  2. Design, build & implement
  3. Transition to business as usual and ongoing delivery of change

# Review recommendations & Action Plan



VICTORIA POLICE

The Action Plan has four key themes:

- Informed and sustained leadership and governance
- Building capability and competency
- Respond swiftly and effectively to workplace harm
- Advocate for change

Progress against which will be the subject of two further public audit reports, which are to be published in the following two years

## Victoria Police response



VICTORIA POLICE

- The Review report was published on 9 December 2015
- The Chief Commissioner has accepted the review findings and recommendations.
  - He has a clear expectation that everyone will take responsibility for ensuring that our workplace is safe and supportive for all employees, irrespective of their gender or sexual orientation.

# Victoria Police response



VICTORIA POLICE

- CCP made a public apology to the community and our staff for the harm done to victims of workplace harm, which included an acknowledgement of his own part in our culture being what it is.

## Victoria Police Commissioner Graham Ashton apologises over damning report showing sexual harassment within force

By [Melissa Brown](#) and [Gloria Kalache](#)

Updated 9 Dec 2015, 1:37pm

**Victoria Police Chief Commissioner Graham Ashton has apologised to staff over the findings of a damning report on sexual harassment within the police force.**

The Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission (VEOHRC) has found a high prevalence and tolerance of sexual harassment within Victoria Police, as well as substantial evidence of sexual discrimination and gender inequality.

The VEOHRC survey of more than 5,000 officers and staff found 40 per cent of women said they had been sexually harassed, resulting in significant harm to the mental and physical health of many officers.



**PHOTO:** Victoria Police Chief Commissioner Graham Ashton says there is need for broad cultural change.

(Twitter: Graham Ashton)

**RELATED STORY:** 'Just some lesbian drama': Former constable reveals bullvini in police force

# Victoria Police response



VICTORIA POLICE

We are working to develop and establish a system which:

- Is victim-centric
- Supports victims and reporters (Safe Space)
- Provides redress and restorative engagement for victims
- Secures accountability for perpetrators
- Is grounded in restorative justice principles
- Is supported by an integrated, “people portfolio” approach
- Supports early warning / intervention
- Informs and drives cultural change

# Victoria Police response



VICTORIA POLICE

We will move from

- an ‘investigation led’ and “complaint driven” model
- to
- a victim-centric response, in which Victoria Police takes responsibility for addressing workplace harm, rather than leaving it to the victim to drive accountability, and
  - an early intervention and prevention system, grounded in the principles of a “zero harm” approach

# Measuring success



VICTORIA POLICE

What does success look like?

Victoria Police will be a workplace where everyone is treated with dignity and respect and everyone takes responsibility for ensuring that our workplace is free from sex discrimination and harassment.

How will we measure this?

- Progress indicators outlined in the action plan
- Performance measures which hold us to account in the implementation of the gender and diversity strategy.



# Role of leadership



VICTORIA POLICE

Leadership from the top is critical

- Example of former CDF, General David Morrison
- Chief Commissioner's acceptance of the recommendations and commitment to implementation
- Chief Commissioner's all staff video message
- Presentations from Command members to every workplace
- Commitment by senior people to personal reflection, listening, learning and action
- Investment in supporting the change

# The future for women in VicPol



VICTORIA POLICE

Personal reflection...



VICTORIA POLICE

# Thank You