

Public Accounts and Estimates Committee

Inquiry into the 2026-27 Budget Estimates

The Hon. Anthony Carbines MP
Minister for Police

Thursday 21 May 2026



Investment in police capacity and technology

The Government's ongoing investment in Victoria Police will deliver a stronger and more visible police presence across the community



Police reservist scheme

- **\$62.06 million** over 2 years to recruit up to 200 police reservists to undertake administrative duties.
- The recruitment of police reservists will enable the deployment of police officers back to frontline policing activities and free up valuable police resources.
- Legislation has been introduced to give the Chief Commissioner the power to appoint these new police reservists.



Police recruitment

- The 2025-26 budget allocated **\$7.35 million** over 3 years to expand Victoria Police's recruitment programs.
- From 20 April 2026, Victoria Police has doubled its intake of recruits each fortnight.
- The number of recruits trained at the police academy will increase by 650 to 1,300 a year.
- From July 2025 to March 2026, Victoria Police received 6,534 police and 706 PSO applications.



Mobile technology

- **\$18.33 million** over 4 years for 3,000 mobile devices for specialist police.
- This will provide real time information on the ground that will assist decision making.
- It will also reduce the time that needs to be spent completing paperwork. This is more time that can be used protecting Victorians.

More visible policing in the community

Victoria Police is being provided with more PSOs and equipment to be in the community when and where they are needed most



Protective Services Officers

- **\$44.80m** to recruit an additional 50 PSOs to support Victoria Police's intelligence-led deployment.
- The 'active PSOs' program redeploys PSOs from low-or-no-crime stations to where they are most needed across the public transport network.



Operation Pulse

- **\$6.54m** for Operation Pulse, to extend the deployment of police and PSOs at major shopping centres until 31 December 2026.
- This builds on the **\$2.30m** already provided for the initial 90-day deployment of Operation Pulse.
- At one shopping centre, data shows that 84% of customers said the operation made them feel safer while shopping.



More handheld metal detectors to seize knives and machetes

- **\$0.94m** for 842 additional hand-held metal detectors, to expand the ability of frontline police to conduct searches and get these dangerous weapons off the street.
- More than 12,350 machetes and other knives were surrendered by the public as part of the Machete Ban Amnesty.
- This is in addition to the record 17,400 knife seizures by Victoria Police last year.

Supporting police to tackle crime in 2026-27



\$39.70 million towards other frontline service delivery initiatives



\$17.13 million for police prosecutors and to implement new bail laws



\$48.05 million for technology uplift, cyber security and combatting cyber crime

The 2026-27 Victorian Budget has funded a collection of initiatives to reduce crime and improve community safety, including:

- **\$17.13 million** investment in police prosecutors and police custody capacity to implement Victoria's strengthened bail laws and operationalise the new Wyndham Law Courts.
- **\$9.46 million** for Blue Light Victoria to deliver early intervention programs to support young people at-risk of offending.
- **\$0.50 million** for specialised training for police to use reformed protest powers safely and with respect to individual rights.
- **\$2.68 million** investment in tackling organised retail theft.
- **\$7.07 million** to address Victoria's unmet critical demand for digital forensics and policing services to combat cybercrime.
- **\$40.98 million** investment in Victoria Police's technology infrastructure and frontline systems to improve security and public safety.

The Victorian Government is committed to improving community safety

Responding to community concerns around serious incidents, including organised crime and youth offending

- Victoria Police's **Gang Crime Squad** continues the work of Operation Lunar in targetting and dismantling organised crime syndicates driving Victoria's illicit tobacco – making **218 arrests** for arson, extortion, and associated criminal offences and seizing more than **\$50 million** worth of cash, vapes and illegal tobacco.
- **Operation Eclipse** is specifically targeting organised crime syndicates behind arson attacks against hospitality and other venues, **arresting over 40 people** and laying **hundreds of charges**.
- **\$5 million** to boost the State Command and Coordination Centre, located at Victoria Police Headquarters, which is staffed 24-hours-a-day and is currently supporting Operation Eclipse.
- From 1 September 2025, machetes were made a prohibited weapon in response to concerns from Victoria Police and the community about serious incidents involving young people and the use of machetes.





Promoting and protecting police mental health

BlueHub is an initiative created by The Police Association of Victoria (TPAV) providing expert psychological assessment and tailored trauma and mental health treatment to current sworn Victoria Police members

- Given the nature of their work, there is a higher prevalence of mental health challenges experienced by police members.
- This budget provides **\$1.60 million** to extend the BlueHub Police Mental Health initiative through to June 2028. This builds on the **\$4.00 million** invested over 4 years in the 2023-24 budget.
- BlueHub clients have shown a reduction in Post Traumatic Stress Disorder symptom severity, psychological distress, anxiety, and depression symptoms upon their discharge, compared to intake.
- Victoria Police also invests in a range of other programs to support mental health and wellbeing for its veteran employees and their families, including Victoria Police's Employee Assistance Program and access to Blue Space.

A serious approach to addressing road trauma

Funding provided to increase roadside drug testing and continue and expand Victoria's road safety camera program as part of this Government's Road Safety Action Plan 2

- **\$21.1 million** was provided to Victoria Police in December 2025 for 5 road policing initiatives that will increase drug testing, expand the use of technology to catch unauthorised drivers and reduce paperwork so police spend more time on the road.
- Funding will see an extra 25,000 roadside drug tests each year, (increasing the annual total to 175,000 tests), the expansion of automatic numberplate recognition (ANPR) technology and replacement and upgrade of police in-car video technology at one-member stations.
- A further **\$28.3 million** was invested in May 2026 to boost road safety enforcement across Victoria. The new technology will strengthen enforcement targeting speeding, distraction and seatbelt non-compliance.
- This new investment in road safety is in addition to the **\$156.10 million** provided in the 2025-26 State Budget to continue and expand the DDS program.



Thank you.

