

**Police Association submission to the “Rush Inquiry” –
Executive Summary.**

The Victoria Police Force currently has a “top heavy” management structure, which should and must become a leaner and more effective & efficient Leadership Structure.

Police Officers in Victoria must be lead, not managed, and they must have leaders in whom they have confidence and who inspire admiration and loyalty.

The best structure for a modern police force will be a hybrid, developed from both the military and the private sector.

Resources, other than personnel, form part of a support and supply role that may be best managed by either; suitably experienced and equipped police officers, or ‘unsworn’ (public service) personnel with particular expertise in, for example, technology or procurement.

In the end, all of the sworn police and public servants working within the Force must report, eventually, to the Chief Commissioner, who must be the sole person responsible for all governance of the Victoria Police Force. There can be no committee of management, nor any duopoly of responsibility at ‘the top’. It is exactly this unclear responsibility which has wrought so much of the damage on the Force that has led to the need for this Inquiry.

Victoria once provided the Police Commissioners of every State and Territory in Australia, with the exception of New South Wales and the Australian Federal Police. Today, Victoria has trouble in providing its own, home-grown, Chief Commissioner. This is due, in large part, to three major faults: A decade of fragmented expansion of senior management of the Force in entirely unsuitable models that do not promote leadership or prepare senior police for command level appointment; an almost total absence of training, support and supervision of front-line personnel and; a lack of knowledge and understanding, by command, of what it is those front-line personnel actually do.

Leadership within the Force must, by the very requirements of the duties involved, be hierarchical; there must be appointments of suitably trained and experienced leaders to the various commissioned officer ranks and positions throughout the Force; and the Force must make the best use of the rank structure that currently exists, which was created to allow for and encourage the development of individuals who can then be assessed for promotion to higher rank.

The simple fact is that the Force can create a contemporary, effective and efficient leadership structure within the parameters of the current legislation. It is only due to 'internal' fiddling-about, to cater for the personal preferences of the Chief Commissioner of the day, that the Force's command team became moribund.

In the submission of the Police Association, the current situation does not require a 'slash and burn' approach that hopefully sees a Phoenix arise from the ashes, but a simple return to the basics, that have worked so well in the past. Fundamental, proven, structures that are set in place, as they were in legislation, are what is required to protect

the Victoria Police Force from the vagaries and personal preferences of individuals who have temporary custody of the Force.

How the command team of the Force is structured is not a matter of personal choice, to be altered at the behest of whoever is in charge for a time. Constant change to basic structures is destabilising and confusing to rank and file members and has led to top-heavy and cumbersome management. Systems should be put in place that allow for a contemporary Force to be staffed and supported in the best possible way, for the benefit of all Victorians, now and into the future.

The model for success lies within our own history. It worked before and it will work again, albeit with a degree of modernisation. There is, therefore, no need to gamble on the unknown – in fact, it would be dangerous to do so.

Structures that have stood the test of time in our Parliamentary system, our courts, our military and our police forces, have lasted *because* they have stood the test of time.