

# Members' issues on the decision- makers' tables



Mark Carroll  
Police Association  
President

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**The lead-up periods to state elections are extremely active for not only sitting and potential parliamentarians, but also unions, lobbyists and interest groups. This is the time when those representative bodies seek commitments, and those who might form government pledge or, perhaps, do not pledge, to deliver.**

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**For** the Police Association to deliver outcomes for its members, it too must – and is – at the forefront of political lobbying through this crucial lead-up to the March state election. And, to secure the commitments we seek – for better resourcing, equipment, IT and police-relevant legislation – we must act in the most forthright but responsible fashion.

Accordingly, the association has worked hard to position its members' issues on the tables of the decision-makers, those with political influence, during this pre-election period. Our planned approach has brought about a range of top-level meetings with party leaders, ministers and shadow ministers.

And, in our discussions with these key political figures, we have outlined, in chapter and verse, each of the specific working needs of police officers, and how we believe the next government can best respond to them.

## Resources

We have indicated, in person and in writing, that we seek a commitment to

increase the numbers of sworn police officers (full-time equivalent) in SAPOL, over and above natural attrition.

Current law-and-order policies, and the associated legislative changes to deal with crime, necessitate increased numbers. This is particularly the case with changed legislation relating to hoon-driving, illegal firearms, serious and organized crime, alcohol-fuelled violence, licensing, and domestic violence.

Along with greater administrative demands on police – owing to disclosure rules – policing has never been more labour intensive. As the state develops its mining, tourism and defence industries, and grows its population, the police force requires growth accordingly.

The association welcomed the Rann Labor Government commitment, in this current parliamentary term, to increase the police force by 400 full-time equivalent officers. But gains such as this must not be eroded.

Indeed, the next government must bring about appropriate and necessary numbers of police to deliver the raft of services the community and government of the day expect.

Community safety is the cornerstone of our way of life; and police cannot deliver it without adequate resources and proper funding.

So the association has sought, from both the Labor and Liberal parties, a commitment similar to that which the Rann Government made and lived up to during its last term in office from 2006.

## Information technology

Member frustration with outdated computer systems has reached an all-time high. Carrying out administrative duties by computer is needlessly slow and cumbersome. This is because the existing patchwork of systems has for years lacked the capacity to retrieve and integrate information into police and court documentation in a timely and efficient manner.

The association has sought a commitment to provide recurrent government funding in the next four years to replace the existing police information systems with a fully integrated database system which is compatible with and comparable to national criminal investigation database systems.

## Equipment

Advances in technology have brought about the development of new equipment which is ideally suited to law enforcement. These advances are evident in, but not limited to:

- » Fingerprint scanning.
  - » Facial recognition technology.
  - » In-vehicle recording and location devices.
  - » Portable data retrieval devices.
  - » Electronic control devices.
- Combined with the development of the National Automatic Number Plate Recognition System (ANPR), these technologies provide police with powerful devices to assist in the fight against crime.

The association has sought a commitment to fund an audit and review of existing and new equipment and technology for law enforcement so as to ascertain what equipment should be provided to SAPOL and provide the necessary funding to procure it. Also sought is a commitment to fund fully South Australia's participation in the national ANPR system.

## Police Act and Regulations amendments

Another commitment the association has sought is to make legislative amendment to the *Police Act* and *Regulations* (or other applicable legislation as the case may be) which provides for:

- » Appeal against dismissal for police cadets.
- » Promotional appeals for officers of police.
- » Keeping and use of history of employees.

## Matters for on-going discussion

With either a returned Labor government or a new Liberal government, the association intends to keep dialogue going on such matters as:

- » Enterprise bargaining.
- » Police superannuation.
- » Injury-on-duty provision.
- » Country housing rental agreement.
- » National police registration scheme.
- » National police uniform and equipment advisory council.
- » Mandatory sentencing of those who commit serious assaults on police.