

POLICE ASSOCIATION ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2011



In his last 48 hours as premier, Mike Rann turned up at the Police Association to open and address its annual conference. He got the attention of union delegates from across the state and over the borders, as did Opposition leader Isobel Redmond and a host of other speakers over two days. Edited versions of the Rann and Redmond speeches (below and right) follow.

EQUIPPING POLICE TO DO THE JOB

CRIME RATES AND POLICE RESOURCES

I congratulate the Police Association for the important work it undertakes to support the interests and needs of its members.

I also extend my deep gratitude, on behalf of the people of South Australia to the outstanding officers and staff of South Australia Police. Those of you on the front line, who so bravely and diligently protect our communities against crime.

I'm stepping down as premier and chair of the Emergency Management Council on Friday morning.

From the day our government came to office, we have unashamedly maintained our commitment to fighting crime, particularly violent crime, and to tilting the balance of our criminal justice system in favour of victims, not criminals.

We now have more than 4,400 sworn police officers in South Australia, which is the highest rate of police per capita of any Australian state.

We have also increased the police budget to \$722 million for the current financial year, which represents a 96 per cent increase on what was being spent on police by our predecessors.

We've invested heavily in new infrastructure, with 17 new police stations opened since 2002.

We've undertaken major upgrades of stations at Christies Beach, Port Adelaide and Elizabeth, built the new \$41 million SAPOL headquarters in Angas St, and are currently completing the new \$53 million police academy.

We've ensured our hard-working officers have access to the latest technology to help them carry out their work more efficiently and more safely. That includes high-tech tools such as mobile data terminals, portable fingerprint scanners and the roll-out of Tasers.

So it's no coincidence that we continue to see a reduction in crime rates in South Australia.

Since this government came to office, we've seen a decline in victim-reported crime of more than 36 per cent. That's around 75,000 fewer crimes committed per year. More than 200 fewer crimes every day, than when we were elected.

LEGISLATION

Over the past nine-and-a-half years, we have built the sort of strong legislative framework that modern-day police require to detect and tackle crime.

We've introduced more than 100 new laws to keep pace with the changing nature of crime, and to ensure those of you on the front line have every tool at their disposal to keep the public safe.

We've cracked down on those who engage in the irresponsible and deadly act of hoon driving. Over the past seven years, more than 11,000 cars have been clamped or impounded.

We've altered legislation to provide greater protection for police who are properly engaged in high-risk and pursuit driving.

We introduced harsher penalties for aggravated assaults against public officials, including police.

We've increased sentences and created new laws to tackle the insidious incidence of sex offending. Our rape and sexual assault laws have undergone their biggest reform in more than 30 years, to provide better protection for victims.

One of our first acts was to remove the statute of limitations that prevented sex offenders from being prosecuted for offences that occurred prior to 1982. A person convicted of sex crimes is now also treated by the courts as a serious repeat offender after recording a second conviction.

And we've introduced a raft of changes to protect children from sex offenders, such as a five-fold increase in the penalties for those found guilty of child pornography offences.

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POLICE WORK NOT ABOUT ENDLESSLY ISSUING FINES

ROAD SAFETY AND EXPIATION NOTICES

I thank the police for their ongoing contribution to the safety of the community, and the association for its ongoing commitment to work constructively with both sides of politics.

The community is at the core of the police function. Each of you comes to work every day with the safety of South Australians in mind. You work tirelessly towards a peaceful, law-abiding society, free of crime. Your presence makes our roads safer, guides people through emergency situations and provides invaluable support to the victims of crime.

The public is probably more aware of those duties than the investigation of crime and the prosecution of criminals. Paramount to your success is a positive relationship with the community because, without trust and respect from South Australians, your job becomes immeasurably harder.

When it comes to policing, the role of

government is clear. We must:

- Provide the necessary resources.
- Ensure those resources are the most practical and effective.
- Foster an environment that makes it as easy as possible for police to do their jobs.
- Encourage a positive relationship between the police and the community.

We believe that South Australia is moving dangerously close to ruining years of positive relations between the police and the community. We believe there should be more focus on prevention rather than punishment when it comes to fines. For example, on a busy highway, an increased police presence could have a better road safety outcome than issuing many trivial fines.

We do not discount the use of expiations as a preventative measure, but it must be coupled with a more serious investment in educating the community and boosting police presence.

We want our police seen as leaders within the community, rather than punishers or tax-collectors. We want to allow our police to do the kind of work that needs to be done to achieve a safe community but, at the same time, empower you with discretion and show that, as a government, we trust your judgement.

The Liberal Opposition is driven by road safety objectives rather than budget lines. I want South Australians to know

that the police are not out to get them, that you're here to help.

INTRODUCTION OF A MOTORCYCLE ROAD SAFETY TASK FORCE

The Liberals do recognize the role of fines in deterring the public from acting inappropriately on our roads. It is an important part of any government's road safety strategy and that will continue to be the case under a Redmond Liberal government.

However, we need to rebuild trust with the community. We want to reassure South Australians that the government and the police are acting in the interests of their safety, not just propping up the budget by imposing yet more fines.

But we want to go further on road safety. We want to give the police more resources so that they can look after South Australians on the roads.

We know that, in the association's view, no number of police on the beat, or out on the roads, or in the community, is too many. We believe it would be appropriate to examine the reintroduction of a state-wide motorcycle road safety task force.

We'd like to work with the Commissioner with a view to committing 40 new motorcycles to such a task force at the rate of 10 per year with, of course,

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To help police in their fight against crime, we introduced legislation to ensure DNA testing can be carried out on prisoners and on any person suspected of having committed an indictable offence. It also enables police to permanently retain all DNA profiles that are legally obtained from offenders.

We've also enhanced the use of other technological advances, such as the vehicle licence plate recognition system that is a vital component of Operation Nomad, which targets known and suspected arsonists on bushfire danger days.

To help fight this scourge, we also introduced Australia's toughest penalty for bushfire arsonists, who now face a maximum 20-year jail sentence.

As well as giving police powers to scan for weapons in our main entertainment precincts, we legislated for weapons prohibition orders to target those with a history of violence.

Under these laws, police have the power to search individuals who are subject to an order anywhere and at any time – at their homes, their business premises, in their vehicles, or their boats.

As of earlier this year, more than 50 firearms prohibition orders had been issued with more than half of those against members of outlaw bikie gangs.

SERIOUS AND ORGANIZED CRIME

Following last year's High Court ruling, the government has already foreshadowed its intention to introduce a suite of bills that will underpin our approach to serious and organized crime, including criminal bikie gangs.

These include new offences to criminalize participation in a criminal

organization, measures to support vulnerable witnesses and encourage informants to come forward, and tougher measures to target the behaviour of individuals.

We've also introduced laws to keep the state's most dangerous offenders locked up, and sent a clear message to our courts that public safety and the rights of victims must be prime considerations when sentencing dangerous offenders.

For example, the Attorney-General is now able to apply to the Court of Criminal Appeal to have a dangerous offender's non-parole period removed.

In cases in which there's little prospect of rehabilitation, or the community needs to be protected, the Attorney-General may ask the court to make sure they are not released.

We've also made it possible for courts to impose tougher sentences for other types of offences. Changes that require serious repeat offenders to serve a heftier proportion of their jail term before parole can be considered.

On average, the length of time spent in prison in just the last five years has increased by one year. This is reflected in total prisoner numbers, which have increased from around 1,400 in 2004 to around 2,000 last year.

We can expect the trend for longer jail terms to continue, particularly now that we have legislated for a minimum non-parole period of 20 years for murder.

We intervened in the case of Eugene McGee, which led to significant changes in the law and penalties for people involved in serious hit-run cases that are deemed to involve aggravated dangerous driving. This can also be applied to people who engage police in high-speed pursuits.

The government also intervened in the case of Paul Nemer, an action for which

we've been bitterly criticized by some sections of the legal community.

The circumstances of that case, and the nature of that offence, meant it was inconceivable that it should not result in a prison sentence. An unprovoked attack on an innocent man going about his business and seriously injured and left permanently incapacitated.

A case in which the court, faced with the presentation of a factual case agreed between the prosecution and the defence, imposed a sentence that did not reflect the brutality and callousness of the crime.

A sentence that provoked a spontaneous and sustained public outcry over an obvious injustice. It demanded intervention in the interests of justice.

PAROLE AND VICTIMS' RIGHTS

We were the first to put an end to the rubber-stamping of the board's recommendations for release. We expanded the Parole Board's power to refuse automatic parole for sex offenders, and to improve information sharing between the board and SAPOL, to help police officers track down and apprehend parole violators.

Since 2005, the government has – when it was considered necessary in the public interest – taken a different view from the Parole Board and refused to grant parole to eight convicted murderers serving life sentences.

We were the first state to create the independent office of the Commissioner of Victims' Rights, and we gave victim-of-crime advocates the legal right to make victim impact submissions to court in cases which had resulted in the victim's death, or permanent incapacity.

This was to ensure that victims who no longer had a voice could still be heard in court.

Change of Address

The Police Association of South Australia needs your change-of-address details. If you have moved, in either the recent or distant past, please let the association know your new address. Its office does not receive notification of changed addresses by any other means. The association will need your new address, full name, ID number, telephone numbers (home, work and/or mobile). Members can e-mail these details to the association on pasa@pasa.asn.au or send them by letter through dispatch (168).

Group Life Insurance Beneficiary Nomination Forms

Owing to a Supreme Court decision, the Police Association no longer uses the GLI beneficiary forms. Existing forms held at the association have been destroyed.

Now, in the case of the death of a member, the GLI benefit (currently \$200,000) will be paid to his or her estate.

Accordingly, the association's strong advice is that you ensure that your estate is well-administered. This is best achieved by having a valid will.

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a matching commitment of officers out of the 300 additional sworn officers we committed to at the last election.

We believe that such an initiative would act as a deterrent to dangerous driving. It would place a focus on changing behaviour before the incident occurs, instead of punishing it after.

There's no doubt that the key to tackling reckless and dangerous behaviour is through a visible police presence. The motorcycle road safety task force would provide a more visible police presence on our roads to help reduce the tragedy of fatal and serious accidents.

Tackling the tragedy of our road toll is a whole-of-community effort that requires bold initiatives from a government; and a Redmond Liberal government is committed to giving you the resources you need to serve and protect to the highest possible standard.

The government tells us we have the highest number of trained police officers per capita in the nation, but community concerns suggest we still need greater police visibility.

It's clear that many officers are unnecessarily stuck behind desks, tied up with administrative tasks, rather than attending to police work at the coalface. The Liberal Opposition wants to see more

public servants redeployed to SAPOL to perform purely administrative duties.

If there are administrative jobs that don't have to be done by a police officer, they could be done by public servants to free up officers and allow them to get back to actual policing.

POLICE UNIFORMS

We'd also like to see a more collaborative approach to managing police uniforms. The issue of uniforms has been ongoing for the association. It's pleasing to hear that a tender is now being formulated for the provision of new uniforms. I hope the new style is less formal, less restrictive and more functional. It's imperative that what you have and what you wear is operational, not ceremonial.

Despite the fact that the new uniforms are on the way, there will continually be new technology, new ideas and new approaches to police dress. It seems sensible to me that we take a more collaborative approach to uniform design. I understand that Victorian police are currently looking to purchase their new uniforms based on the new South Australian contract.

The association has long been an advocate for establishing a national police uniform and equipment standards advisory council, and I'm advised that

you've finally got it on the agenda of the Ministerial Council on Police and Emergency Management.

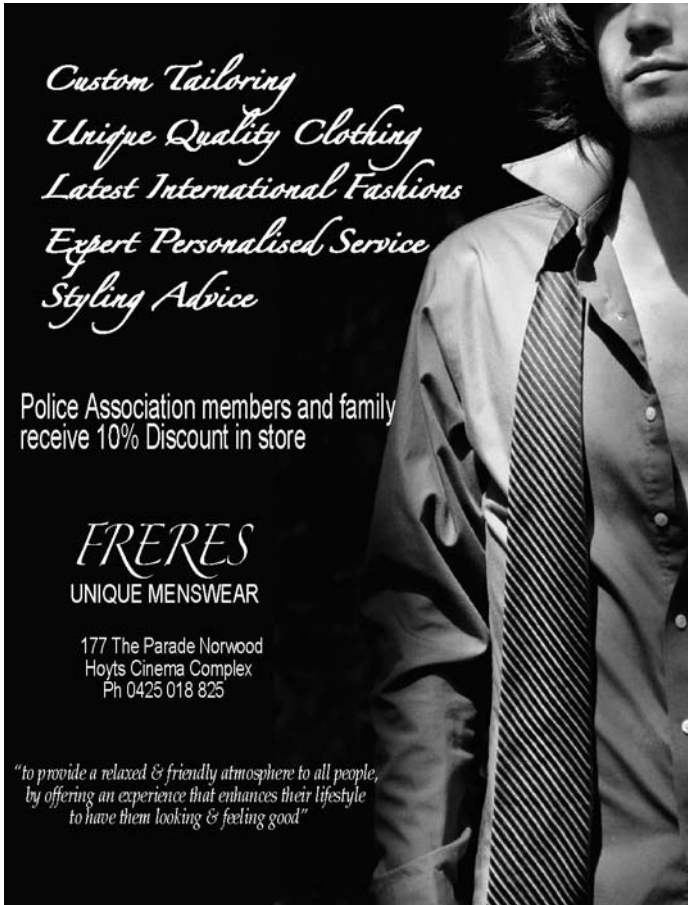
A Redmond Liberal government would support the idea of a uniform advisory council and would like to see South Australia take the lead in its establishment.

It makes sense to talk to your interstate colleagues about what works best. It makes sense to have a central body to co-ordinate trials and evaluations of new products so that each jurisdiction doesn't have to conduct duplicate trials on the same product.

It makes sense to have a council which can assess providers so that police across the nation can have more certainty about the contracts they enter into. This is a common-sense initiative which the South Australian Liberals support.

I look forward to a continuing positive relationship with the police and the association. The opposition is privileged to have open channels of dialogue with the association. This relationship is integral to our policy development.

I can promise you I'm not in the business of saying one thing and doing another. I'll keep the promises I make, and pre-election commitments will be acted on post-election. Once in government, our policies will become a reality.



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Unique Quality Clothing
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Police Association members and family receive 10% Discount in store

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*"to provide a relaxed & friendly atmosphere to all people,
by offering an experience that enhances their lifestyle
to have them looking & feeling good"*

Advice Of Resignation/ Retirement

When you retired or retire from SAPOL, you must also resign from the Police Association.

So that the association can accurately record the details of your resignation and discontinue your subscriptions, you will need to advise our office in writing.

Please send your letter of resignation to Police Association secretary Andy Dunn by e-mail (secretary@pasa.asn.au), fax (8212 2002), despatch (168) or post (PO Box 6032 Halifax Street, SA, 5000).

Your letter will appear in the *Police Journal (The Last Shift)* unless you instruct us to withhold it from publication.