

Community Safety Statement Assurance Report December 2020

Community Safety Trustee



Acknowledgement of Country

The Community Safety Trustee acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the land and pays respect to the Elders past and present.

ISSN 2208-8083 - Online (pdf / word)

December 2020

Available on justice.vic.gov.au

Photos: Copyright Victoria Police. These images may not be used or reproduced without express permission of Victoria Police.



Community Safety Trustee Preface

I am pleased to present my sixth assurance report into the government's implementation of its Community Safety Statement promises. The COVID-19 pandemic has and continues to present many challenges for everyone. My assurance work was not immune, and the necessary arrangements were made. I would like to thank those involved for their persistence, patience and assistance in making this report possible.

This is my final assurance report and I thank everyone who has supported me during my term. Being Victoria's inaugural Community Safety Trustee has been an honour and a privilege.

Since my appointment in April 2017, I have seen genuine commitment by the government to improve community safety and keep Victoria and Victorians safe. The release of the first Community Safety Statement in 2016 heralded the government's commencement of its largest packaged investment in reducing harm, increasing police connection to the community, putting victims first, holding offenders to account and improving Victoria Police's capability, culture and technology.

Delivering a law and order investment of around \$3 billion presents many challenges. Over the course of my assurance activities, I have noted a maturing in the government's program and project management: I am confident those responsible for implementing the Community Safety Statement promises are now well placed to complete or accept new initiatives.

The government, with notable mentions to the Department of Justice and Community Safety and Victoria Police, are to be commended on their hard work and dedication to implementing the Community Safety Statement promises.

Victoria is well placed to have an additional 2729 police officers and 100 Protective Services Officers by mid-2021 to maintain public order. The introduction of the Police Assistance Line and the online reporting system are major advancements, bringing Victoria into line with other police jurisdictions: modern technology is now part of our everyday lives and this investment provides the community with more options and better access to Victoria Police. The introduction of body-worn cameras and the intention to visually record family violence victim statements will provide a more efficient and accurate system reducing some of the trauma associated with the process.

Many Community Safety Statement initiatives have been or are well progressed in their implementation. I urge the government to evaluate the impact of the financial investment: to assess the financial spend and whether the \$3 billion investment achieved the objectives it set out to attain as well as any other unintended consequences.

The foundations are strong, and the government needs to continue to build on that. Crime statistics ebb and flow, with some offences like burglary trending down over a five-year period. Of concern, offences related to the person are slowly increasing and these are the ones that impact victims the most. Family violence remains an issue and the COVID-19 pandemic and associated restrictions exacerbated many challenges: the Crime Statistics Agency reports that the number of family violence incidents increased by 11.7% (up 2296 incidents) between 1 April and 30 June 2020 from the same time period in 2019. This is partly due to Victoria Police's proactive approach of attending homes resulting in an increase in detected offences.

The government has been instrumental in funding many projects and initiatives to improve mental health and wellbeing. Further, all recommendations from Dr Peter Cotton's 2016 review into the mental health and wellbeing of Victoria Police employees have been implemented. However, mental health and wellbeing remains an issue for Victoria Police. The Victoria Police Annual Report 2018-2019 reported a budget deficit of \$18.5 million, largely driven by an increase in WorkCover risk premiums due to growth in claim costs, particularly in relation to mental health. These premiums have been increasing annually. Further, the loss of shifts has increased from 81,236 in 2017/18 to 103,205 in 2019/20, largely due to an increase from 358 to 386 in mental health claims. This loss of shifts equates to a loss of around 540 full time staff. Senior management of Victoria Police need to apply greater focus on understanding the drivers and evaluating the success of its mental health and wellbeing strategies.

Since my commencement, I have been committed, focused and driven in independently monitoring and ensuring all Community Safety Statement promises were progressed and achieved. As I approach the end of my term, I am confident that the government remains committed to implementing the remaining promises in past Community Safety Statements as well as further building on the foundations laid. Good work has been achieved but now is not the time to be complacent.

In 1829, Sir Robert Peel developed "Peel's Policing Principles", which are still relevant today: the key to preventing crime is earning public support. The police are the community, and the community are the police. I am honoured and privileged to have served as Victoria's inaugural Community Safety Trustee and hope that I have helped make Victorians and Victoria safer. Once again, I thank you and all involved for the support and cooperative efforts with my assurance activities during my appointment.



Ron Iddles OAM, APM

Contents

Community Safety Trustee Preface.....	3
1 Executive Summary	7
1.1 Summary of findings	8
2 Introduction	11
2.1 Community Safety Statement	13
2.2 Scope of the assurance report	14
2.3 Approach	15
3 Overview: implementation progress of the initiatives	17
3.1 Notable observations	21
3.1.1 Reducing harm	21
3.1.2 Increasing connection to the community	21
3.1.3 Putting victims first.....	22
3.1.4 Holding offenders to account	23
3.1.5 Improving Victoria Police capability, culture and technology	23
3.2 Towards continuous improvement	24
3.2.1 Good practice themes.....	24
3.2.2 Other considerations.....	24
4 Findings: implementation progress of initiatives	25
4.1 Reducing harm	27
4.1.1 2729 new police officers	27
4.1.2 100 new Protective Services Officers.....	28
4.1.3 Measure of harm reporting.....	28
4.1.4 Policy review: serious traffic crimes	29
4.1.5 Policy review: public event planning.....	29
4.1.6 Music festival safety.....	30
4.1.7 Policy review: expansion of vehicle immobilisation devices	30
4.1.8 Legislative reform: driver licence suspension.....	31
4.2 Increasing connection to the community	33
4.2.1 24-hour non-emergency Police Assistance Line	33
4.2.2 Online reporting portal	34
4.2.3 Station replacement.....	34
4.2.4 New Youth Specialist Officers.....	35
4.2.5 Policy review: Protective Services Officers' presence, powers and career pathways	37
4.2.6 Legislative reform: expansion of Protective Services Officer mobility and flexibility	38
4.3 Putting victims first.....	39
4.3.1 New specialist family violence police officers	39
4.3.2 Mobile devices for frontline officers	41

4.3.3	Body-worn cameras	43
4.3.4	Legislative reform: strangulation	44
4.4	Holding offenders to account	45
4.4.1	Policy review: youth justice strategy.....	45
4.4.2	Automatic Number Plate Recognition technology	47
4.4.3	Trial: number plate theft reduction initiatives	47
4.4.4	Legislative reform: unlawful association.....	48
4.4.5	Policy review: criminal organisation control laws.....	49
4.4.6	Policy review: asset confiscation regime.....	50
4.5	Improving Victoria Police capability, culture and technology	51
4.5.1	Specialist training facility build	51
4.5.2	Air Wing capability	53
4.5.3	Policy review: mental health of police and other emergency services workers ..	53
4.5.4	Mental health care for emergency services workers	54
4.5.5	Restorative engagement and redress program	55
5	Concluding remarks	57
	Appendix A – all initiatives monitored to date	59

Glossary

Department	Department of Justice and Community Safety
Initiatives	Government commitments in the Community Safety Statements that are within the Trustee’s scope of works to monitor
Statements	Victorian Government, Community Safety Statement 2017, State of Victoria, December 2016; Victorian Government, Community Safety Statement 2018/19, State of Victoria, April 2018; Victorian Government, Community Safety Statement 2019-20, State of Victoria, June 2019
Statement 2017	Victorian Government, Community Safety Statement 2017, State of Victoria, December 2016
Statement 2018/19	Victorian Government, Community Safety Statement 2018/19, State of Victoria, April 2018
Statement 2019/20	Victorian Government, Community Safety Statement 2019-20, State of Victoria, June 2019
Trustee	Community Safety Trustee appointed by the government to hold it to account for delivering the initiatives and reforms set out in the Community Safety Statement

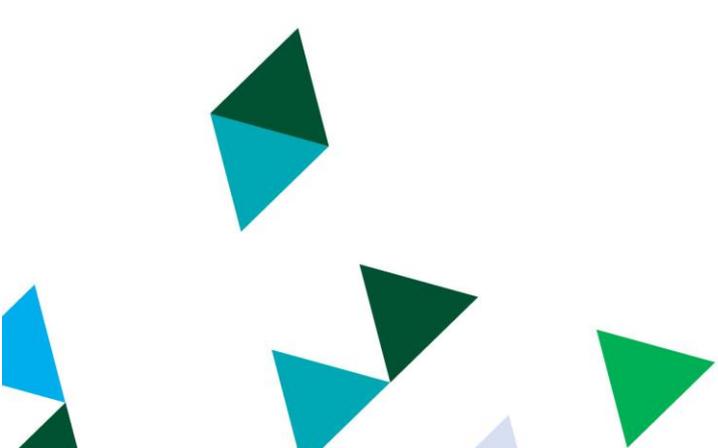


1 Executive Summary

The Community Safety Trustee (Trustee) is responsible for providing the government with an independent assessment on its progress in implementing the commitments in the Community Safety Statement (Statement) and progress towards tracking the outcomes. Since December 2016, the government has released three Statements to keep Victorians safe.

The COVID-19 pandemic has been extremely difficult for everyone. The scope of works for this assurance report has been significantly reduced to adjust for these extraordinary and challenging times.

This assurance report focuses on the implementation progress by the Department of Justice and Community Safety (department) and Victoria Police of select initiatives in the Statements that the Trustee considers within his scope to monitor (initiatives). Despite the reduced scope, the Trustee anticipates that this assurance report will provide government and the community with confidence that the relevant entities are delivering the initiatives promised to build community safety.

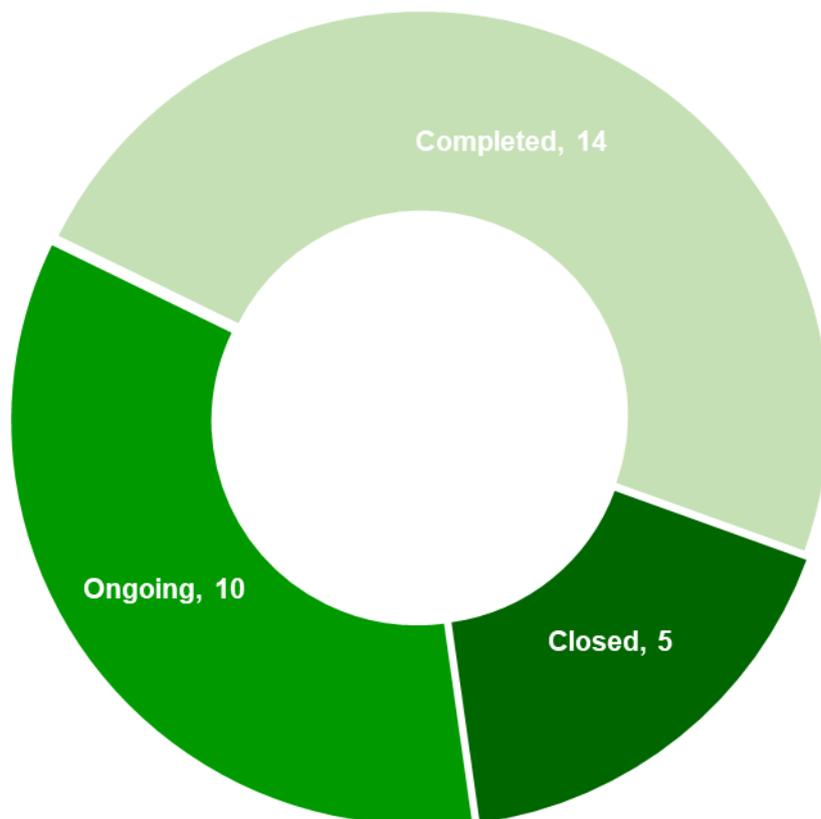


1.1 Summary of findings

Implementation progress of the initiatives

The Trustee assessed government's implementation of 29 select initiatives. The Trustee finds that 14 initiatives are completed and delivered as planned. Another 10 initiatives are ongoing and continue to be implemented. The remaining five initiatives are on track to be completed through business as usual processes or have transitioned to ongoing business as usual activity. In these instances, the Trustee is satisfied that appropriate governance structures are in place and has closed the monitoring of these initiatives.

Figure 1 Implementation progress of initiatives monitored within this assurance report



Continuous improvement opportunities

During the current assurance activities, the Trustee observed examples of good practice and areas for continuous improvement.

Good practice examples include:

- ◆ The Trustee commends all stakeholders for adapting, implementing mitigation strategies within Victoria's Chief Health Officer's restrictions and the greater use of technology to progress the implementation of initiatives while managing COVID-19 pandemic-related issues.
- ◆ Victoria Police has improved its reporting by consolidating various reporting bodies and establishing the Investment Management and Reporting Department as a central point of truth to deliver a level of consistency over all reporting and investment expenditure.
- ◆ The Trustee has seen improvements to Victoria Police's financial visibility and reporting, and encourages Victoria Police to continue maturing its financial management and delivering on its financial sustainability objectives.

Opportunities for improvement include:

- ◆ Since the commencement of the Statements, the Trustee has monitored 94 initiatives of which 74 have been delivered or transitioned to business as usual. The greater part of the \$3 billion investment has been expended and the balance committed to the final projects. The Trustee believes it is now time to undertake an evaluation of the overall investment to identify the actual realised change and whether the government has achieved its objectives and desired outcomes.

The Trustee recognises that improvements are continually occurring and encourages the relevant entities to consider and address the above identified improvement opportunities.





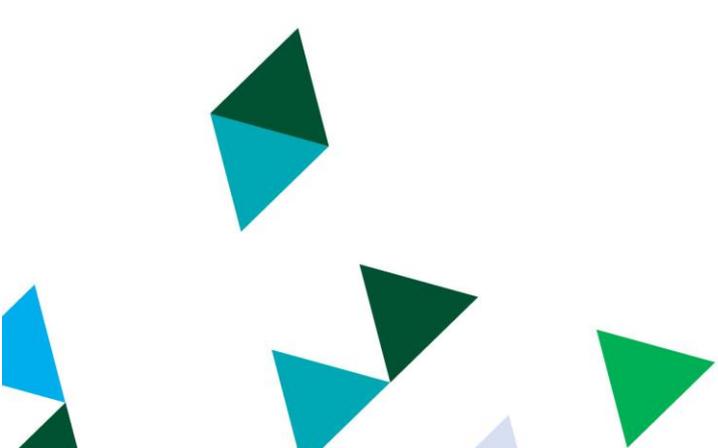
2 Introduction

The Community Safety Trustee (Trustee) was appointed by the government on 20 April 2017 to:

- ◆ provide independent, expert advice about community safety to the Victorian Government
- ◆ report on the implementation of the Victorian Government's Community Safety Statement (Statement).

The purpose of the Community Safety Statement Assurance Report December 2020 is to provide the Victorian Government with an independent assessment on the implementation progress of select Statement initiatives that are within the Trustee's scope to monitor (initiatives).

The scope of works for this assurance report has been reduced to adjust for COVID-19 pandemic-related challenges. Despite this, the Trustee hopes that this report assures the government and the community that the relevant entities are delivering the initiatives promised under the Statements.



This assurance report is the Trustee's sixth submission to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services.

The five previous assurance reports:

- ◆ Community Safety Trustee First Progress Report June 2017 outlines the role of the Trustee and focuses on the initial implementation progress of key initiatives.¹
- ◆ Community Safety Statement Assurance Report December 2017 examines government's initial progress towards tracking outcomes for community safety.²
- ◆ Community Safety Statement Assurance Report June 2018 largely looks at the implementation progress of initiatives.³
- ◆ Community Safety Statement Assurance Report December 2018 further examines government's progress towards tracking outcomes for community safety.⁴
- ◆ Community Safety Statement Assurance Report June 2019 further tracks government's implementation progress of initiatives.⁵

¹ Community Safety Trustee, First Progress Report – June 2017, State of Victoria, June 2017.

² Community Safety Trustee, Community Safety Statement Assurance Report December 2017, State of Victoria, December 2017.

³ Community Safety Trustee, Community Safety Statement Assurance Report June 2018, State of Victoria, June 2018.

⁴ Community Safety Trustee, Community Safety Statement Assurance Report December 2018, State of Victoria, December 2018.

⁵ Community Safety Trustee, Community Safety Statement Assurance Report June 2019, State of Victoria, June 2019.

2.1 Community Safety Statement

The Statement sets out the government's policing and community safety agenda for Victoria. Since December 2016, the Victorian Government has released three Statements: Community Safety Statement 2017⁶ (Statement 2017); Community Safety Statement 2018/19⁷ (Statement 2018/19); and Community Safety Statement 2019-20⁸ (Statement 2019/20).

The Statements recognise and outline some of the existing broader work underway across government as part of the shared responsibility in achieving community safety. They largely focus on the role of the Department of Justice and Community Safety (department) and Victoria Police in contributing to community safety. They list the priority areas, outcomes framework and initiatives to further improve community safety, often through partnerships. To support delivering the initiatives and achieving change, the government has committed around \$3 billion of investment.

The initiatives help address five government priority areas for community safety:

- ◆ Reducing harm
- ◆ Increasing connection to the community
- ◆ Putting victims first
- ◆ Holding offenders to account
- ◆ Improving Victoria Police capability, culture and technology.

The government, mainly the department and Victoria Police, have key roles in implementing the initiatives and/or tracking the progress towards outcomes.

⁶ Victorian Government, Community Safety Statement 2017, State of Victoria, December 2016.

⁷ Victorian Government, Community Safety Statement 2018/19, State of Victoria, April 2018.

⁸ Victorian Government, Community Safety Statement 2019-20, State of Victoria, June 2019.

2.2 Scope of the assurance report

This assurance report examines the implementation progress of 29 select initiatives. These include 22 of the 32 initiatives announced in Statement 2017 or Statement 2018/19, and assessed as “ongoing” in the previous assurance report. It also includes seven of the 17 new initiatives announced in Statement 2019/20.

Transition to an annual assurance report

In agreement with the Minister for Police and Emergency Services, the Trustee transitioned from a biannual to an annual assurance report. The annual assurance report combines the scopes of the separate biannual reports. This means, the government continues to be held to account on both implementation progress of initiatives and tracking towards outcomes. Combining the scopes into one report assists the community in better understanding the link between the initiative and how it contributes to community safety outcomes.

The biannual schedule was needed during the early stages of implementing the inaugural Statement program of works. The frequency ensured that government acknowledged and commenced work on all its commitments as well as received advice to better embed a meaningful outcomes framework. Now, nearly four years in, the biannual level of scrutiny is no longer required. The Trustee is confident that the government is fully committed to delivering its promises and achieving meaningful outcomes.

Scope changes due to the COVID-19 pandemic

The 2020 assurance report was originally intended to focus on 49 initiatives⁹ as well as government’s progress towards tracking outcomes for community safety. However, the COVID-19 pandemic has caused significant interruptions and challenges. The Trustee’s assurance activities were not immune, and the report was postponed from September to December 2020.

Further, the scope of works was adjusted to be commensurate with the extremely difficult circumstances. In consultation with the Minister for Police and Emergency Services, department and Victoria Police, this report was rescoped to focus on initiatives where notable progress could be reported despite COVID-19 pandemic-related constraints and delays. This report does not include 10 of the 32 initiatives that were assessed as “ongoing” in the previous assurance report as well as 10 of the 17 new initiatives announced in Statement 2019/20.

As per previous assurance reports, this report does not include activities listed in the Statements that are part of the government’s broader community safety work, as identified outside of the Trustee’s monitoring scope. It also tries to limit any further commentary on initiatives that the Trustee classified as completed or closed in previous assurance reports as well as limit repeating observations made previously.

⁹ Namely, the 32 initiatives assessed as “ongoing” in the previous assurance report and the 17 new identified initiatives announced in Statement 2019/20.

2.3 Approach

This assurance report was largely developed in four overlapping phases.

Phase 1: Information collection requirements

The department and Victoria Police were consulted on the development of the project plan and information required to inform this assurance report. Where possible and appropriate, the Trustee used outputs created for other reporting or management requirements to minimise administrative burden. The information sought included contextual challenges that relevant entities experienced when implementing the initiatives.

Where required, the Trustee aligned with the *Memorandum of Understanding for the sharing of information to assist the Community Safety Trustee with its function*, which was developed and endorsed in collaboration with the department and Victoria Police.

Phase 2: Stakeholder notification of commencement

Throughout the conduct of this assurance report, the department and Victoria Police were kept apprised of the status and next steps through consultation meetings, phone conversations and emails.

Written notification was provided to senior representatives of the department and Victoria Police to inform them of the commencement of this assurance report.

Phase 3: Information collection

The Trustee issued an information request via email to the following relevant entities:

- ◆ Crime Statistics Agency (business unit within the Corporate Governance and Support group of the department)
- ◆ Justice Policy and Data Reform group of the department
- ◆ Police, Fines and Crime Prevention group of the department
- ◆ Victoria Police
- ◆ Youth Justice group of the department.

The request for information included a customised template to assist with the collection of information, as per the requirements prepared during Phase 1. Relevant entities were provided approximately 10 weeks to prepare a submission. Where required, an extension was granted, or additional information was requested.

Interviews were held periodically with relevant senior staff to gather insights and contextual factors that impacted the implementation of the initiatives.

Other sources of information:

- ◆ Desktop research of information available in the public domain such as media releases and websites.
- ◆ Information provided by stakeholders for past assurance reports and for general monitoring purposes since the last assurance report.¹⁰

Phase 4: Information consolidation, assessment and reporting

The Trustee's findings were based on assessed information received from stakeholders, gathered from the desktop research and provided verbally during meetings.

Status	Trustee's findings for the implementation progress
Ongoing	This initiative is progressing and will continue to be monitored
Completed	This initiative has been implemented as planned
Closed	This initiative will continue to be progressed via business as usual processes or other initiatives

The Trustee also sought to identify good practice themes and opportunities that support continuous improvement.

A draft of this assurance report was provided to the department, Victoria Police and Office of the Minister for Police and Emergency Services for comment prior to finalisation. This final assurance report has been provided to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services for noting.

¹⁰ In May 2020, Victoria Police provided the Trustee with the following internal bimonthly dashboard reports and combined monthly project status reports for Victoria Police-led Statement initiatives: June 2019, August 2019, October 2019, December 2019 and February 2020.



3 Overview: implementation progress of the initiatives

The Trustee examined the implementation progress of 29 select initiatives (Table 1). The Trustee finds that the relevant entities have completed and delivered as planned 14 initiatives. Another 10 initiatives are progressing towards completion. The Trustee has closed the monitoring of the remaining five initiatives because they are on track to be completed through business as usual processes or transitioned to ongoing business as usual activity.

Since the commencement of the Statements, the Trustee has monitored the implementation progress of 94 initiatives.¹¹ Overall, 74 initiatives have been delivered, transitioned to ongoing business as usual activities or consolidated into another initiative. The Trustee looks forward to seeing the realisation of their outcomes and benefits. See Appendix A for a summary of all initiatives monitored to date.

The government is commended for the completion of some initiatives and implementation progress in others, particularly when concurrently resolving COVID-19 pandemic-related issues.

¹¹ The 94 initiatives monitored includes 10 of the 32 initiatives assessed as “ongoing” in the previous assurance report but not monitored in this assurance report.



Table 1 Summary of Trustee findings for the implementation progress of initiatives monitored within this assurance report

ID	Initiative title	Responsible entity	Status	Trustee finding
4.1. Reducing harm				
Statement 2017				
4.1.1.	2729 new police officers	Victoria Police	Ongoing	This initiative is progressing and will continue to be monitored
4.1.2.	100 new Protective Services Officers	Victoria Police	Ongoing	This initiative is progressing and will continue to be monitored
4.1.3.	Measure of harm reporting	Department	Completed	This initiative has been implemented as planned
Statement 2018/19				
4.1.4.	Policy review: serious traffic crimes	Department	Completed	This initiative has been implemented as planned
4.1.5.	Policy review: Public event planning	Department	Closed	This initiative will continue to be progressed via business as usual processes or other initiatives
Statement 2019/20				
4.1.6.	Music festival safety	Department	Closed	This initiative will continue to be progressed via business as usual processes or other initiatives
4.1.7.	Policy review: expansion of vehicle immobilisation devices	Department	Completed	This initiative has been implemented as planned
4.1.8.	Legislative reform: driver licence suspension	Department	Completed	This initiative has been implemented as planned
4.2. Increasing connection to the community				
Statement 2017				
4.2.1.	24-hour non-emergency Police Assistance Line	Victoria Police	Completed	This initiative has been implemented as planned
4.2.2.	Online reporting portal	Victoria Police	Completed	This initiative has been implemented as planned

ID	Initiative title	Responsible entity	Status	Trustee finding
4.2.3.	Station replacement	Victoria Police	Ongoing	This initiative is progressing and will continue to be monitored
4.2.4.	New Youth Specialist Officers	Victoria Police	Completed	This initiative has been implemented as planned
Statement 2018/19				
4.2.5.	Policy review: Protective Services Officers' presence, powers and career pathways	Department	Completed	This initiative has been implemented as planned
Statement 2019/20				
4.2.6.	Legislative reform: expansion of Protective Services Officer mobility and flexibility	Department	Completed	This initiative has been implemented as planned
4.3. Putting victims first				
Statement 2017				
4.3.1.	New specialist family violence police officers	Victoria Police	Completed	This initiative has been implemented as planned
4.3.2.	Mobile devices for frontline officers	Victoria Police	Closed	This initiative will continue to be progressed via business as usual processes or other initiatives
4.3.3.	Body-worn cameras	Victoria Police	Closed	This initiative will continue to be progressed via business as usual processes or other initiatives
Statement 2019/20				
4.3.4.	Legislative reform: strangulation	Department	Ongoing	This initiative is progressing and will continue to be monitored
4.4. Holding offenders to account				
Statement 2017				
4.4.1.	Policy review: youth justice strategy	Department	Completed	This initiative has been implemented as planned
4.4.2.	Automatic Number Plate Recognition technology	Victoria Police	Ongoing	This initiative is progressing and will continue to be monitored

ID	Initiative title	Responsible entity	Status	Trustee finding
4.4.3.	Trial: number plate theft reduction initiatives	Department	Completed	This initiative has been implemented as planned
Statement 2018/19				
4.4.4.	Legislative reform: unlawful association	Department	Ongoing	This initiative is progressing and will continue to be monitored
4.4.5.	Policy review: criminal organisation control laws	Department	Ongoing	This initiative is progressing and will continue to be monitored
4.4.6.	Policy review: asset confiscation regime	Department	Ongoing	This initiative is progressing and will continue to be monitored
4.5. Improving Victoria Police capability, culture and technology				
Statement 2017				
4.5.1.	Specialist training facility build	Victoria Police	Ongoing	This initiative is progressing and will continue to be monitored
4.5.2.	Air Wing capability	Victoria Police	Completed	This initiative has been implemented as planned
Statement 2018/19				
4.5.3.	Policy review: mental health of police and other emergency services workers	Department	Closed	This initiative will continue to be progressed via business as usual processes or other initiatives
Statement 2019/20				
4.5.4.	Mental health care for emergency services workers	Department / Victoria Police	Ongoing	This initiative is progressing and will continue to be monitored
4.5.5.	Restorative engagement and redress program	Department	Completed	This initiative has been implemented as planned

3.1 Notable observations

The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the many challenges when delivering an investment of around \$3 billion across numerous initiatives. This section provides notable observations into some initiatives assessed as part of this assurance report. See Section 4 for a more detailed assessment into each initiative within this report.

3.1.1 Reducing harm

The Statements recognise the diverse Victorian society and that communities perceive and experience safety and harm in many ways. The government has committed to a range of initiatives that align with efforts to make people safer and feel safer in private and public spaces. This includes swifter action by Victoria Police to protect communities and respond to emerging issues.

- ◆ A key part of the Statement's strategy to build community safety includes delivering initiatives that create a highly visible presence of officers to deter crime and give the community a strong sense of being protected. In Statement 2017, the government committed to an additional 2729 police officers and 100 Protective Services Officers (PSOs), excluding the additional 406 police officers committed to in 2016. As Victoria Police nears full delivery of these additional members, the Trustee notes that overall crime has increased by 6% during the 2019/20 financial year. However, the Trustee acknowledges that the overall increase may be a result of more officers on the frontline undertaking proactive policing and making arrests, consequently increasing detected crime numbers.¹²
- ◆ Sadly, 249 lives were lost on Victorian roads in 2019.¹³ The Trustee is pleased to see that the government has delivered several road safety initiatives and the number of lives lost for 2020 has decreased by around 18.9% to 202 lives, as at 7 December 2020. However, the Trustee cautions the government against complacency because one life lost, is one too many. The Trustee hopes the recent addition of tougher legislation on immediate licence or permit suspension for certain circumstances and the expansion of the situations where police can deploy vehicle immobilisation devices will help save lives and reduce serious injuries on Victorian roads.

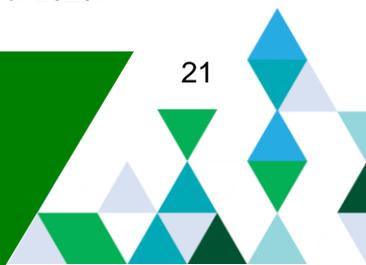
3.1.2 Increasing connection to the community

The Statements acknowledge that improving community safety is a shared responsibility. Partnerships between enforcement agencies and government services with community and businesses are critical in preventing and disrupting crime. The Statements include a range of initiatives aimed at strengthening the relationship between the community and Victoria Police. These initiatives endeavour to inspire confidence in people about how their communities are policed and the police organisation; and to create safer, stronger communities through active engagement between police with Victorians.

¹² Examples: drug offences increased by 13.6% and justice procedure offences by 6.2% (including breach family violence order up by 9.7%). In addition, two new COVID-19 related offences were introduced. Data from Crime Statistics Agency 'Latest Victorian Crime Data web pages,

<https://www.crimestatistics.vic.gov.au/crime-statistics/latest-victorian-crime-data>, viewed 9 October 2020.

¹³ <https://www.tac.vic.gov.au/road-safety/statistics/lives-lost-year-to-date>, viewed 9 December 2020.



- ◆ Victoria Police now have a fully operational Police Assistance Line and the Online Reporting Portal, providing the community with more efficient access to police assistance for non-urgent calls. Anecdotally, the savings in police hours is substantial and is being redirected into more operationally urgent duties. The Trustee looks forward to Victoria Police's evaluation of the benefits. The Trustee notes that both systems were used during the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions with great success and encourages the continued publicity to build greater awareness of the telephone assistance line 131 444 and online reporting website.¹⁴
- ◆ The Trustee is pleased to see the expansion of PSOs' powers and presence, which enables more flexibility in deployment. The Trustee notes that PSOs provide(d) vital support and enforcement of Victoria's Chief Health Officer's directions during COVID-19 operations seven days a week. The Trustee hopes the expanded role beyond transport hubs will mean more visible patrolling to keep community streets safe and more community reassurance options to service community needs.

3.1.3 Putting victims first

The Statements and their initiatives align with Victoria Police's focus on victim-centric policing. The initiatives aim to support police to protect victims and witnesses and to work with other agencies to keep them safe and connected to the right support services. A range of initiatives are also aimed at facilitating services to work together to identify and support vulnerable children and young people, as well as to protect Victoria's women and children against family violence.

- ◆ Over 9300 body-worn cameras have been deployed to frontline police officers across the state, increasing visibility of police interactions with the public. The Trustee hopes to see this technology support public and police safety through oversight of police conduct, enhancement of evidence gathering capabilities for police and reduction in victim trauma through the prompt resolution of court cases. Victoria Police advised that body-worn camera footage on average translates to around three hours of report writing saved for each complaint made. The Trustee encourages the government to proceed with the next major step of Digital Recording of Evidence in Chief: enabling the use of body-worn camera footage as evidence at court needs very careful consideration and planning involving a large range of stakeholders including community, not-for-profit and legal organisations and government representatives.
- ◆ Family violence is and continues to be a major issue for all law enforcement agencies across Australia. The Trustee is pleased to see that Victoria Police has delivered an additional 415 police officers specialising in family violence and established Family Violence Units across the state. The Trustee commends Victoria Police's launch of Operation Ribbon on 13 April 2020, to protect vulnerable family violence victims during the COVID-19 pandemic. Between 1 April and 30 June 2020, there were 10,580 arrests and 5,784 summons issued for criminal offences related to a family incident.¹⁵ The Trustee encourages Victoria Police to transition this proactive policing operation to business as usual. The Trustee notes that Tasmania Police and New Zealand Police have the power to issue Police Family Violence Orders and Police Safety Orders respectively, saving significant police and court time. The Trustee supports the recommendation from the Royal Commission into Family Violence regarding that government consider whether Victoria Police should be given the power to issue family violence intervention orders in the field.

¹⁴ https://onlinereporting.police.vic.gov.au/s/?language=en_US

¹⁵ Family Violence Database, Victoria Police: Family Violence related criminal offences, Crime Statistics Agency, viewed 16 December 2020.

3.1.4 Holding offenders to account

The Statements set out a whole of justice system response to hold offenders accountable for their actions, so that the community and those who choose to break the law, know there are consequences for criminal behaviour. The initiatives are also aimed at supporting police to proactively monitor and manage the risks posed by serious offenders, as well as increasing engagement and connection between offenders and agencies to assist with behavioural change.

- ◆ On 21 May 2020, the government released the 'Youth Justice Strategic Plan 2020-2030', supported by over \$1 billion of investment. The Trustee applauds all those involved in the development of the plan and supports all efforts that aim to provide genuine opportunities for vulnerable children and young people to help turn their lives around. Prevention, diversion and early intervention are effective ways to reduce youth crime in the long term and improve community safety. The Trustee notes and supports the government's intention to continuously improve the plan and develop a new performance measurement framework.
- ◆ As at 31 August 2020, 146 Victoria Police highway patrol vehicles have been fitted with Automatic Number Plate Recognition technology to detect unregistered vehicles, unlicensed or uninsured owners and offences such as theft of vehicles and theft of registration plates. The Trustee notes that this technology has scanned over 39 million number plates resulting in the identification of significant numbers of unauthorised drivers, unregistered vehicles, stolen vehicles and stolen plate detections. The Trustee looks forward to the full roll out of this technology and hopes it further increases the detection of crime and improves road safety.

3.1.5 Improving Victoria Police capability, culture and technology

The Statements recognise that for Victoria Police to keep the community safe from harm, they too must be safe, with the right capability, culture and technology to do their jobs efficiently and effectively. The government has committed to a range of initiatives that further instil a police workforce that is diverse and inclusive in structure, and objective and just when servicing the needs of all Victorians. It also aims to support Victoria Police in employing the use of evidence, data and technology for more effective policing services.

- ◆ Victoria Police has delivered on its \$63.2 million investment to modernise and expand its air wing capability. The Trustee hopes that the new fixed-wing plane and three new helicopters results in greater flexibility and timelier resolution of critical specialist and high risk incidents.
- ◆ The government has established a Restorative Engagement and Redress Scheme. Former and current Victoria Police employees who have experienced workplace sex discrimination or sexual harassment can apply for counselling services, restorative engagement or financial payments. The Trustee hopes this scheme will result in measurable improvements to Victoria Police's organisational culture, which in turn will help its members to more effectively serve the community. Further, that the support delivered, and acknowledgment of the harm helps provide closure to those who have been harmed. The Trustee notes that the scheme requires periodic funding submissions and advises the government to establish adequate ongoing funding.
- ◆ The mental health of all emergency services workers is critical for them to effectively serve the community. Immediate treatment is key to a quicker return to work. The government has piloted a provisional payment scheme to enable emergency services workers to access payments for reasonable medical expenses incurred while their compensation claim is being determined. The Trustee is pleased to see that the evaluation of the scheme resulted in an extension of the pilot until the scheme is established in legislation.

3.2 Towards continuous improvement

In assessing the implementation progress of the initiatives, the Trustee observed and acknowledges examples of good practice. This section also includes improvement opportunities for the government to consider.

3.2.1 Good practice themes

Adaptability during the COVID-19 pandemic challenges

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted the working arrangements and business processes for all stakeholders. The Trustee commends all stakeholders for implementing mitigation strategies within Victoria's Chief Health Officer's restrictions and for the greater use of technology to progress the implementation of initiatives during these challenging times. Despite the delays in some initiatives, the Trustee is confident that the relevant entities remain committed to delivering the promises under the Statements as soon as practical.

Consolidated reporting department in Victoria Police

In early 2020, Victoria Police established the Investment Management and Reporting Department, which consolidated various reporting bodies including the Enterprise Management Program Office. This new Department is now the central point to oversee all investment expenditure and reporting where required, providing a single source of truth and a level of consistency.

Improved Victoria Police financial management and reporting

The Trustee has seen improvements to Victoria Police's financial visibility and reporting since the commencement of the Statement assurance activities. This includes the establishment of the Cost Control Board with Deputy Commissioners and Deputy Secretaries as members. The new Investment Management and Reporting Department also helps with greater visibility and compliance over budget expenditure. The Trustee encourages Victoria Police to continue maturing its financial management and delivering on its financial sustainability objectives.

3.2.2 Other considerations

Delivering a program of this scale has many challenges, and improvements happen over time. The following identified improvement opportunities did not impact the findings in this assurance report.

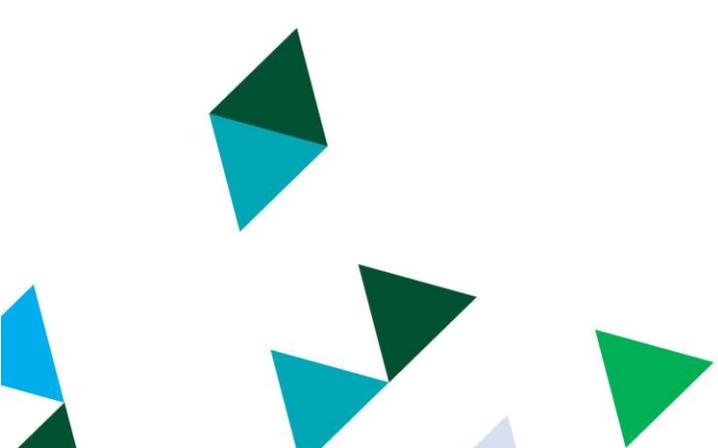
Increased focus on evaluating the benefits of the overall program of works

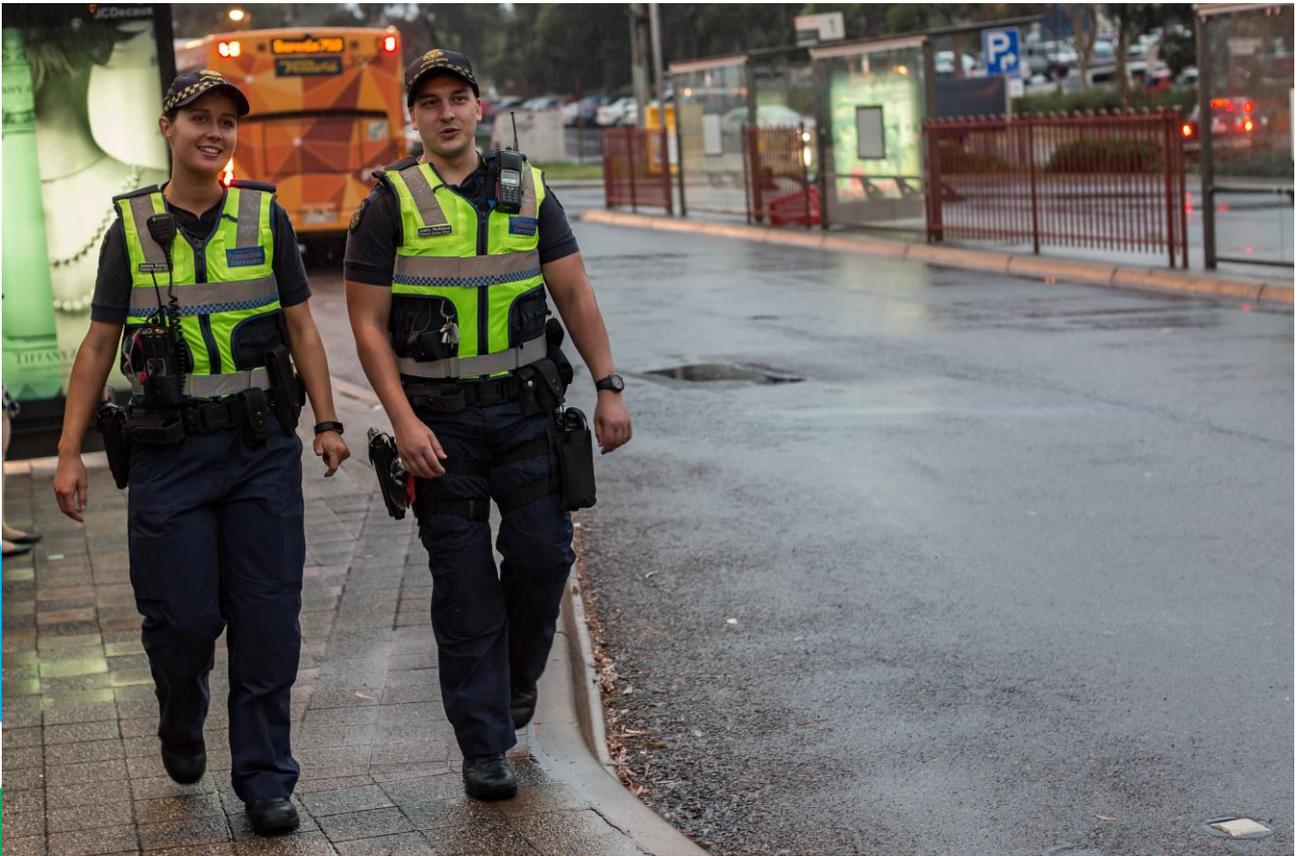
Many initiatives have been implemented since the commencement of the Statements. The Trustee acknowledges and supports that the delivery of several initiatives included evaluating the impacts of that initiative's outputs. The Trustee encourages the government to increase focus on tracking the outcomes and evaluating the actual realised benefits and impacts of the overall community safety investment. Did the government achieve the desired change and were there any other unanticipated positive or negative consequences? Gathering evidence that demonstrates proven benefits to community safety will help inform and justify future prudent investments, particularly those that improve the mental health and wellbeing of Victoria Police employees.



4 Findings: implementation progress of initiatives

This section provides detail on the implementation of each initiative assessed as part of this assurance report. The commentary takes into consideration but tries to avoid repeating similar observations made in the previous assurance reports. It avoids providing specific details that would compromise security.





4.1 Reducing harm

4.1.1 2729 new police officers

Description	Responsible entity	Status	Trustee finding
2729 new police over four years to keep our streets and suburbs safe and to respond to critical issues	Victoria Police	Ongoing	This initiative is progressing and will continue to be monitored

The Trustee assessed the response provided by Victoria Police to the Trustee's information request via the customised template, including project status reports, resource tracker and images. Relevant senior Victoria Police staff were interviewed, and relevant government media releases noted.¹⁶

Attraction, recruitment and training

Under the Statements, Victoria Police has, as of 30 June 2020, recruited 1636 new police officers. Victoria Police advised that despite transient delays due to the introduction of COVID-19 pandemic-related restrictions, the recruitment program is on schedule to complete full recruitment by 30 June 2021.

Deployment

Victoria Police advised that police officers have been deployed to areas of greatest need as determined by the Staffing Allocation Model, including in Eastern, North Western Metro, Southern Metro and Western Regions. The deployment includes 415 officers to respond specifically to family violence, 42 officers to respond specifically to young people, and 219 officers for the purpose of backfilling positions for staff on parental leave. Victoria Police advised that the additional 2729 new police will be fully deployed by 30 April 2022.

This initiative is related to other initiatives such as the new Youth Specialist Officers (for more information see section 4.2.4); and new specialist family violence police officers (for more information see section 4.3.1).

¹⁶ Minister for Police and Emergency Services, Record investment delivers hundreds of additional police, Victorian Government, 11 March 2020; and Minister for Police and Emergency Services, Record recruitment drive boosts police numbers, Victorian Government, 15 July 2019.

4.1.2 100 new Protective Services Officers

Description	Responsible entity	Status	Trustee finding
\$62.3 million to recruit an additional 100 PSOs	Victoria Police	Ongoing	This initiative is progressing and will continue to be monitored

The Trustee assessed the response provided by Victoria Police to the Trustee’s information request via the customised template, including project status reports, resource tracker and images. Relevant senior Victoria Police staff were interviewed, and relevant government media releases¹⁷ and a Victoria Police Gazette article¹⁸ noted.

Under the Statements, Victoria Police has, as of 30 June 2020, recruited and deployed 75 of the 100 PSOs to the Transit Safety Division. The Trustee notes that despite COVID-19 pandemic-related delays, the recruitment of the final group of 25 PSOs is on schedule.

4.1.3 Measure of harm reporting

Description	Responsible entity	Status	Trustee finding
Develop additional tools to measure crime and the harm it causes	Department	Completed	This initiative has been implemented as planned

The Trustee assessed the response provided by the Crime Statistics Agency to the Trustee’s information request via the customised template. The Trustee reviewed the discussion paper¹⁹ and website²⁰ used for community consultation on the draft measure of crime harm, and the Crime Statistics Agency ‘Harm and crime’ web page.²¹ Relevant senior Crime Statistics Agency staff were interviewed, and relevant government media releases noted.²²

In June 2020, the Crime Statistics Agency announced the release of the new measure of harm caused by crime, which reflects the potential harm to victims as perceived by the public. The Crime Statistics Agency has applied the new harm measure to publish harm statistics for the year ending March 2020 and the year ending June 2020. The Trustee commends the agency for undertaking public consultation to help inform the development of the new measure of crime harm.

¹⁷ Minister for Police and Emergency Services, More places, more often: PSOs to drive community safety boost, Victorian Government, 2 June 2020; Minister for Police and Emergency Services, Deploying PSOs to where Victorians need them, Victorian Government, 6 April 2020; and Minister for Police and Emergency Services, Reforms to better protect Victorians, Victorian Government, 28 August 2019.

¹⁸ Victoria Police, PSOs hit the streets for Op Shielding, The Victoria Police Gazette, Number 8, 13 April 2020.

¹⁹ Crime Statistics Agency, Developing a new measure of harm arising from crime victimisation, State of Victoria, December 2019.

²⁰ <https://engage.vic.gov.au/crime-harm-measure>, viewed 10 January 2020.

²¹ <https://www.crimestatistics.vic.gov.au/harm-and-crime>, viewed 23 June and 29 September 2020.

²² Crime Statistics Agency, Harm caused by crime, State of Victoria, June 2020.

4.1.4 Policy review: serious traffic crimes

Description	Responsible entity	Status	Trustee finding
Review the operation of laws relevant to suspension and cancellation of drivers' licences of people charged with serious traffic crimes	Department	Completed	This initiative has been implemented as planned

The Trustee assessed the response provided by the Police, Fines and Crime Prevention group of the department to the Trustee's information request via the customised template. Relevant senior department staff were interviewed.

The department has reviewed the appropriateness of immediately suspending the drivers' licences of persons charged with serious traffic offences, as already occurs with high level drink- and drug-driving offending. The review identified a range of offences that pose significant risk to public safety and warrant immediate licence suspension. The outcome of the review led to the government's commitment in Statement 2019/20 to introduce legislation that will ensure drivers who are charged with certain offences are immediately suspended from driving. The Trustee commends the department for consulting not only with Victoria Police, Department of Transport and other organisations but also with the families of victims to better target and tailor review outcomes.

This initiative is related to other initiatives such as the legislative reform: driver licence suspension (for more information see section 4.1.8).

4.1.5 Policy review: public event planning

Description	Responsible entity	Status	Trustee finding
Examine the role of Victoria Police in the planning of public events such as music festivals to promote community safety and prevent harm related to drug use	Department	Closed	This initiative will continue to be progressed via business as usual processes or other initiatives

The Trustee assessed the response provided by the Police, Fines and Crime Prevention group of the department to the Trustee's information request via the customised template. Relevant senior department staff were interviewed.

On 14 November 2019, Victoria Police hosted a music festival industry forum to explore how the music festival industry, service providers and government agencies can work together and share information to achieve community safety outcomes and prevent harm at music festivals. The forum was attended by 160 people including representatives from industry, security providers, health academics and the Tasmania, New South Wales and Queensland Police. Victoria Police and the industry agreed to continue to work collaboratively to ensure that Victoria can continue to host vibrant events that are safe. Further, Victoria Police are members of the Victorian Government's Music Festivals Working Group.

This initiative is related to other initiatives such as the music festival safety (for more information see section 4.1.6).

4.1.6 Music festival safety

Description	Responsible entity	Status	Trustee finding
Ensure live music events are safe for attendees through working closely with industry and government agencies as part of the Live Music Roundtable	Department	Closed	This initiative will continue to be progressed via business as usual processes or other initiatives

The Trustee assessed the response provided by the Police, Fines and Crime Prevention group of the department to the Trustee’s information request via the customised template. Relevant senior department staff were interviewed.

In March 2019, the Victorian Government established a Music Festivals Working Group to support a whole of government approach to reducing the risk of harm and improving the safety and wellbeing for patrons, staff and the local community. Working group members include various government departments, Ambulance Victoria, Safer Care Victoria, Victoria Police and the Municipal Association of Victoria. The working group has implemented its 2019 initiatives. These include better access to online planning information to help music event organisers run safer events and minimise harm; developed a meeting agenda template to help guide early conversations between event organisers and relevant agencies about possible risks and mitigation strategies; hosted a music festival industry forum; improved data collection of medical assistance given by first aid providers at music festivals to assist the identification of future health issue trends; and improved advice about medicines at public events.

The department advised that the draft workplan for 2020/21 is currently under consultation. Further, the COVID-19 pandemic has delayed the launch of some initiatives and has put on hold the working group meetings. The Trustee notes that the appropriate governance structures are in place to continue this initiative as business-as-usual.

This initiative is related to other initiatives such as the policy review: public event planning (for more information see section 4.1.5).

4.1.7 Policy review: expansion of vehicle immobilisation devices

Description	Responsible entity	Status	Trustee finding
Consider options to further expand the use of vehicle immobilisation devices to put a stop to hoon drivers	Department	Completed	This initiative has been implemented as planned

The Trustee assessed the response provided by the Police, Fines and Crime Prevention group of the department to the Trustee’s information request via the customised template. Relevant senior department staff were interviewed, and a government gazette publication noted.²³

²³ Victoria Government Special Gazette, Proclamation of Royal Assent of the *Transport Legislation Amendment Act 2019*, State Government of Victoria, 3 December 2019.

The department reviewed existing policies and considered additional options for the deployment of vehicle immobilisation devices to promote road safety. The review identified an opportunity to expand the use of vehicle immobilisation devices to support police in maintaining public order at public events. The outcome of the review led to the department undertaking a legislative program to amend section 63B of the *Road Safety Act 1986*.²⁴

The *Transport Legislation Amendment Act 2019* received Royal Assent on 3 December 2019. The relevant part of the amendment commenced immediately and has enabled police officers to deploy vehicle immobilisation devices in additional circumstances. For example, to stop or assist in stopping a vehicle from entering a place on or near a road or road related area at which there is a public gathering or where a non-road activity²⁵ is being conducted.

4.1.8 Legislative reform: driver licence suspension

Description	Responsible entity	Status	Trustee finding
Introduce legislation that will ensure drivers who are charged with certain offences are immediately suspended from driving	Department	Completed	This initiative has been implemented as planned

The Trustee assessed the response provided by the Police, Fines and Crime Prevention group of the department to the Trustee’s information request via the customised template. Relevant senior department staff were interviewed, and a government gazette publication²⁶ and a relevant media release²⁷ noted.

The *Road Safety and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2020* received Royal Assent on 17 March 2020 and commenced on 12 November 2020. The amendment enabled, *inter alia*, immediate licence or permit suspension for certain excessive speeding offences²⁸ and circumstances where a motor vehicle was used as a weapon in a serious offence that resulted in injury or death.

This initiative is related to other initiatives such as the policy review: serious traffic crimes (for more information see section 4.1.4).

²⁴ Section 63B of the *Road Safety Act 1986* authorises police officers to deploy a vehicle immobilising device to prevent the use of a vehicle for the purpose of escaping from lawful custody or avoiding arrest or in a police pursuit.

²⁵ Examples of non-road activities include the use of a road for shooting of a film, a street festival or a bicycle event.

²⁶ Victoria Government Special Gazette, Proclamation of Royal Assent of the *Road Safety and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2020*, State Government of Victoria, 17 March 2020.

²⁷ Minister for Police and Emergency Services, Taking dangerous drivers off the road, Victorian Government, 6 March 2020.

²⁸ Examples include a motor vehicle driven at a speed of 45 km/h or more over the applicable speed limit or at a speed of 145 km/h or more in a 110 km/h speed limit zone.



4.2 Increasing connection to the community

4.2.1 24-hour non-emergency Police Assistance Line

Description	Responsible entity	Status	Trustee finding
A new 24-hour non-emergency Police Assistance Line to enable people to contact Victoria Police in non-emergency situations, such as reporting a crime or suspected criminal activity, and make general enquiries	Victoria Police	Completed	This initiative has been implemented as planned

The Trustee assessed the response provided by Victoria Police to the Trustee's information request via the customised template, including project status reports. Relevant senior Victoria Police staff in charge of the 'BlueConnect' program²⁹ were interviewed, and a relevant government media release³⁰ noted.

Victoria Police advised that between 28 February 2019 and 30 June 2020, a total of 847,461 general enquiries and referral calls have been received. Of these, approximately 25% were transferred or redirected to Triple Zero (000) or other government departments. Victoria Police advised that, anecdotally, substantial time savings have been achieved with police at local stations redirecting time back into more operationally urgent duties. The Trustee notes that the initiative was delivered under budget.

Victoria Police advised that, since December 2019, the ongoing administration of the Police Assistance Line has transitioned to the control of State Emergencies and Support Command of Victoria Police.

Although outside of scope, the Trustee notes that Victoria Police continues to implement enhancements to the assistance line, including interactive voice response and cyber security applications.

This initiative is related to other initiatives such as the online reporting portal (for more information see section 4.2.2); mobile devices for frontline officers (for more information see section 4.3.2); and body-worn cameras (for more information see section 4.3.3).

²⁹ The BlueConnect program comprises the Police Assistance Line, online reporting portal, mobile devices for frontline officers and body-worn cameras.

³⁰ Minister for Police and Emergency Services, Backing our police to keep the community safe, Victorian Government, 1 July 2019.

4.2.2 Online reporting portal

Description	Responsible entity	Status	Trustee finding
Create an online reporting portal for reporting crime and obtaining information and other assistance	Victoria Police	Completed	This initiative has been implemented as planned

The Trustee assessed the response provided by Victoria Police to the Trustee’s information request via the customised template, including project status reports. Relevant senior Victoria Police staff in charge of the ‘BlueConnect’ program were interviewed, and a relevant government media release noted.³¹

Victoria Police advised that, as at 30 June 2020, a total of 17,687 reports were submitted by the community. A further 1213 reports were generated in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic. The types of crimes being reported include burglary, theft of/from motor car and property damage offences. Victoria Police advised that, anecdotally, substantial time savings have been achieved and returned to frontline policing.

Victoria Police advised that, since December 2019, the ongoing administration of the reporting portal has transitioned to the control of State Emergencies and Support Command of Victoria Police.

Although outside of scope, the Trustee notes that Victoria Police continues to implement enhancements to the portal, including interactive voice response and cyber security applications.

This initiative is related to other initiatives such as the 24-hour non-emergency Police Assistance Line (for more information see section 4.2.1); mobile devices for frontline officers (for more information see section 4.3.2); and body-worn cameras (for more information see section 4.3.3).

4.2.3 Station replacement

Description	Responsible entity	Status	Trustee finding
Replace 10 stations across the State: Alexandra, Altona North, Reservoir, Rutherglen, South Melbourne, Tangambalanga, Warracknabeal, Wedderburn, Wycheproof and Wyndham	Victoria Police	Ongoing	This initiative is progressing and will continue to be monitored

³¹ Minister for Police and Emergency Services, Backing our police to keep the community safe, Victorian Government, 1 July 2019.

The Trustee assessed the response provided by Victoria Police to the Trustee’s information request via the customised template, including project status reports. A relevant Victoria Police Gazette article was noted.³²

In addition to those reported in the previous assurance report, the following construction works are now also completed and the station operational: Altona North and Reservoir police stations.

Despite delays, the Trustee is confident that the appropriate risk and issue management strategies are in place to manage the budget and complete the final two stations:

- ◆ South Melbourne Police Station: Land acquisition and concept design phases are completed. Market engagement to identify delivery options is underway and will inform the new anticipated completion date.
- ◆ Wyndham Police Station: The COVID-19 pandemic has delayed construction works. Victoria Police forecasts practical completion by May 2021.

4.2.4 New Youth Specialist Officers

Description	Responsible entity	Status	Trustee finding
42 new youth specialist positions to work in local communities and divert young people from a life of crime	Victoria Police	Completed	This initiative has been implemented as planned

The Trustee assessed the response provided by Victoria Police to the Trustee’s information request via the customised template, including project status reports. The Trustee interviewed relevant senior Victoria Police staff.

Victoria Police has deployed 42 new Youth Specialist Officers to various locations across the state, based on localised youth crime statistics and existing levels of resourcing. The Trustee notes that the initiative was delivered under budget.

Although outside of scope, the Trustee commends Victoria Police for creating a two-day professional development program for Youth Specialist Officers to enhance their capabilities in responding to young people involved in offending that is causing significant community harm. This was done in consultation with the Children’s Court of Victoria, Youth Justice group of the department and the Department of Health and Human Services.

This initiative is related to other initiatives such as the 2729 new police officers (for more information see section 4.1.1).

³² Victoria Police, New Reservoir station opens this week, The Victoria Police Gazette, Number 3, 22 June 2020.



4.2.5 Policy review: Protective Services Officers' presence, powers and career pathways

Description	Responsible entity	Status	Trustee finding
Expand the presence of PSOs beyond the public transport network and into other places of mass gathering as well as more career pathway opportunities	Department	Completed	This initiative has been implemented as planned

The Trustee assessed the response provided by the Police, Fines and Crime Prevention group of the department to the Trustee's information request via the customised template, including legislative and commitment³³ documents. Relevant senior department and Victoria Police staff were interviewed, a relevant Victorian Legislation web page reviewed³⁴, relevant government media releases³⁵ and a government gazette publication³⁶ noted.

Presence and powers

The *Police and Emergency Legislation Amendment Act 2020* received Royal Assent on 27 October 2020. The department is working with Victoria Police to enable commencement of the provisions of the relevant parts of the amendment prior to the default commencement date of 3 May 2021. The relevant parts of the amendment expand the areas where PSOs may exercise their powers. This includes places of mass gathering and the thoroughfares to access them. It also expands the PSO functions to enable deployment more widely across the state to maintain public order and security of local premises. This includes to any area across Victoria that is declared an emergency or disaster area for the protection of the general public.

In the interim, in February 2020, the Victoria Police Amendment Regulations 2020 were introduced to temporarily enable PSOs to be deployed more widely across the state to maintain public order and security of local premises. The regulations expire on 7 April 2021.

Career pathway

Victoria Police and The Police Association Victoria have agreed to a best practice employment commitment to support the Victoria Police Enterprise Bargaining Agreement 2019. Clause 7 of the commitment gives effect to a new career structure for PSOs including the new supervisor positions as well as enabling PSO voluntary duties and expanded career development opportunities.

This initiative is related to other initiatives such as 100 new PSOs (for more information see section

³³ Victoria Police and The Police Federation of Australia, Victoria Police Best Practice Employment Commitment 2020-2024.

³⁴ <https://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/bills/police-and-emergency-legislation-amendment-bill-2020>, viewed 21 September and 2 November 2020.

³⁵ Minister for Police and Emergency Services, More places, more often: PSOs to drive community safety boost, Victorian Government, 2 June 2020; Minister for Police and Emergency Services, Deploying PSOs to where Victorians need them, Victorian Government, 6 April 2020; and Minister for Police and Emergency Services, Reforms to better protect Victorians, Victorian Government, 28 August 2019.

³⁶ Victoria Government Special Gazette, Proclamation of Royal Assent of the *Police and Emergency Legislation Amendment Act 2020*, State Government of Victoria, 27 October 2020.

4.1.2); and legislative reform: expansion of PSO mobility and flexibility (for more information see section 4.2.6).

4.2.6 Legislative reform: expansion of Protective Services Officer mobility and flexibility

Description	Responsible entity	Status	Trustee finding
Introduce legislation that allows PSOs to be deployed more flexibly, while maintaining the PSO presence across the public transport network	Department	Completed	This initiative has been implemented as planned

The Trustee assessed the response provided by the Police, Fines and Crime Prevention group of the department to the Trustee's information request via the customised template, including legislative documents. Relevant senior department and Victoria Police staff were interviewed, a relevant Victorian Legislation web page reviewed³⁷ and relevant government media releases³⁸ noted.

The *Police and Emergency Legislation Amendment Act 2020* received Royal Assent on 27 October 2020. The department is working with Victoria Police to enable commencement of the provisions of the relevant parts of the amendment prior to the default commencement date of 3 May 2021. The relevant parts of the amendment expand the areas where PSOs may exercise their powers. This includes places of mass gathering and the thoroughfares to access them. It also expands the PSO functions to enable deployment more widely across the state to maintain public order and security of local premises. This includes to any area across Victoria that is declared an emergency or disaster area for the protection of the general public.

In the interim, in February 2020, the Victoria Police Amendment Regulations 2020 were introduced to temporarily enable PSOs to be deployed more widely across the state to maintain public order and security of local premises. The regulations expire on 7 April 2021.

This initiative is related to other initiatives such as 100 new PSOs (for more information see section 4.1.2); and policy review: PSOs' presence, powers and career pathways (for more information see section 4.2.5).

³⁷ <https://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/bills/police-and-emergency-legislation-amendment-bill-2020>, viewed 21 September and 2 November 2020.

³⁸ Minister for Police and Emergency Services, More places, more often: PSOs to drive community safety boost, Victorian Government, 2 June 2020; Minister for Police and Emergency Services, Deploying PSOs to where Victorians need them, Victorian Government, 6 April 2020; Minister for Police and Emergency Services, Reforms to better protect Victorians, Victorian Government, 28 August 2019.

4.3 Putting victims first

4.3.1 New specialist family violence police officers

Description	Responsible entity	Status	Trustee finding
415 specialist police to transform how Victoria Police responds to family violence	Victoria Police	Completed	This initiative has been implemented as planned

The Trustee assessed the response provided by Victoria Police to the Trustee's information request via the customised template, including project status reports. Relevant senior Victoria Police staff were interviewed, and relevant government media releases³⁹ and a public media article⁴⁰ noted.

Victoria Police has recruited 415 officers for specialist family violence deployment to newly created positions across the command structure, regions and specialist units. Most of these additional police were deployed specifically to Family Violence Investigation Units, which have been established within each police division to respond to family violence-related matters. The Trustee notes that the initiative was delivered under budget.

This initiative is related to other initiatives such as the 2729 new police officers (for more information see section 4.1.1).

³⁹ Minister for Police and Emergency Services, Record investment delivers hundreds of additional police, Victorian Government, 12 March 2020; and Minister for Police and Emergency Services, Record recruitment drive boosts police numbers, Victorian Government, 15 July 2019.

⁴⁰ Silvester, J., The scandal behind locked doors, The Age, 23 July 2020.



4.3.2 Mobile devices for frontline officers

Description	Responsible entity	Status	Trustee finding
Mobile devices for frontline officers	Victoria Police	Closed	This initiative will continue to be progressed via business as usual processes or other initiatives

The Trustee assessed the response provided by Victoria Police to the Trustee’s information request via the customised template, including project status reports. Relevant senior Victoria Police staff in charge of the ‘BlueConnect’ program were interviewed, and a relevant government media release⁴¹ and a public media article⁴² noted.

Victoria Police advised that over 11,000 devices have been delivered to members and, on average, 2400 devices are being used each day. The roll out will continue as recruits graduate from the Police Academy, and another 516 iPhones are planned to be provided to Senior Sergeants to enhance their technical ability. The Trustee notes overspends in the deployment of the devices is managed internally within the BlueConnect program budget.

Victoria Police advised that, as of May 2020, this mobile technology project has closed and the ongoing management of these devices as well as the future deployment of enhancements and additional devices has transitioned to the Information Systems and Security Command of Victoria Police.

Although outside of scope, the Trustee notes that Victoria Police continues to improve device functionality with various enhancements. These include Realtime Tactical Mapping to provide supervisors visibility over resources, iPad keyboards to allow members to efficiently type statements for crime and event reports as well as member safety applications. Further, Victoria Police have released a new Family Violence Report available on mobile devices to better guide risk assessment and management to protect more victims. The new tool assists officers with better decision making and more timely and accurate incident reports filled in the field.

This initiative is related to other initiatives such as the 24-hour non-emergency Police Assistance Line (for more information see section 4.2.1); online reporting portal (for more information see section 4.2.2); and body-worn cameras (for more information see section 4.3.3).

⁴¹ Minister for Police and Emergency Services, Family violence reporting tool goes live across Victoria, Victorian Government, 14 August 2019.

⁴² Silvester, J., The scandal behind locked doors, The Age, 23 July 2020.



4.3.3 Body-worn cameras

Description	Responsible entity	Status	Trustee finding
State-wide roll out of body-worn cameras to better respond to and investigate crime	Victoria Police	Closed	This initiative will continue to be progressed via business as usual processes or other initiatives

The Trustee assessed the responses provided by Victoria Police and the Justice Policy and Data Reform group of the department to the Trustee’s information request via the customised template, including project status reports and an evaluation report.⁴³ Relevant senior Victoria Police staff in charge of the ‘BlueConnect’ program were interviewed.

Victoria Police advised that, as at 30 June 2020, over 9300 body-worn cameras have been deployed to frontline members and specialist units. Capital works for body-worn camera operations and safe storage has been completed at 335 police sites. The Trustee notes that deployment of body-worn cameras is tracking under budget.

Victoria Police advised of police member use and compliance with the introduction of body-worn cameras and associated policies. Over the course of the 2019/20 financial year, the monthly number of footage files, hours of video and size of footage has more than doubled. Further, the availability of footage evidence has reduced the time spent on processing reports by, on average, three hours per complaint. Victoria Police advised that, as of May 2020, the body-worn camera project has closed, and the ongoing management and future deployment of additional cameras has transitioned to the Information Systems and Security Command of Victoria Police. In addition, a body-worn camera reference group has been established to support body-worn camera outcomes through the justice system.

Although outside of scope, the Trustee notes that Victoria Police conducted a trial of the use of body-worn cameras to capture the digitally recorded evidence in-chief of victims of family violence. Subsequently, Victoria Police commissioned Monash University to undertake an independent evaluation of the trial. On 1 September 2020, the evaluation report was tabled in Parliament. The report made 11 recommendations regarding training, upgrades and better facilities within the Court system to enable delivery of the digital evidence. Victoria Police advised that further evaluations on victim outcomes are being considered.

This initiative is related to other initiatives such as the 24-hour non-emergency Police Assistance Line (for more information see section 4.2.1); online reporting portal (for more information see section 4.2.2); and mobile devices for frontline officers (for more information see section 4.3.2).

⁴³ McCulloch, J., et al, Victoria Police Trial of Digitally Recorded Evidence in Chief – Family Violence, Monash University, 14 February 2020.

4.3.4 Legislative reform: strangulation

Description	Responsible entity	Status	Trustee finding
Introduce legislation and penalties for a stand-alone offence of strangulation	Department	Ongoing	This initiative is progressing and will continue to be monitored

The Trustee assessed the response provided by the Justice Policy and Data Reform group of the department to the Trustee's information request via the customised template. A public media article was noted.⁴⁴

The COVID-19 pandemic has delayed and continues to require the reprioritisation of the department's legislative program.

The department advised that a Bill to introduce an offence of non-fatal strangulation is progressing well. On 14 October 2020, the department conducted a roundtable with legal and family violence stakeholders to discuss key aspects of the Bill. The department will continue to consult with stakeholders to assist with the ongoing development of the Bill.

⁴⁴ Hope Z., New law to make strangulation a stand-alone offence, The Age, 1 July 2019.

4.4 Holding offenders to account

4.4.1 Policy review: youth justice strategy

Description	Responsible entity	Status	Trustee finding
A new Youth Justice Strategic Plan that supports immediate action with long term reform	Department	Completed	This initiative has been implemented as planned

The Trustee assessed the response provided by the Youth Justice group of the department to the Trustee's information request via the customised template. A strategy⁴⁵ and the Youth Justice 'Youth Justice Strategic Plan 2020-2030' web pages were reviewed⁴⁶ and a relevant government media release⁴⁷ noted.

On 21 May 2020, the Victorian Government launched the Youth Justice Strategic Plan 2020-2030. The plan describes the government's 10-year roadmap and commitments to reform the youth justice system. The Trustee feels that early intervention is often the key to understanding motivations and better than punitive measures in reducing crime, and so is pleased to note that the plan focusses on prevention, diversion, early intervention and supporting young people to remain engaged in school, work and the community.

The Trustee commends the department for engaging with community members from overrepresented groups, children and young people when developing the plan, in addition to representatives from the Youth Justice Reference Group, key service delivery partners and sector participants.

The Trustee notes that Youth Justice will monitor progress and continuously improve the plan over the life of the strategy as well as develop a new performance measurement framework.

⁴⁵ Victorian Government, Youth Justice Strategic Plan 2020–2030, State of Victoria, May 2020.

⁴⁶ <https://www.justice.vic.gov.au/youth-justice-strategy>, viewed 6 October 2020.

⁴⁷ Minister for Youth Justice, New plan to help young Victorians turn their lives around, Victorian Government, 21 May 2020.



4.4.2 Automatic Number Plate Recognition technology

Description	Responsible entity	Status	Trustee finding
Automatic Number Plate Recognition technology: \$43.8 million to roll out this technology across Victoria Police highway patrol vehicles	Victoria Police	Ongoing	This initiative is progressing and will continue to be monitored

The Trustee assessed the response provided by Victoria Police to the Trustee’s information request via the customised template, including project status reports and images. Relevant government media releases⁴⁸ and a Victoria Police Gazette article⁴⁹ were noted.

Victoria Police advised that despite functional delays and COVID-19 pandemic-related impacts, the roll out of automatic number plate recognition technology to highway patrol vehicles is scheduled to be delivered by 31 March 2021. As of 31 August 2020, the technology has been deployed to 146 of 221 eligible vehicles. The Trustee notes the current underspends in implementation.

Victoria Police advised that an independent evaluation of the benefits of the technology will occur after the initiative has been delivered.

4.4.3 Trial: number plate theft reduction initiatives

Description	Responsible entity	Status	Trustee finding
Trial a series of number plate theft reduction initiatives to determine those that best reduce this high-volume crime	Department	Completed	This initiative has been implemented as planned

The Trustee assessed the response provided by the Police, Fines and Crime Prevention group of the department to the Trustee’s information request via the customised template, including an evaluation report. Relevant senior department staff were interviewed.

The trial was delivered in a two phased approach as previously reported:⁵⁰ Phase 1 involved trialling the use of one-way number plate screws and phase 2 involved using vehicle identification technology.

The department evaluated the effectiveness and efficacy of the trialled initiatives in addressing number plate theft, misuse and number plate-enabled crime. When making its findings, the

⁴⁸ Minister for Police and Emergency Services, High-tech tool to target dangerous drivers, Victorian Government, 13 February 2019; and Minister for Police and Emergency Services, New technology to target dangerous drivers in Bendigo, Victorian Government, 13 February 2019.

⁴⁹ Victoria Police, ANPR hotlist helping highlight known local offenders, The Victoria Police Gazette, 22 June 2020.

⁵⁰ Community Safety Trustee, Community Safety Statement Assurance Report June 2019, State of Victoria, June 2019.

department considered the independent evaluation reports from La Trobe University and ARTD Consultants, data from community members to understand perceptions of safety and safety behaviours and interviews with key stakeholders to identify enablers, barriers and areas for improvement in the trial.

Overall, the department found that one-way screws were an effective avenue for Neighbourhood Watch to engage communities around safety and crime prevention messages. However, they were not effective in addressing high levels of number plate theft. Radio Frequency Identification Device technology provided a viable solution, given the relatively low cost per vehicle and the reliability and performance of the products. Further, Passive Radio Frequency tags, placed on the inside of the windshield, can reliably be detected in controlled conditions and in hectic urban and busy highway environments.

The department noted that concurrent to its trial implementation, VicRoads had engaged the Monash University Accident Research Centre to conduct a literature and technology review outlining the most effective options in addressing number plate theft and misuse. Further, that outcomes from the Monash University Accident Research Centre report should be considered when pursuing future work.

The Trustee commends the department for its implementation and evaluation of the trials. Although outside of scope, the Trustee notes that the government has commenced implementing some of the report’s recommendations.

4.4.4 Legislative reform: unlawful association

Description	Responsible entity	Status	Trustee finding
New laws to prevent criminals from building and maintaining their criminal networks through strengthened police powers to stop people from repeatedly associating with convicted criminals	Department	Ongoing	This initiative is progressing and will continue to be monitored

The Trustee assessed the response provided by the Justice Policy and Data Reform group of the department to the Trustee’s information request via the customised template, including a final review report.⁵¹

The department advised that the Justice Legislation Amendment (Unlawful Association and Criminal Appeals) Bill 2018 was introduced to the Parliament in July 2018. The Bill passed the Legislative Assembly but lapsed at the end of the 58th session of the Parliament.

Since then, the department has engaged an independent review panel to undertake an examination of the criminal organisation control laws, which includes unlawful association policies. The independent review panel has reviewed the operation and effectiveness of the *Criminal Organisations Control Act 2012*, which includes the unlawful association scheme. Despite COVID-19 pandemic-related delays, the report was completed and tabled in Parliament on 1 September

⁵¹ Department of Justice and Community Safety, Review of Victorian Criminal Organisation Laws – Stage One, Victorian Government, 30 June 2020.

2020. The independent review panel recommended, *inter alia*, that consideration be given to developing a more operationally practical and effective method of limiting associations between serious criminals and others likely to be involved in organised crime.

The department advised that consideration of issues arising from the deferred Bill will commence when the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has eased. The COVID-19 pandemic has delayed and continues to reprioritise the department’s legislative program.

This initiative is related to other initiatives such as the policy review: criminal organisation control laws (for more information see section 4.4.5).

4.4.5 Policy review: criminal organisation control laws

Description	Responsible entity	Status	Trustee finding
Examine the criminal organisation control laws to identify potential opportunities to help Victoria Police to better disrupt criminal gang activities	Department	Ongoing	This initiative is progressing and will continue to be monitored

The Trustee assessed the response provided by the Justice Policy and Data Reform group of the department to the Trustee’s information request via the customised template, including a final review report.⁵²

The department has engaged an independent review panel to undertake an examination of the criminal organisation control laws to help identify ways to improve the powers available to Victoria Police to disrupt criminal gang activities. The department advised that the review will be undertaken in two stages.

- ◆ Stage 1: To review the operation and effectiveness of the *Criminal Organisations Control Act 2012*, as per legislative requirements.
- ◆ Stage 2: To review organised crime laws more broadly to identify any other opportunities to improve the Victorian response to criminal organisations.

Despite COVID-19 pandemic-related delays, the independent review panel completed its review of the *Criminal Organisations Control Act 2012* and the final Stage 1 report was tabled in Parliament on 1 September 2020. The independent review panel recommended, *inter alia*, that further work be done, in consultation with stakeholders, to strengthen existing legislation and develop and implement additional provisions to prevent and disrupt organised crime in Victoria.

The department advised that Stage 2 will commence when the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has eased.

This initiative is related to other department initiatives such as the legislative reform: unlawful association (for more information see section 4.4.4).

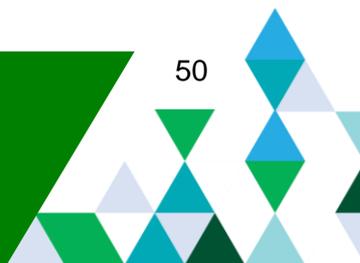
⁵² Department of Justice and Community Safety, Review of Victorian Criminal Organisation Laws – Stage One, Victorian Government, 30 June 2020.

4.4.6 Policy review: asset confiscation regime

Description	Responsible entity	Status	Trustee finding
Examine ways to improve Victoria's unexplained wealth system to strengthen Victoria Police's ability to directly target the accumulated assets and wealth of people whose lifestyles are funded by crime	Department	Ongoing	This initiative is progressing and will continue to be monitored

The Trustee assessed the response provided by the Justice Policy and Data Reform group of the department to the Trustee's information request via the customised template.

The department advised that the COVID-19 pandemic has further delayed its review of the asset confiscation regime. The department is preparing a discussion paper on the scope of the review and will recommence stakeholder consultation on operational improvements to the *Confiscation Act 1977* when possible.



4.5 Improving Victoria Police capability, culture and technology

4.5.1 Specialist training facility build

Description	Responsible entity	Status	Trustee finding
\$27.4 million to build Victoria Police's critical specialist and high risk capability with a dedicated new training facility	Victoria Police	Ongoing	This initiative is progressing and will continue to be monitored

The Trustee assessed the response provided by Victoria Police to the Trustee's information request via the customised template, including project status reports.

On 1 April 2020, the construction works for the new dedicated training facility commenced. As of mid-November 2020, the build is approximately 85% completed. Victoria Police advised that due to land procurement delays, the practical completion date is now forecast for the end of March 2021.

The Trustee notes the budget overspends for the period ending 30 June 2020 are due to earlier than anticipated construction costs, and that the project management controls will be re-baselined.



4.5.2 Air Wing capability

Description	Responsible entity	Status	Trustee finding
\$63.2 million for a new Air Wing fleet, including three new helicopters and a fixed wing plane	Victoria Police	Completed	This initiative has been implemented as planned

The Trustee assessed the response provided by Victoria Police to the Trustee’s information request via the customised template, including project status reports and images. A relevant government media release was noted.⁵³

One King Air 350ER fixed-wing aircraft and three AW139 Rotary Wing aircrafts were delivered between June and August 2020. Victoria Police continues to manage pilot and air crew training, comprehensive testing and acceptance programs for each new aircraft and aircraft system, and ongoing aircraft maintenance. The Trustee notes that the final contract price for all new aircraft did not exceed the approved funding model.

4.5.3 Policy review: mental health of police and other emergency services workers

Description	Responsible entity	Status	Trustee finding
Improve model of support for the mental health of police and other emergency services personnel	Department	Closed	This initiative will continue to be progressed via business as usual processes or other initiatives

The Trustee assessed the response provided by the Police, Fines and Crime Prevention group of the department to the Trustee’s information request via the customised template. Relevant senior department staff were interviewed.

In 2018, a cross-government, non-profit and relevant parties working group completed a review into the arrangements for mental health care of police and other emergency services workers. The outcomes of the review led to a \$14.5 million package of works to deliver better mental health care for Victoria’s emergency services workers. Works included establishing an Early Intervention and Prevention Fund, a Centre for Excellence in Emergency Worker Mental Health, a Specialist Network of Clinicians and a 12-month provisional payments pilot for mental health injuries.

Although outside of scope for this assurance report, the Trustee notes that in 2015, the Chief Commissioner of Victoria Police announced a review into the mental health and wellbeing of Victoria Police employees. On 1 July 2019, the Mental Health Steering Committee agreed that all 39 recommendations were acquitted. Project closure documents have been submitted and accepted for all projects associated with the recommendations.

This initiative is related to other initiatives such as the mental health care for emergency services workers (for more information see section 4.5.4).

⁵³ Minister for Police and Emergency Services, Victoria Police Air Wing upgrade now complete, Victorian Government, 18 November 2020.

4.5.4 Mental health care for emergency services workers

Description	Responsible entity	Status	Trustee finding
\$14.5 million to support the mental health of emergency services workers, including establishing an Early Intervention and Prevention Fund, a Centre for Excellence and Specialist Network of Clinicians and a 12-month provisional payments pilot for mental health injuries	Department / Victoria Police	Ongoing	This initiative is progressing and will continue to be monitored

The Trustee assessed the responses provided by the Police, Fines and Crime Prevention group of the department and Victoria Police to the Trustee’s information request via the customised template. The Victorian Government ‘Provisional Payments Pilot’ web page⁵⁴ was reviewed and relevant senior department staff interviewed.

In 2018, a cross-government, non-profit and relevant parties working group completed a review into the arrangements for mental health care of police and other emergency services workers. The outcomes of the review led to a \$14.5 million package of works to deliver better mental health care for Victoria’s emergency services workers.

Early Intervention and Prevention Fund

Victoria Police is leading the implementation of various innovative prevention and early intervention initiatives for its employees. The Trustee supports Victoria Police’s longer-term plan to evaluate the initiatives for effectiveness and to inform continuous improvement.

These initiatives include:

- ◆ The Victoria Police Trauma Recovery and Resilience Group program for sworn employees: The COVID-19 pandemic delayed the commencement of the group from March to July 2020. During the delayed period, all participants of the program remained in close contact with a clinician to ensure wellbeing.
- ◆ A Trauma Recovery and Resilience Group program for Victorian Public Service employees: The program developed for sworn employees was adapted for Victorian Public Service employees and will be piloted in 2021.
- ◆ Reflective Practice groups: After a delay, the Reflective Practice groups recommenced with smaller group sizes to align with government COVID-19 pandemic-related restriction guidelines. Options are being explored to adapt the program to remote style facilitation and individual case management. Additional resources were recruited to expand the injury management team and clinicians to support the delivery of the Reflective Practice program.

⁵⁴ <https://www.vic.gov.au/provisional-payments>, viewed 25 September 2020.

Centre of Excellence in Emergency Worker Mental Health

The department advised that the Department of Health and Human Services is leading the development of the centre to support clinicians in delivering evidence-based treatments for police and emergency service workers. Further, an advisory committee was established to inform its development in partnership with Beyond Blue, the Black Dog Institute, and Phoenix Australia – Centre for Post-traumatic Mental Health. The department advised that the centre will include a research foundation to inform evidence-based treatment options to support clinicians with the care and treatment of emergency services workers.

The COVID-19 pandemic delayed the anticipated establishment of the centre from December 2020 to February 2021. In May 2020, Phoenix Australia was commissioned to deliver the clinical service specifications for the centre and develop a framework to support practitioners and emergency worker-centric research projects. The final draft specifications were delivered in October 2020. Government has commenced the next steps for the establishment of the service.

Specialist Network of Clinicians

The department advised that the Department of Health and Human Services is leading the specialist network of clinicians. On 24 February 2020, the government launched the Central Access and Reference Treatment teleservice, a referral, assessment and triage service that enables frontline responders to access a specialist network of clinicians. In August 2020, a review was conducted on the uptake of the service, and options for the continuation of the service were provided to the inter-departmental Mental Health Initiatives Coordination Group.

Provisional Payments Pilot

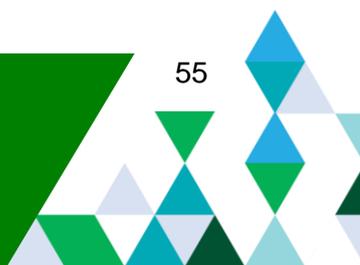
The 12-month pilot allowed eligible emergency workers to access payments for medical treatment and services while their compensation claims were being determined. The pilot was rolled out from 17 June 2019, with access for all eligible emergency workers by 1 July 2019. In June 2020, a post-evaluation was completed, and the pilot was extended until the legislative scheme commences.

This initiative is related to other initiatives such as the policy review: mental health of police and other emergency services workers (for more information see section 4.5.3).

4.5.5 Restorative engagement and redress program

Description	Responsible entity	Status	Trustee finding
Introduce a redress scheme and restorative engagement process for Victoria Police employees who have experienced sexual abuse, harassment and discrimination	Department	Completed	This initiative has been implemented as planned

The Trustee assessed the response provided by the Police, Fines and Crime Prevention group of the department and Victoria Police to the Trustee’s information request via the customised



template. The 'Restorative Engagement and Redress Scheme' website was reviewed⁵⁵, relevant senior department staff interviewed, and relevant government media releases⁵⁶ noted.

On 12 December 2019, the government announced the opening of the Restorative Engagement and Redress Scheme for the provision of case management and counselling services to participants and applications for financial redress. On 1 July 2020, the full scheme commenced with the distribution of payments for financial redress. The department advised that the demand and eligibility for financial payments, counselling and other scheme programs is significantly higher than modelled. Victoria Police advised that as of 14 August 2020, 111 of 216 (51.3%) eligible Victoria Police employees have opted into the Provisional Payments Pilot.

The scheme is administered by the department and independent of Victoria Police. The department advised that a reference group was established to develop a meaningful scheme and comprised the Community and Public Sector Union, the Police Association of Victoria and Victoria Police. Further, a steering committee was established to guide and oversee its development and comprised Victoria Police, the Department of Treasury and Finance and the Department of Premier and Cabinet.

This scheme delivers on a key recommendation from the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission's Independent Review into sex discrimination and sexual harassment, including predatory behaviour in Victoria Police.⁵⁷ The Trustee looks forward to seeing the positive outcomes from the implementation of all the independent review recommendations, noting that benefits may take time to manifest.

The Trustee acknowledges that the Restorative Engagement and Redress Scheme has been implemented, however notes that funding is required and is being sought for the scheme to continue. Appropriate governance arrangements and processes are in place through the department's Redress Design business unit to deliver this initiative as part of business as usual.

⁵⁵ <https://www.vic.gov.au/redress-police-employees>, viewed 22 September 2020.

⁵⁶ Minister for Police and Emergency Services, Restorative engagement and redress scheme for police staff, Victorian Government, 12 December 2019; and Minister for Police and Emergency Services, Helping create a more inclusive Victoria Police, Victorian Government, 27 August 2019.

⁵⁷ Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission, Independent Review into sex discrimination and sexual harassment, including predatory behaviour in Victoria Police – Phase One Report, State of Victoria, 2015.



5 Concluding remarks

Since April 2017, the Trustee has held the government to account for its promises made under the Statements and has delivered six assurance reports. These reports provide confidence that government is committed to delivering the initiatives and achieving community safety outcomes.

Since the commencement of the Statements, the Trustee has monitored 94 initiatives. Of these, 74 initiatives have been delivered, transitioned to business as usual activities or consolidated into another initiative. While delivering the program of works, the government displayed many examples of good program and project management practices. The Trustee commends the effort and dedication shown by the relevant entities in completing or progressing the implementation of the initiatives. The Trustee also encourages the government to consider and, where appropriate, implement the identified improvement opportunities.

The Statements have delivered the largest packaged investment to community safety and law enforcement ever seen in the history of Victoria. With many initiatives implemented, it is now timely for the government to evaluate the impact and effectiveness of the Statements and its initiatives as well as whether the program has achieved its objectives. I am confident the Statements will be value for money and Victoria will be a safer state.

I thank the government for its contribution to and cooperation on my assurance activities. It has been my honour and privilege to have been Victoria's Trustee over the past four years.





Appendix A – all initiatives monitored to date

Since the commencement of the Statements, the Trustee has monitored the implementation progress of 94 initiatives. Monitoring has not commenced for 10 select new initiatives announced in Statement 2019/20. Overall, 74 initiatives have been delivered, transitioned to ongoing business as usual activities or consolidated into another initiative.

Figure 2 Implementation progress of all initiatives monitored to date

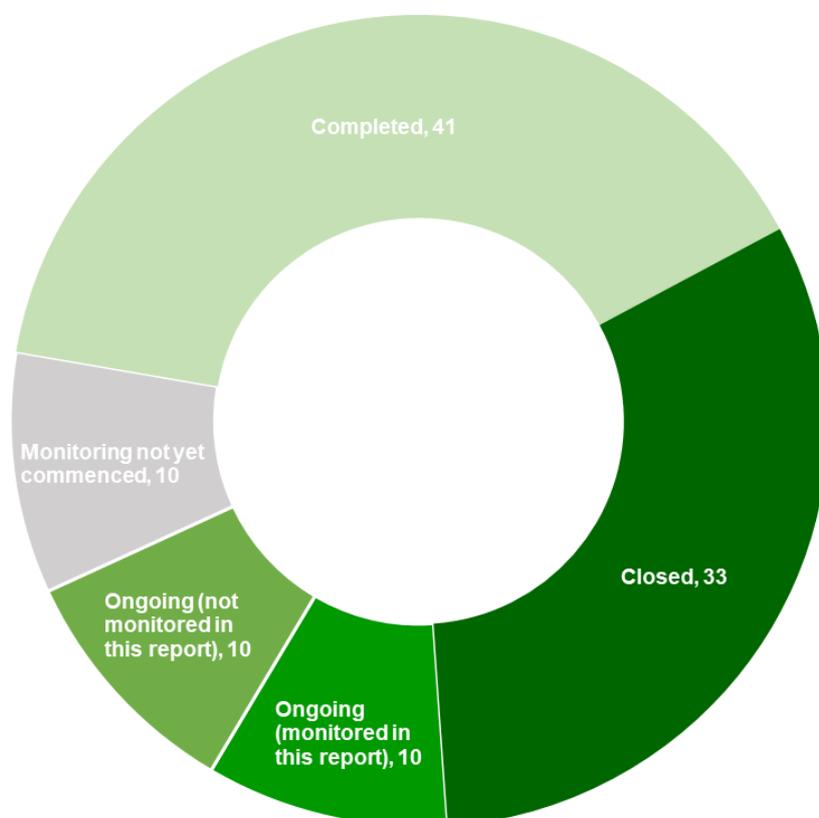


Table 2 Status of all initiatives monitored to date

ID	Initiative title	Responsible entity	Status	Reference
1. Reducing harm				
Statement 2017				
1.1.	2729 new police officers	Victoria Police	Ongoing	Assurance Report December 2020
1.2.	100 new Protective Services Officers	Victoria Police	Ongoing	Assurance Report December 2020
1.3.	Incident-based reporting	Department	Completed	Assurance Report June 2018
1.4.	Measure of harm reporting	Department	Completed	Assurance Report December 2020
1.5.	Local policing: active, visible and accessible	Victoria Police	Closed	Assurance Report June 2018
1.6.	Public order: visible and active policing	Victoria Police	Closed	Assurance Report June 2019
1.7.	Countering violent extremism	Victoria Police	Closed	Assurance Report June 2018
1.8.	Road safety operations	Victoria Police	Closed	Assurance Report June 2019
Statement 2018/19				
1.9.	Technology enabled offending: new specialist police and technology	Victoria Police	Ongoing	Assurance Report June 2019 Not monitored in this report
1.10.	Legislative reform: heroin trafficking	Department	Completed	Assurance Report June 2019
1.11.	Legislative reform: excessive speeding and unlicensed driving	Department	Completed	Assurance Report June 2019
1.12.	Policy review: serious traffic crimes	Department	Completed	Assurance Report December 2020
1.13.	Policy review: Public event planning	Department	Closed	Assurance Report December 2020
1.14.	Pilot: Embedded Youth Outreach	Victoria Police	Closed	Assurance Report June 2019
Statement 2019/20				
1.15.	Forensic Drug Intelligence Capability Program	Victoria Police	Ongoing	Assurance Report June 2019 Not monitored in this report
1.16.	Music festival safety	Department / Victoria Police	Closed	Assurance Report December 2020
1.17.	Policy review: expansion of vehicle immobilisation devices	Department	Completed	Assurance Report December 2020
1.18.	Legislative reform: driver licence suspension	Department	Completed	Assurance Report December 2020

ID	Initiative title	Responsible entity	Status	Reference
1.19.	Detecting dangerous drivers	Department	Ongoing	Assurance Report June 2019 Not monitored in this report
1.20.	Fixated Threat Assessment Centre	Victoria Police	Ongoing	Assurance Report June 2019 Not monitored in this report
1.21.	Policy review: private security industry licensing review	Department	Ongoing	Assurance Report June 2019 Not monitored in this report
2. Increasing connection to the community				
Statement 2017				
2.1.	24-hour police stations	Victoria Police	Closed	Assurance Report June 2019
2.2.	24-hour non-emergency Police Assistance Line	Victoria Police	Completed	Assurance Report December 2020
2.3.	Online reporting portal	Victoria Police	Completed	Assurance Report December 2020
2.4.	Station replacement	Victoria Police	Ongoing	Assurance Report December 2020
2.5.	Youth Crime Prevention Grants	Department	Closed	Assurance Report June 2018
2.6.	New Youth Specialist Officers	Victoria Police	Completed	Assurance Report December 2020
2.7.	Koori Youth Crime Prevention Grants	Department	Completed	Assurance Report June 2018
2.8.	New Aboriginal Community Liaison Officers	Victoria Police	Completed	Assurance Report June 2018
2.9.	Kopkoda	Victoria Police	Closed	Assurance Report June 2018
2.10.	Local communities: visible and accessible policing	Victoria Police	Closed	Assurance Report June 2018
2.11.	Community consultation and co-design	Victoria Police	Closed	Assurance Report June 2018
2.12.	Vulnerable youth engagement	Victoria Police	Closed	Assurance Report June 2018
2.13.	Strengthening connections with diverse communities	Victoria Police	Closed	Assurance Report June 2018
Statement 2018/19				
2.14.	Melbourne East station replacement	Victoria Police	Completed	Assurance Report June 2019
2.15.	Mobile police stations	Victoria Police	Ongoing	Assurance Report June 2019 Not monitored in this report
2.16.	Policy review: Protective Services Officers' presence, powers and career pathways	Department / Victoria Police	Completed	Assurance Report December 2020
2.17.	Grants: Public Safety Infrastructure Fund	Department	Completed	Assurance Report June 2019

ID	Initiative title	Responsible entity	Status	Reference
2.18.	Grants: Community Safety Fund	Department	Completed	Assurance Report June 2019
2.19.	Grants: youth crime prevention projects	Department	Completed	Assurance Report June 2019
2.20.	Grants: Crime Stoppers, Neighbourhood Watch and the National Motor Vehicle Theft Reduction Council	Department	Completed	Assurance Report June 2019
Statement 2019/20				
2.21.	Legislative reform: expansion of Protective Services Officer mobility and flexibility	Department	Completed	Assurance Report December 2020
2.22.	Staff Allocation Model resource allocation principles	Department / Victoria Police	Ongoing	Assurance Report June 2019 Not monitored in this report
2.23.	New stations: Narre Warren and Clyde North	Victoria Police	Ongoing	Assurance Report June 2019 Not monitored in this report
3. Putting victims first				
Statement 2017				
3.1.	New specialist family violence police officers	Victoria Police	Completed	Assurance Report December 2020
3.2.	Community safety networks	Department	Completed	Assurance Report June 2019
3.3.	Mobile devices for frontline officers	Victoria Police	Closed	Assurance Report December 2020
3.4.	Body-worn cameras	Department / Victoria Police	Closed	Assurance Report December 2020
3.5.	Victoria Police Family Violence Centre of Learning	Victoria Police	Completed	Assurance Report June 2019
3.6.	Family violence specialist career pathway	Victoria Police	Closed	Assurance Report June 2019
3.7.	Family violence frontline police response	Victoria Police	Closed	Assurance Report June 2018
3.8.	Victim engagement, consultation and co-design	Victoria Police	Closed	Assurance Report June 2018
Statement 2019/20				
3.9.	Legislative reform: strangulation	Department	Ongoing	Assurance Report December 2020

ID	Initiative title	Responsible entity	Status	Reference
4. Holding offenders to account				
Statement 2017				
4.1.	Presumption against bail for new offences	Department	Completed	Assurance Report June 2018
4.2.	New offence: firearms	Department	Completed	Assurance Report June 2018
4.3.	New offence: road safety	VicRoads	Completed	Assurance Report June 2018
4.4.	Improve penalty: road safety	VicRoads	Closed	Assurance Report June 2018
4.5.	Tougher threshold: trafficking illicit drugs	Department	Completed	Assurance Report June 2018
4.6.	New offence: dangerous synthetic drugs	Department	Completed	Assurance Report June 2018
4.7.	Harper Review: serious sex offenders	Department	Closed	Assurance Report June 2018
4.8.	New youth detention facility staff	Department	Completed	Assurance Report June 2018
4.9.	Training: new youth justice facility staff	Department	Completed	Assurance Report June 2018
4.10.	Youth Justice System Reform: Monitoring and Control Bail Supervision Scheme	Department	Completed	Assurance Report June 2019
4.11.	Youth Justice System Reform: Youth Control Order	Department	Completed	Assurance Report June 2018
4.12.	Youth Justice System Reform: expand bail supervision program	Department	Completed	Assurance Report June 2019
4.13.	Youth Justice System Reform: Central After-Hours Assessment and Bail Placement Service	Department	Ongoing	Assurance Report June 2019 Not monitored in this report
4.14.	Youth Justice System Reform: new offence - encouragement of young persons to commit serious crimes	Department	Completed	Assurance Report June 2018
4.15.	Policy review: youth justice strategy	Department	Completed	Assurance Report December 2020
4.16.	Automatic number plate recognition technology	Victoria Police	Ongoing	Assurance Report December 2020
4.17.	Streamlined DNA testing	Department / Victoria Police	Closed	Assurance Report June 2019

ID	Initiative title	Responsible entity	Status	Reference
4.18.	New offence: banning cash for scrap metal	Department	Completed	Assurance Report June 2018
4.19.	Trial: number plate theft reduction initiatives	Department	Completed	Assurance Report December 2020
4.20.	Reducing youth in the criminal justice system	Victoria Police	Ongoing	Assurance Report June 2019 Not monitored in this report
4.21.	Reducing gun crime	Victoria Police	Closed	Assurance Report June 2018
4.22.	Disrupting serious and organised crime	Victoria Police	Closed	Assurance Report June 2018
Statement 2018/19				
4.23.	Legislative reform: aiding organised crime through commercial trafficking	Department	Closed	Assurance Report June 2019
4.24.	Legislative reform: unlawful association	Department	Ongoing	Assurance Report December 2020
4.25.	Policy review: criminal organisation control laws	Department	Ongoing	Assurance Report December 2020
4.26.	Policy review: asset confiscation regime	Department	Ongoing	Assurance Report December 2020
4.27.	Legislative reform: further protect Victoria Police personnel	Department	Closed	Assurance Report June 2019
4.28.	Legislative reform: police powers to act against businesses suspected of engaging in serious criminal activity	Department	Closed	Assurance Report June 2019
4.29.	Policy review: petrol theft information sharing	Victoria Police	Completed	Assurance Report June 2019
4.30.	Policy review: vehicle theft intelligence gathering	Victoria Police	Closed ⁵⁸	Assurance Report June 2019
Statement 2019/20				
4.31.	Technology enhanced court processes in police stations	Victoria Police	Ongoing	Assurance Report June 2019 Not monitored in this report

⁵⁸ In Assurance Report June 2019, this initiative was erroneously labelled as 'ongoing' in Table 1 of section 4.

ID	Initiative title	Responsible entity	Status	Reference
5. Improving Victoria Police capability, culture and technology				
Statement 2017				
5.1.	Parental leave program	Victoria Police	Ongoing	Assurance Report June 2019 Not monitored in this report
5.2.	Mental health literacy program	Victoria Police	Closed	Assurance Report June 2019
5.3.	Specialist training facility build	Victoria Police	Ongoing	Assurance Report December 2020
5.4.	Air Wing capability	Victoria Police	Completed	Assurance Report December 2020
5.5.	Expand roadside drug testing	Victoria Police / Department	Ongoing	Assurance Report June 2019 Not monitored in this report
5.6.	Expand Protective Services Officers, Police Custody Officers and other specialist support staff functions	Department	Completed	Assurance Report June 2018
5.7.	Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission Report and the Mental Health Review	Victoria Police	Closed	Assurance Report June 2018
5.8.	Zero Harm Strategy	Victoria Police	Closed	Assurance Report June 2018
5.9.	Capability plan	Victoria Police	Closed	Assurance Report June 2018
Statement 2018/19				
5.10.	Longarm firearms equipment and training	Victoria Police	Ongoing	Assurance Report June 2019 Not monitored in this report
5.11.	Legislative reform: warrant and crime scene processes	Department	Ongoing	Assurance Report June 2019 Not monitored in this report
5.12.	Policy review: court costs in unsuccessful prosecutions	Department	Ongoing	Assurance Report June 2019 Not monitored in this report
5.13.	Policy review: powers to gather evidence	Department	Ongoing	Assurance Report June 2019 Not monitored in this report
5.14.	Policy review: mental health of police and other emergency services workers	Department / Victoria Police	Closed	Assurance Report December 2020
5.15.	Policy review: workforce diversity – strategies and action plans	Victoria Police	Completed	Assurance Report June 2019
Statement 2019/20				
5.16.	Detection dogs	Victoria Police	Ongoing	Assurance Report June 2019 Not monitored in this report
5.17.	Conducted Energy Devices	Victoria Police	Ongoing	Assurance Report June 2019 Not monitored in this report

ID	Initiative title	Responsible entity	Status	Reference
5.18.	Policy review: destruction of bulk exhibits	Department	Ongoing	Assurance Report June 2019 Not monitored in this report
5.19.	Mental health care for emergency services workers	Department / Victoria Police	Ongoing	Assurance Report December 2020
5.20.	Restorative engagement and redress program	Department	Completed	Assurance Report December 2020

