

MEDIA RELEASE

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CCC review sparks Police dog changes

A report by the Corruption and Crime Commission tabled in Parliament today highlights the steps WA Police has taken to address serious misconduct risks associated with the use of police dogs.

The *'Final Review of WA Police Action into Recommendations on the Deployment of Police Dogs'* outlines the actions taken by WA Police in response to two key recommendations made by the Commission in its 2022 report, *'A report on the deployment of Police Dogs'*.

The first recommendation was to develop and implement policy, procedure or guidelines to govern police dog use; the second to explore and address reasons for the higher representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in police dog deployments.

The Commission's report is the second and final review of WA Police's response to the recommendations. The first review determined that the initiatives taken by WA police were still in their early stages and unable to be sufficiently reviewed at the time.

In its final report, the Commission found WA Police have made considerable improvements to the Canine Unit, ranging from structural changes in its operation to implementing new policies and standard operating procedures. These changes have reduced ambiguity and risk surrounding the use of police dogs, leading to significant positive outcomes including a reduction in incidents involving police dogs.

WA Police also engaged ECU's Sellenger Centre to assist with research into police dog use, specifically in relation to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander persons. As a result, a series of recommendations are being implemented by WA Police. The steps taken include consulting with Aboriginal organisations, simplifying the verbal police dog warning, ongoing training for canine handlers, policy amendments and development of a master database on police dog use.

Commissioner Michael Corboy SC acknowledged the significant progress achieved by WA Police in implementing change to the policies, practices, and oversight of the Canine Unit.

"The use of police dogs as a force option carries inherent risks, and the recommendations made in the Commission's 2022 'A report on the deployment of Police Dogs' were important to address and reduce associated serious misconduct risks. The actions of WA Police in response to the recommendations demonstrates a commitment to understanding and mitigating these ongoing risks, and it is encouraging to note WA Police has already seen a reduction in the number of incidents involving the deployment of police dogs following the implementation of the recommendations," Commissioner Michael Corboy said.

The report is available [here](#).

NOTE: An opinion that serious misconduct has occurred does not mean, and should not be understood to mean, that any person referred to in the Commission's report has committed a criminal or disciplinary offence.

ENDS

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