

Media Release

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Progress in tackling discrimination and harassment in SAPOL

Steps taken by South Australia Police to address sex discrimination and sexual harassment within their organisation have been highlighted in the latest report by the Equal Opportunity Commission released today.

Equal Opportunity Commissioner Niki Vincent said the report – the third of four to be prepared by the Commission – focussed on the agency’s capacity and willingness to support cultural change.

“Importantly, the vast majority of the 110 supervisors and managers surveyed for this report indicated they viewed changes brought in by Project Equitas – the group designed to spearhead reforms – in a positive light,” she said.

“This indicates that people in senior positions within SA Police both acknowledge the need for change and are supportive of steps being taken to promote a more positive workplace culture.”

Dr Vincent said it was also pleasing to see that SAPOL’s nearly year-old Diversity and Inclusion Branch, which was established to handle complaints and review the agency’s diversity and inclusion training programs, appeared to have staff who feel competent to fulfil the Branch’s purpose and objectives.

“And while this is encouraging, it’s important to note that work is still needed in this important area,” she said.

“Our latest report has highlighted the need for SAPOL to maintain momentum, for example ensuring members of the Diversity and Inclusion Branch remain appropriately equipped to handle what are often highly sensitive matters.

“In addition, this report has highlighted the need for SAPOL to foster a work environment where employees feel confident and safe to challenge and report inappropriate behaviour from sworn officers or those at a higher classification or rank.

“I’d encourage SAPOL leadership to consider how far they’ve come since the EOC’s Independent Review was first released - the progress that has been made but also the areas that still need improvement.

“This will continue to require persistence, engagement with staff and a relentless commitment to delivering a respectful, more positive workplace culture.”

The fourth and final Progress Report from the Commission – examining the changes in practice and culture within SAPOL – is due to be released at the end of the year.

The third Progress Report can be found on the EOC website at <https://eoc.sa.gov.au/initiatives/sapol-monitoring-project>

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