



THE AUDIT OFFICE
OF NEW SOUTH WALES

10 December 2008

MEDIA RELEASE

NSW AUDITOR-GENERAL'S REPORT

Early retirement of Police Officers increasing

The Auditor-General, Mr Peter Achterstraat, today stated that frontline policing is at risk due to the early medical retirement of experienced police officers.

“Since a new Death and Disability Scheme was introduced in 2005, medical retirements under this scheme have tripled in the first 2 years. This trend is unacceptable and must not be allowed to continue”, he explained.

“NSW has 10 times more police officers retiring on medical grounds than Victoria”, Mr Achterstraat revealed.

“These early retirements are hurting the people of New South Wales in the hip pocket. The direct cost of injured officers to the Police Force is over \$110 million” Mr Achterstraat added.

Mr Achterstraat stressed that early rehabilitation and getting officers back to work as soon as possible is best for the officer, the Force and the community. Something the Force is doing much better than in the past.

Mr Achterstraat is recommending that the Police Force conduct an immediate review of the Death and Disability scheme with a view to either reducing benefits, increasing officer's contributions or ceasing the scheme.”

These were some of the findings that were released today by the NSW Audit Office in a report into 'Managing Injured Police'. The audit report looks at key aspects of injury management and gives some examples of the types of injuries and claims that have occurred.

Mr Achterstraat summarised the report by stating: “The people of NSW are losing out because they are losing experienced, highly trained police officers who take a great deal of time to replace. The financial cost is one thing but more importantly, it's not always the best outcome for the police officer and the community.”

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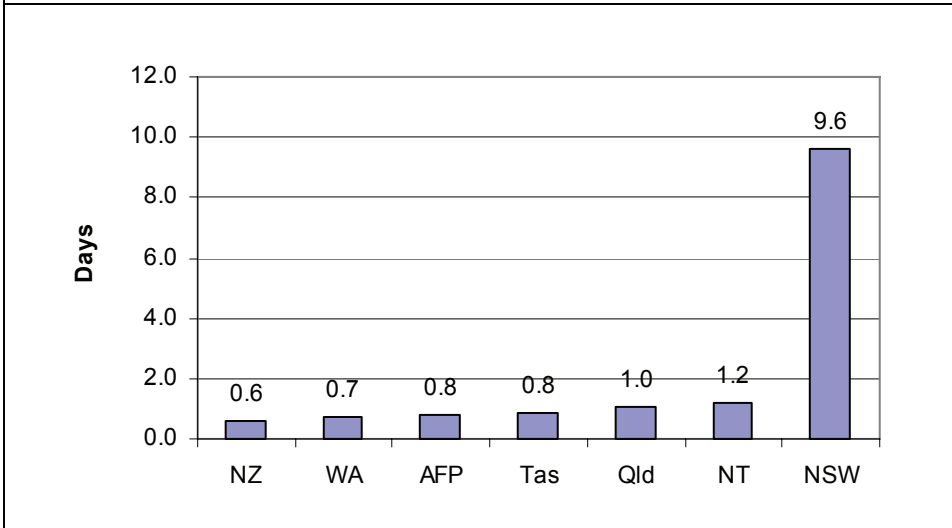
For further information, a full copy of the report on 'Managing injured police in the NSW Police Force', or to arrange interviews please contact:

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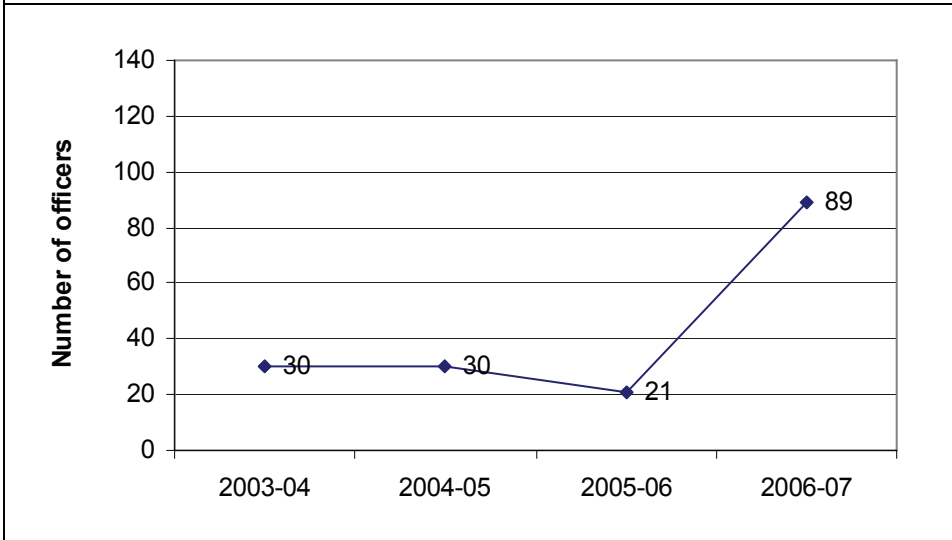
Exhibit 9: Average time lost due to workplace injuries per employee in various police forces in 2005-06



Source: NSW Police Force

Note: Time lost in NSW Police Force before the establishment of the Safety Command. Data on time lost was converted from hours to days based on 7.5 hours per day. There was no data available for the Victorian and South Australian police forces.

Exhibit 14: Medical retirements - post '88 officers



Source: NSW Police Force

Note: Data include both work and non-work related injuries

Exhibit 15: Medical retirements in NSW and the Victorian Police Forces

	2005-2006		2006-2007	
	NSW	Victoria	NSW	Victoria
Number of police officers medically retired	431	37	445	47
Total police officers separations	727	295	780	316
Medical retirements of police officers as % of total police separations	59%	13%	57%	15%

Source: NSW Police Force and Audit Office research

Note: Includes officers that have retired due to medical illness such as cancer.