



University of
**Southern
Queensland**

**SINGLE-OFFICER POLICE STATION EFFECTIVENESS IN
REGIONAL QUEENSLAND:
A QUANTITATIVE, WORK-BASED STUDY OF SERVICE
DELIVERY FOR THE TOWNSVILLE WESTERN PATROL
GROUP**

A thesis submitted by

Dean M Cavanagh

For the award of

Master of Professional Studies (Research)

2022

ABSTRACT

This work-based study was conducted in the field of law enforcement within the context of Single-Officer Police Stations (SOPS) in the Queensland Police Service (QPS). The study focused on the effectiveness of the service delivery within SOPS with consideration into the unique policing role performed in rural environments. Utilising a quantitative method to collect and analyse data, two surveys were utilised to fill information gaps regarding police tasking, police legitimacy, satisfaction with police, feelings of community safety, staffing numbers, contact with police, policing autonomy, officer welfare and service delivery. The research identified that when compared to Two-Officer Police Stations (TOPS), organisational structures within the QPS that utilise SOPS are not the most effective option to deliver policing services, and do not adequately achieve QPS performance indicators. Effective service delivery requires maximising positive and informal contacts with the community, and increasing visibility and presence, which in-turn improves the public's perception of safety. Police and residents within policing divisions that utilise SOPS identified that community safety was the most important policing aspect, and policing tasks that should be prioritised to achieve this include spending discretionary time maximising informal contacts with the community. Community safety is not only intrinsically linked to the public's perception of safety, but also to police legitimacy and satisfaction of service delivery. SOPS are severely hindered in their ability to achieve effective service delivery when compared to TOPS due to limited discretionary rostered duty, which is by no means a reflection of the work ethic or ability of the dedicated police officers. This staffing structure results in minimal proactive patrols, minimal opening hours for the police station counter, a division that remains unstaffed for extended periods, offenders that are not taken into custody due to officers working alone and police who are not known by the residents regularly being deployed to assist within that community. It also negatively affects the welfare of the officers within the division, with reduced feelings of safety, increased feelings of isolation, and a feeling of having the sole responsibility for a policing division. It was determined that the preferred option to improve effectiveness of service delivery within SOPS, is to increase the scope of the environmental scanning and allow for case-by-case consideration, focused on QPS capabilities, into the unique and specific elements within each division. After these factors are considered, it could be determined that some SOPS are not required and should be consolidated with neighbouring divisions, or should adopt the staffing structure of TOPS, being an additional officer and an administration officer.

CERTIFICATION OF THESIS

I Dean Cavanagh declare that the Thesis entitled Single-Officer Police Station Effectiveness In Regional Queensland: A Quantitative, Work-Based Study Of Service Delivery For The Townsville Western Patrol Group is not more than 100,000 words in length including quotes and exclusive of tables, figures, appendices, bibliography, references, and footnotes. The thesis contains no material that has been submitted previously, in whole or in part, for the award of any other academic degree or diploma. Except where otherwise indicated, this thesis is my own work.

Date: 5 December 2022

Endorsed by:

Dr Lee Fergusson

Principal Supervisor

Dr Shayne Baker

Associate Supervisor

Student and supervisors' signatures of endorsement are held at the university.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This research has been supported by an Australian Government Research Training Program Scholarship.

It is with gratitude that I acknowledge my Principal Supervisor, Dr Lee Fergusson, and Associate Supervisor, Dr Shayne Baker, for their contribution, guidance, and wisdom.

I would also like to acknowledge the Queensland Police Service Officers, and participating community members, from Ravenswood, Greenvale, Pentland, Richmond, Clare, Giru, Halifax and Rollingstone.

The researcher firmly acknowledges that Queensland Police Service officers from Single-Officer Police Stations throughout Queensland are generally dedicated and motivated, who completely embrace the difficult and varied expectations placed upon them by the QPS and the community in which they serve.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	i
CERTIFICATION OF THESIS	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iii
TABLE OF CONTENTS	iv
LIST OF TABLES	viii
LIST OF FIGURES	x
ABBREVIATIONS.....	xi
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Background to the research	1
1.2 Research problem	4
1.3 Justification for the research	4
1.4 Methodology.....	5
1.5 Work-based project.....	5
1.6 Professional studies	6
1.6.1 Master of Professional Studies (Research).....	6
1.6.2 Reflective practice.....	7
1.6.3 Learning Objectives	8
1.6.4 Triple dividend	8
1.7 Definitions	9
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW	11
2.1 Introduction.....	11
2.2 Parent theories and classification models	11
2.2.1 Rural Policing.....	11
2.2.2 Staffing Allocation	13
2.2.3 Community perceptions	17

2.2.4 QPS Objectives and Performance Indicators	20
2.3 Research problem theory	22
2.4 Conclusion	22
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY	24
3.1 Introduction and research setting.....	24
3.2 Justification for the paradigm and methodology	29
3.3 Research method.....	30
3.4 Research design	31
3.4.1 Survey process.....	33
3.5 Participants	36
3.5.1 Police: Single-Officer Police Stations (Group 1).....	37
3.5.2 Police: Two-Officer Police Stations (Group 2).....	37
3.5.3 Community: Single-Officer Police Stations (Group 3).....	38
3.5.4 Community: Two-Officer Police Stations (Group 4).....	38
3.6 Instrumentation	38
3.6.1 Police survey	42
3.6.2 Police survey	43
3.7 Data analysis.....	45
3.8 Ethical considerations.....	45
CHAPTER 4: RESULTS	47
4.1 Introduction.....	47
4.2 Descriptive Analysis of Data	47
4.3 Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)	59
4.4 Correlational Analysis	62
4.4.1 Aspect of keeping community safe: Police tasking	62
4.4.2 Performance indicators: Police legitimacy	63

4.4.3 Performance indicators: Service Delivery.....	65
4.4.4 Performance indicators: Safety	67
4.4.5 Contact with Police	68
4.4.6 Police Staffing numbers	69
4.5 Conclusion.....	70
CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION.....	71
5.1 Introduction.....	71
5.2 Discussion regarding important policing aspect or focus.....	71
5.3 Discussion regarding performance indicators	74
5.3.1 Strategic objectives	75
5.3.2 Perception of safety	75
5.3.3 Public order problems	75
5.3.4 Emergencies and disasters.....	76
5.3.5 Police professionalism and public confidence	76
5.3.6 Police honesty and fairness	76
5.3.7 Satisfied in general with police	77
5.4 Discussion regarding SOPS impact on service delivery and officers.....	78
5.4.1 Autonomy.....	78
5.4.2 Contact	78
5.4.3 Welfare.....	81
5.4.4 Number of Police	82
5.4.5 Service delivery.....	83
5.5 Conclusion.....	85
CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSIONS.....	87
6.1 Introduction.....	87
6.2 Conclusions about research sub-questions	87

6.2.1 Sub-question 1: Policing aspect	87
6.2.2 Sub-question 2: performance indicators	88
6.2.3 Sub-question 3: SOP impact on service delivery and officers	89
6.2.4 Sub-question 4: Community perceptions	90
6.3 Alternate options to improve service delivery	90
6.4 Conclusions about the research problem	91
6.5 Limitations	95
6.6 Further research	95
6.7 Learning objectives.....	96
REFERENCES.....	99
APPENDIX A	106
APPENDIX B	114

LIST OF TABLES

Table 2.2.4.1 QPS performance indicators not addressed at a divisional level	21
Table 3.1.1 Single or Two-Officer stations within Townsville Policing District.....	27
Table 3.5.1 Single and Two-Officer stations in Townsville Policing District, and number of officers invited to participate in survey	36
Table 3.6.1 NSCSP survey questions compared to survey questions from this research.....	39
Table 3.6.1.1 Police survey question links	43
Table 3.6.2 Community survey question links	44
Table 4.2.1 Frequency data relating to most important duty to achieve a relevant.....	49
Table 4.2.2 Descriptive statistics for results relating to QPS performance indicators	51
Table 4.2.3 Descriptive statistics for results relating to QPS performance indicators	51
Table 4.2.4 Descriptive statistics for safety and satisfaction results	53
Table 4.2.5 Descriptive statistics for safety and satisfaction results	54
Table 4.2.6 Frequency statistics for NSCSP survey	54
Table 4.2.7 Descriptive statistics relating to the contact and accessibility for community and police	55
Table 4.2.8 Descriptive statistics for police participants relating to police autonomy, police welfare and service delivery	55
Table 4.2.9 Descriptive statistics for police participants relating to police autonomy, police welfare and service delivery	56
Table 4.2.10 Frequency results relating to Single-Officer duties, calls for service attended as a SOP	56
Table 4.2.11 Frequency results relating to Single-Officer duties, external resources required for calls for service	57
Table 4.2.12 Frequency results relating to Single-Officer duties, external resources required for calls for service	57
Table 4.2.13 Frequency results relating to Single-Officer duties, time taken for assistance to attend.....	57

Table 4.2.14 Frequency results relating to Single-Officer duties, days per year division unstaffed	58
Table 4.2.15 Frequency results relating to Single-Officer duties, hours per week division staffed	58
Table 4.2.16 Frequency results relating to Single-Officer duties, number of permanent police division should have	59
Table 4.3.1 ANOVA results for SOPS and TOPS, police and community	60
Table 4.3.2 Two-way ANOVA between group results for SOPS community and TOPS community	62
Table 4.4.1 Correlational results for police tasking.....	63
Table 4.4.2 Correlational results for police legitimacy	64
Table 4.4.3 Correlational results for service delivery.....	66
Table 4.4.4 Correlational results for safety	67
Table 4.4.5 Correlational results for contact with police.....	68
Table 4.4.6 Correlational results for police staffing numbers	70

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1.1 QPS Strategic Plan 2018 - 2022.....	2
Figure 3.1.1 Map of Queensland with QPS Region, District and Divisional boundaries ...	25
Figure 3.1.2 Map of Queensland with Northern region & Townsville Policing District boundaries.....	26
Figure 3.1.3 Towns and associated Police Stations relevant to this research within Townsville Policing District.....	27
Figure 3.4.1 Relationship between practice-based and research-based project relationship	32
Figure 3.4.1.1 Survey process	35
Figure 4.2.1 Frequencies for most important policing aspect	48
Figure 4.2.2 Mean percentage of time spent on tasks	50
Figure 4.2.3 Frequency for number of police contacts within 12 months.....	52
Figure 4.2.4 Frequency results for main reason for contact with police	53

ABBREVIATIONS

CFS – Calls for service

TWPG – Townsville Western Patrol Group

QPS – Queensland Police Service

SOP – Single-Officer Police Station

TOP – Two-Officer Police Station

NSCSP – National Survey Community Satisfaction with Police

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the research

This work-based study, conducted in the field of law enforcement, will concentrate within the context of Single-Officer Police Stations in regional Queensland, specifically the Townsville Western Patrol Group of the Queensland Police Service. Reference will also be made to Two-Officer Police Stations within the Townsville Police District for the purpose of comparison and deeper analysis of variables.

The Townsville Policing District is a regional area that encompasses 149,017 km² with between approximately 600 to 700 police officers that service the area. Most of the population within this District reside in the City of Townsville, with a population of 182,920. Townsville Western Patrol Group (TWPG) is a rural policing area in the western section of the District that encompasses 134,682 km² and has a population of 49,617 people. Towns are relatively isolated, with the largest township being Charters Towers which has a permanent population of 11,676. Seven police stations operate within the patrol group, the largest being Charters Towers which has a permanent allocation of approximately 27 police officers, and the smallest being Ravenswood, Pentland, Greenvale and Prairie, which are the Single-Officer Police Stations (SOPS) that surround Charters Towers.

The researcher is a police officer within the Queensland Police Service (QPS) with approximately 20 years' experience in the field. The researcher was the Officer in Charge of Charters Towers Police Station and is now the Inspector of the Townsville Patrol Group, Townsville Policing District. The researcher has performed leadership duties within the environment that incorporates SOPS for approximately ten years; and has experience working in, and with, SOPS and understands the unique community challenges that impact on officers, service delivery, and the community within these areas.

As shown in Figure 1.1, the QPS publishes a strategic plan that outlines approaches to achieve the strategic objectives of; 1) stopping crime; 2) making the community safer; 3) strengthening relationships with the community; and 4) equipping the workforce for the future. These strategies are developed with consideration of the challenges associated with future proofing the workforce to ensure the right people are in the right place with the right support, to maximise community safety (QPS, 2017).

QUEENSLAND POLICE SERVICE STRATEGIC PLAN 2018-2022



Our Values

COURAGE: by always doing the right thing
FAIRNESS: in making, objective, evidence-based, consistent decisions and by treating people with respect
PRIDE: in themselves, the QPS, the work they do and the community they serve

Our Purpose

To provide timely, high quality and efficient policing services, in collaboration with community, government and non-government partners, to make Queensland safer

Queensland Government Values



Our Vision: DELIVERING SAFE AND SECURE COMMUNITIES THROUGH INNOVATION, COLLABORATION AND BEST PRACTICE

Strategic Objectives

<p>1 Stop Crime</p> <p>Strategies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus resources to identify and deliver sustainable, effective, innovative and efficient services to prevent, investigate and disrupt crime Address the threat of serious and organised crime, terrorism and radicalisation through strong collaborative partnerships with community and other law enforcement agencies <p>Performance Indicators</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> An increase in the percentage of code 1 and 2 incidents attended within 12 minutes An increase in the rate of personal safety, property security and offences against good order cleared within 30 days An increase in public perception of safety Reduce the rate of crime victims 	<p>2 Make The Community Safer</p> <p>Strategies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Foster collaborative partnerships with government agencies, non-government organizations and community groups to maximise opportunities to prevent crime and enhance community safety Improve policing responses to people who are over-represented in the criminal justice system as either victims or offenders, including vulnerable persons, young people and victims of domestic and family violence <p>Performance Indicators</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> An increase in public satisfaction with police dealing with public order problems A decrease in the rate of road crash fatalities and hospitalisations An increase in public satisfaction with police dealing with emergencies and disasters Reduce rates of youth reoffending The proportion of offender diversions as a proportion of all offenders processed 	<p>3 Strengthen Relationships With The Community</p> <p>Strategies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preserve the legitimacy of policing through fair and ethical service delivery Provide timely and professional responses to calls for service to maintain community confidence Strengthen positive online user and social media experiences to expand options for engagement with police <p>Performance Indicators</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain high levels of public perception of police professionalism, and confidence in police Increase public perception of police honesty, and fair and equitable behaviour A decrease in rate of complaints against police An increase in satisfaction of people who have had contact with police in the last 12 months 	<p>4 Equip Our Workforce For The Future</p> <p>Strategies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Optimise our workforce to meet current and future challenges through training and development Provide world-leading equipment, technology and facilities to support our frontline staff Support healthy, safe and inclusive workplaces and promote a diverse workforce that reflects the community we serve <p>Performance Indicators</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased agency engagement (Working for Queensland survey measure) Increase the diversity of our workforce in line with our 2022 diversity target
--	---	--	--

Our Future State: Advancing Queensland's Priorities

The Queensland Police Service contributes to the Government's objectives for the community by working to keep communities safe. We do this through our focus on stopping crime; making the community safer; strengthening relationships with the community and equipping our workforce for the future so we can meet the challenges of policing into the future.

Strategic Challenges and Opportunities 2018-2019

The Queensland Police Service acknowledges the importance of addressing a range of potential strategic challenges to ensure we keep Queenslanders safe. It has identified these challenges along with opportunities over the next 12 months, linking them to the four objectives and to support delivering safe and secure communities.		LINKED TO OBJECTIVE/S
Maintain community satisfaction and confidence in police, in an environment of changing expectations and declining trust in institutions.	Collaborative partnerships with the community and a wide range of agencies will create opportunities for information sharing and improved responses to enhance community safety	1, 2, 3, 4
The ongoing threat of terrorism with low capability attacks poses unique challenges to our people and safety within the community.		1, 2, 3
Effectively engage our people in a truly inclusive workplace so they are more likely to contribute effectively to the activities of their workplace and enhance performance.	Valuing the diversity of our people and investing in their expertise, knowledge and safety is imperative to continue delivering policing services to our community.	4
Economic conditions will continue to impact on resource allocation to the QPS and numbers of vulnerable people within the community.	Become more self-sufficient and look for ways to encourage new ideas, use existing resources more efficiently and challenge our people to work smarter.	4, 2
As the proportion of demand on police containing digital elements increases, the knowledge and skills to understand criminal uses of emerging technologies is crucial for law enforcement.	Technological advances and increased global connectivity provide opportunities to change and revolutionize policing.	1, 2, 3, 4
Secure key legacies from GC2018 in respect of capabilities, experiences, infrastructure, equipment and processes for the QPS.		4

Figure 1.1 – QPS Strategic Plan 2018 – 2022

These four objectives are measured through performance indicators, several of which are focused on the perception or opinion of the community. This study will focus on how effective the service delivery is within SOPS in this patrol group, being Ravenswood, Pentland and Greenvale Police Stations, with consideration of the unique policing role in rural environments, and the following main areas of investigation: police tasking; police legitimacy; satisfaction with police service delivery; feelings of community safety; staffing numbers; contact with police; policing autonomy; and officer welfare. This research will also examine alternative options to service delivery and associated organisational structure for SOPS. The research is based on the operating environment of the QPS in 2019-2021. Given the fluid nature of organisational planning, some details may have changed since publication of the strategic plan, including naming conventions and operational plans, however the findings remain relevant to current QPS based strategic documents and objectives.

Environmental scanning is promoted within the QPS, and its importance has earlier been highlighted by Tynan (1995, p.22) who said: “police should be scanning, monitoring,

forecasting and assessing their environment constantly for their organisational survival and to maintain some degree of control”. Despite the innovative and modern focus into service delivery, the QPS appears somewhat reserved in affecting timely structural changes to service delivery in regional Queensland, although there are constant changes in the environment in which it operates.

The key to success for the QPS, it can be argued, is maintaining proper alignment between the organisation and its environment, and that “effectiveness” at least 20 years ago was ultimately related to how well an organisation understands, reacts to, and influences its environment (Danna & Griffin, 1999). The environment in which many SOPS operate, and the general environment surrounding transport and technology, is fluid and dynamic. It is recognised that officers in rural environments often adopt a community-based model of policing in which officers become integrated into their community and establish compatible community relations which often result in rural police occupying competing roles of law enforcer and local resident. This increases the diversity of roles and workload performed by officers, in contrast to metro-based officers, as they fulfil their community obligations (Scott & Jobes, 2007).

The researcher is therefore conducting a larger QPS practice-based project seeking to examine a range of factors and performance indicators to provide a broader view of the efficiency and effectiveness of rural divisions within the Townsville Policing District, and to explore alternative service delivery options. This research, however, has a specific and limited scope: to fill information gaps at a TWPG SOP divisional level, to offer insight into different aspects that might drive service delivery options for SOPS in the TWPG, and to examine selected performance indicators, community perceptions and police perceptions at a divisional level.

Some performance indicators, based on community perception and feedback, have been traditionally examined at the district level within the QPS, being large and diverse geographical areas that encompasses small divisions and larger metropolitan divisions. This foundational information, however, does not allow for a detailed analysis of smaller unique areas, including those subjects to SOPS. These information gaps will be investigated in this research, and further aspects affecting service delivery and community satisfaction will be explored as they relate specifically to SOPS of the TWPG.

1.2 Research question

The overarching research question of this study is: ‘How effective are the operational actions and organisational structures of the Queensland Police Service, which are used by Single-Officer Police Stations in delivering police services in rural areas compared to Two -Officer Police Station?’

1.3 Justification for the research

Throughout Queensland, the QPS predominantly utilises a ‘Regional Allocation Model’ for staffing, based on the regional component of the State Government approved overall police strength, and allocates resources as equitably as possible between policing regions. This allocation has historically been based on statistics of population, crime, traffic incidents and other calls for service, together with indicators of urbanisation and isolation (QPS, 1999). However, it can be argued that this model fails to consider numerous other relevant and important factors, including the unique policing role that exists in rural environments, public perception, the importance of police visibility and contact, and a community expectation for varied service delivery.

Factors of isolation and population have seen the QPS traditionally establish police stations in small regional towns in North-western Queensland, which generally have origins based around resource mining, rail provisions, or other isolated commercial or agricultural purposes. Due to this regional allocation model and population numbers, these stations are generally SOPS, a staffing allocation that has not been properly tested for effectiveness and with no consideration of other potentially important influencing factors. Despite the fluctuation of populations and other service necessities in these towns, and the unique role police play in rural towns, State Governments have proven reluctant to amend staffing structures, or to close, increase, relocate or amalgamate SOPS in a timely manner. Furthermore, concerns arise for police officers who conduct Single-Officer patrols or attend critical incidents alone. Major events and functions are also difficult to control without the support of other officers, generally requiring resources to be regularly re-deployed from other divisions at a significant cost.

The TWPG has four SOPS: Ravenswood; Pentland; Greenvale; and Prairie, and one Two-Officer Police Station (TOPS): Richmond. The broader Townsville policing district, excluding the TWPG, also includes another SOPS: Clare Station, and three TOPS: Halifax; Rollingstone; and Giru. Statistics and surveys for Prairie were not included in this research, as this division

has been unstaffed for an extended period with policing functions covered predominantly by Hughenden Police Station, which is a four-officer station approximately 44km away from Prairie.

1.4 Methodology

Utilising a Pragmatist paradigm, this study will adopt a quantitative method. A quantitative focus to collect and analyse data, with some open-ended qualitative questions through surveys to inform discussion and allow deeper analysis to assist in developing alternative service delivery options, this has allowed the consideration of a relatively large number of police and community members associated with SOPS. Two different surveys were utilised to fill information gaps where data could not be obtained through existing data holdings. Questions were designed to compare answers from police in both SOPS and TOPS, with answers from community members in corresponding divisions. This approach aimed to identify any similarities or differences in occurrences, perceptions, and observations between the groups. Categories of questions included police tasking, police legitimacy, satisfaction with police service delivery, feelings of community safety, staffing numbers, contact with police, policing autonomy, officer welfare and service delivery. Participants were grouped into four distinct classes: 1) SOPS police; 2) TOPS police; 3) SOPS community (i.e., community members residing in a SOPS division); and 4) TOPS community (i.e., community members residing in a TOPS division).

1.5 Work-based project

The researcher is conducting a work-based project to determine the efficacy and effectiveness of SOPS in a representative rural part of Queensland, analysing relevant aspects of the QPS rural operating environment and associated performance indicators, and considering the unique demand drivers relevant to rural policing in Queensland.

This body of work aims to provide a detailed overview of SOPS, ensuring outcomes can withstand public scrutiny and assist QPS decision makers. An important aspect of this project is the emphasis on bespoke structures and operating procedures, determined from a case-by-case analysis of all divisions in the research area that utilise SOPS. Outcomes could determine whether SOPS are suitable in some instances, or whether staffing numbers could be increased, or that divisions could be amalgamated with neighbouring divisions.

1.6 Professional Studies

The changing labour market has led to the necessity for a worker, or practitioner, with a high level of competency and capability to ensure they support and enhance their area of practice. This is also the case for the Australian public service, where it is integral that practitioners who support the government are attracted, developed and retained. One way to develop these employees and create practice professionals is through ongoing work-based learning, research and professional-based studies (Fergusson et al., 2020).

Fergusson et al. (2018) identified that:

...advanced practice professionals are those contributors who significantly extend knowledge and skills within a practical environment (such as a workplace), and thereby make a valuable difference to productivity and organisational output, and to society (p.9).

Professional Studies has relevance for police officers, those trained in the field of investigative work, as parallels exist in approaches to lines of inquiry and evidence gathering in both policing and social science research. This has been recognised by the University of Southern Queensland's Professional Studies program (Fergusson et al., 2019).

1.6.1 Master of Professional Studies (Research)

The Master of Professional Studies (Research) program (MPSR) is a postgraduate research-based degree offered by the University of Southern Queensland that aims to provide experienced professionals with the opportunities to demonstrate, autonomously and creatively the application of knowledge and skills in research, their professional practice and further learning. Creativity and initiative are encouraged in engaging issues that are relevant and meaningful to their professional practice and workplace challenges, helping to build the capacity and resilience of the student's organisations/communities and contribute to their self-directed learning and career development. This program has been well utilised by senior officers within the QPS to research various policing related topics.

Development of this project further supported the researcher's goal of being a scholarly professional, which is only possible through critical reflection and focused analysis. This reflection is imperative for successful professional studies programs which promotes that we must learn to live, rather than to acquire a fixed curriculum. Learning is a product of

knowledge, experience and action that must focus on inquiry, critical and reflective thinking, we must learn in response to change (Illeris, 2008).

The concept is supported by Nilsen (2012) who identifies:

... reflection is generally understood as a means of translating experience into learning, by examining one's responses, beliefs, and actions, to draw conclusions to enable better choices or actions in the future. The major outcome of reflection is learning as the understanding gained is integrated into one's experiences. (p. 164)

This reflection makes it possible to fill learning gaps, but only if we are unable to honestly identify these gaps, this identification will come by having a heightened awareness during and after experiences, and by being eager to learn from the deficiencies in knowledge and build upon it (Westberg, 2001).

1.6.2 Reflective practice

Driven to identify professional learning area gaps, the researcher utilised the University of Southern Queensland's Curriculum Vitae Tool (Van der Laan, 2013) to enhance reflective practice regarding prior learning. Categories of prior learning utilised included qualifications, training, organisational community service and community service.

All learning occurrences were then critically considered to determine the main learning experiences gained; these learning outcomes were then categorised into different broad areas as identified in a taxonomy of professional capabilities. Although it was evident that significant and varied learning outcomes may develop from a single learning experience, focus was placed on the learning outcome that was determined to be the most significant. This is not so much a reflection on the anticipated formal learning objectives of the experiences, as much as an indication of personal subconscious processes and personality traits that determine what one feels is important.

Significant learnings were identified in the areas of emotional intelligence, cultural intelligence, and collaboration/teamwork. This identifies extensive personal importance in, and subsequent learnings, the professional capability of 'Personal and Social'. Moderate learnings were identified in all other learning areas except for four, which had minimal associated learnings. The four areas included systemised information gathering

(Communication-Related Capability), analytical skills (Methodological Capability), critical judgement and problem solving (Intellectual Capabilities).

1.6.3 Learning objectives

The identified deficiencies were remedied through learnings gained within an action framework and work-based project, guided through the completion of the MPSR.

Personalised learning objectives for this project have therefore been developed to enhance learnings within these capabilities, but more specifically on the four learning areas identified above.

- 1) Develop communication related capabilities through the systemised gathering of information that relates to the internal and external environment of SOPS in the TWPG.
- 2) Enhance methodological capabilities through the analysis of information gathered relating to the internal and external environment of SOPS and TOPS in the TWPG.
- 3) Develop intellectual capabilities through the critical evaluation of the current service delivery model utilising SOPS in the TWPG, to assess their effectiveness in achieving the strategic objectives of the Queensland Police Service.
- 4) Enhance intellectual capabilities by discussing alternative service delivery options for SOPS in the TWPG.

Numerous benefits achieved through this study are anticipated to support the decision making of the QPS, fill literature gaps within research and law enforcement, and formalise further self-learning and career development for the researcher. Despite increasing interest in rural policing, little has yet been written about these issues. The argument is for more consideration to supporting rural police, with a focus on developing successful strategies for its unique demands (Fenwick, 2015).

1.6.4 Triple Dividend

This mutual and collaborative benefit is termed the triple dividend of Professional Studies. It represents a learning contract between the student, organisation, and university whereby an anticipated project will contribute to all three fields.

Organisation

Queensland Police Service: This study is referenced and supported by academic literature in various theoretical disciplines. This level of research will ensure any recommendations, outcome or finding will be appropriately reinforced to ensure decisions by the organisation will be supported. Single officer stations have long been informally scrutinised by decision makers within the Queensland Police Service, but insufficient research has been conducted regarding their efficiency to support a decision of alternative service delivery.

Research into this topic will therefore fill considerable gaps in both practical and theoretical senses, providing District Officers and QPS planners' substantial and specific information to promote service delivery arrangements throughout Regional Queensland

Academia/practice

Published literature regarding law enforcement: This research will create published literature in a specific field of practice, literature that currently does not exist. This will create a benefit to academia and the practice of law enforcement. Single officer stations are extremely topical, with the Victorian Police Force receiving public criticism around the functions and future of these stations, despite this there is no specific research that exists to support decision making.

Individual

This formalised research opportunity will allow the learner to develop through a higher level of self-reflection and academic scrutiny. The learning objectives are based upon gaps in the learner's prior learning and will allow these gaps to be filled to a high enough level that will ensure a well-rounded scholarly professional. This research has the potential to support and guide all policing jurisdictions worldwide to offer improved policing service delivery and structures, whilst improving efficiency and officer safety.

1.7 Definitions

An important aspect of this research is being able to define the terms used including effectiveness, service delivery, calls for service and discretionary time within the relative context.

Twenty-five years ago, Grabosky (1998) defined effectiveness in policing as the extent to which the QPS are accomplishing its purpose in regional Queensland using SOPS. For this research effectiveness will therefore mean the extent SOPS are achieving QPS strategic objectives and performance indicators.

Service delivery means the interaction between providers and clients where the provider offers a service, whether that be information or a task, and the client either finds value or loses value because of the service, and good service delivery provides clients with an increase in value. For this research, the term service delivery refers to all services delivered by the TWPG in the Townsville Policing District, including actions performed by police, for their community, during official policing duties as well as informal and community-based interactions.

Calls for service relate to public requests for a policing response, despite the outcome of the request or actions taken by police.

Discretionary time was defined for participants within the survey and relates to police work time that is not spent responding to calls for service, station administration duties, arrests, or other urgent duties. It relates to time when officers decide what proactive duty, they will perform themselves, an example of this is self-tasked foot patrols.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The effectiveness, structure, operating environment, and strategic objectives of the nominated SOPS will be analysed through the examination of three distinct areas. These include *Rural Policing* – uniqueness and challenges; *Staffing allocation* – police allocation models and structures through strategic planning and environmental scans; and *Community perceptions of police and crime* – impact on service delivery. QPS objectives and performance indicators will also be examined to offer greater context.

These areas are interconnected, and impact heavily on decision making within the QPS, including decisions on service delivery models and operational priorities. The importance of approaching decisions strategically will be examined and is an important aspect of QPS planning. Staffing allocation will be examined in the context of strategic planning and environmental scanning for police and other organisations, as will the unique nature of policing regional areas and SOPS. Community perceptions of police and crime will be explored to identify opportunities and barriers that affect the current, and any alternative, service delivery.

These concepts will be related specifically to Queensland Police, and specifically the Policing divisions of Ravenswood, Greenvale and Pentland. This critical analysis will assist with a systematic and all-encompassing evaluation of the effectiveness of service delivery in these divisions.

2.2 Parent theories and classification models

2.2.1 Rural policing

A major factor that must be considered when examining service delivery models in the QPS is that one size may not fit all; the environments in which different stations operate are extremely diverse. Rural policing is unique and has many challenges that have limited effect on urban stations. It has often been argued that debates regarding policing are constructed from an urban perspective, while ignoring the experiences of rural police (Buttle et al., 2010). This urban focus to the study of policing is due to the metro-centric emphasis placed on crime by the media, academics, and policymakers. Many of those involved with law enforcement policymaking live and work in the city that contains the seat of government. Also, with media constructions of

crime as well as academic research being embedded in the urban experience, it comes as no surprise that most police policy has been formulated with the city in mind (Buttle et al., 2010). Safety and wellbeing considerations are also abundant for officers working alone, police are the only fully mobile 24-hour service because the public expect them to be able to deal with any number of different social problems that often have little to do with crime. This is especially the case where rural officers are concerned (Buttle et al., 2010).

It is evident that differences exist in the nature of the work for urban and rural police, but it has also been identified that rural police possibly operated differently from urban police because of a distinct rural police culture (Carson, 2014). This culture nominates rural police as professional, dedicated officers who work an assigned shift and then respond to calls when off duty as though they were working a 24/7 shift. The prevalent theme was everyone in the community knowing the officer adds to the stress of working in isolation with limited backup (Carson, 2014). This culture should also be considered when analysing the internal and external environment.

Past studies of rural policing have established that rural communities tend to present unique challenges to police services. These challenges are described in terms of large territorial distances, isolation from colleagues, environmental barriers (such as mountains and islands), and limited access to resources for support. More recently, researchers point also to unique community expectations, and role conflicts experienced by police officers in the social dynamics of rural neighbourhoods (Fenwick, 2015). This highlights the importance of maintaining strong policing legitimacy within rural areas, being confidence, trust, honesty and fairness.

Duties and tasks of officers in rural settings are also different from urban policing and effectiveness is dependent upon hands-on community engagement. Various intricacies in rural settings, including resourcing, crime and public opinion results in lower-ranking officers often completing work that in other settings would be assigned to officers of a higher rank and/or from specialist units. (Abraham & Ceccato, 2020).

Risks, and perceived risks, associated with police working alone exist in every aspect of operational policing. Research has identified a broad preference for two-person patrols among police officers. It was identified that officers perceived increased dangers in single-officer patrols and experienced more stress. Australian research identified occupational health and

safety concerns with Single-Officer patrols and has led to the abolition of single-officer patrols in Western Australia (Anderson & Dossetor, 2012).

2.2.2 Staffing allocation

Any decision affecting the staffing and structure of an organisation should be considered with a holistic approach, critical analysis should be interwoven with reflection concerning strategic planning, decision making and management. Strategic management is the process by which an organisation creates a vision of its future and develops the necessary strategies, structures and action plans to achieve that future (Hunt, 1995). The strategy of an organisation is affected not only by environmental forces and strategic capability, but also by the values and expectations of those who have power in and around the organisation (Johnson et al., 2008). Care should be taken when considering who these people may be within small communities, as internal governing teams may perceive objectives very differently to influential people in divisions with SOPS that are external to the organisation.

Strategic management includes understanding the strategic position of an organisation, strategic choices for the future and turning strategy into action. (Johnson et al., 2008). This third concept is imperative when examining service delivery models in rural Queensland, as no amount of strategic thinking will be positive if it is not practical. Perhaps the greatest strength of strategic management is that it takes both quantitative and qualitative information and uses it to allow effective decisions to be made about future directions under conditions of significant uncertainty (Hunt, 1995). This information, and subsequent analysis, is the key to understanding the operating environment and influencing factors in rural Queensland, it is also the key to understanding the communities' perception and expectations of officers stationed at SOPS.

Strategic management in the QPS has resulted in the development of a strategic plan which sets the overall direction for the QPS for the next four years, including the Service's vision, objectives and annual challenges and opportunities. The QPS Strategic Plan (see Figure 1) describes the QPS's vision, identifies the QPS's values and purpose, presents the QPS's strategic objectives, outlines the strategies that will make the QPS's vision a reality, sets out how the strategies will be measured, states how the QPS contributes to the Government's objectives for the community and lists the strategic challenges and opportunities identified in the Environmental Scan.

This broad strategy focus is then actioned through the operational planning process, this is a process which focuses on answering the question, 'How will we deliver our services'? An operational plan is developed through this, which is a subset of an agency's strategic plan. It covers a period of one year and describes short-term activities and milestones that contribute to the implementation of objectives (QPS, 2018). The Operational Plan also includes the QPS's operational priorities. The priorities are not intended to include everything the QPS does in keeping Queensland safe but provide a focus on areas where new emphasis, funding or attention to outcomes will be undertaken to address one or more of our strategic challenges or opportunities.

A key element of a strategic approach is planning, which is an integral component of the Queensland Government's Performance Management Framework and is recognised as the starting point in any strategic management cycle. A Guide to Strategic and Operational Planning (i.e., the QPS Planning Guide) aims to provide QPS members with information and guidance on planning. The guide sets out the requirements for the levels of planning in the QPS that cascade down from the QPS Strategic and Operational Plans to Individual Performance Development Agreements.

Planning is a cyclical process through which an agency determines an appropriate desired future position considering environmental factors and identifies how this is to be achieved. The planning process is designed to translate whole of government objectives for the community into measurable agency objectives and services, which must be critically examined if the efficiency of a section is to be determined.

The QPS identifies that planning enables the organisation to determine direction, identify possible issues/risks/opportunities to respond to, keep on track to reach objectives and progress priorities, and provide a basis for measuring performance (QPS, 2018). A strategic management approach must therefore be adopted by the researcher when critically examining the current, and any alternative, service delivery models incorporating SOPS.

Informed decisions regarding police staffing, structure and operations can only be strategically achieved with careful scanning of the environment in which officers' work, police are inherently interwoven into every aspect of a community which therefore affects all inputs and outputs. There is no one formula for conducting a scan, but there are several steps to consider ensuring that the scan provides an accurate snapshot of a police services operating environment, both external and internal. The external environment includes, for example, criminal,

government and demographic characteristics. The internal environment includes the organisations policies, operational strategies and internal processes (Hortz et al., 1998).

Environmental scans serve a dual purpose for policing as they firstly help in short term planning. Secondly, they can help to identify problems and assist in breaking down a problem into its component parts, enabling the development of strategies to overcome it (Hortz et al., 1998). The QPS promote environmental scan at all levels, with an aim to identify the key trends, issues, challenges and opportunities relevant to the QPS.

Environmental scanning involves the collection and analysis of information about events, trends, and relationships in an organisation's operating environment, to assist with planning the organisation's future course of action. The objectives of environmental scanning include detecting trends and events, their interrelationships, and their potential impacts on an organisation; defining the potential strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities that arise from those trends and events; and encouraging staff to look ahead and operate proactively rather than reactively.

An environmental scan is usually conducted in three parts: the external environment, the internal environment, and the stakeholder environment. The QPS uses the PESTEL framework to conduct a scan of the external environment. PESTEL relates to the political, economic, social, technological, environmental and legal parameters that are considered at the international, national, and state level. The two basic functions of PESTEL for an organisation is that it can assist to identify the environment in which it operates and can assist to predict situations and circumstances it may encounter (Yuksel, 2012). The information is collected and analysed to identify drivers that impact directly on the portfolio. Internal influences such as organisational capacity, structure and culture, corporate governance and performance management are analysed to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the organisation (QPS, 2017). The QPS Environmental Scan identified rural areas throughout Queensland as being particularly at risk of natural disasters, firearm theft, technology, and communications.

An internal scan can also provide the researcher with a snapshot of the inputs and outputs of SOPS. This quantitative snapshot can identify what officers allocate most of their time on, when this occurs, what crimes are common and if the data is appropriately collected. By gathering and analysing this internal data, strategic analysis of service delivery can be examined.

Determining the allocation of resources for any organisation can be extremely complex, with various intricate variables to consider. This balancing act certainly exists within the QPS,

especially when determining staffing in rural areas with transient populations and spikes in economic conditions. Traditionally, there have been four basic approaches to determining workforce levels. Each differs in its assumptions, ease of calculation, usefulness, validity, and efficiency. These approaches are the per capita approach, the minimum staffing approach, the authorised level approach and the workload-based approach.

The per capita approach is utilised by many police agencies as they use resident populations to estimate the number of officers a community need. The per capita method requires determining an optimum number of officers per person and then calculating the number of officers needed for the population of a jurisdiction. To determine an optimum officer rate, an agency may compare its rate with those it considers its peers (e.g., by location, size, or crime).

The minimum staffing approach requires an estimation of a sufficient number of patrol officers that must be deployed at any one time to maintain officer safety and provide an adequate level of protection to the public. The use of minimum staffing approaches is common and generally reinforced through organisational policy and collective bargaining agreements. The authorised level approach uses budget allocations to specify a number of officers that may be allocated. Typically, it is driven by resource availability and political decision-making and reflects an incremental budgeting process as opposed to identifiable criteria such as demand for service, community expectations, or efficiency analyses. It can sometimes be difficult to determine what is meant by authorised level.

A more comprehensive attempt to determining appropriate workforce levels considers actual police workload based on demand for service indicators. The workload approach estimates future staffing needs of police by modelling the level of current activity, which can assist in determining the need for additional resources or relocating existing resources, assessing individual and group performance and productivity, and detecting trends in workload that may illustrate changing activity levels and conditions. Furthermore, a workload analysis can be performed at every level of the police department and for all key functions, although it is more difficult to assess workload for some units than others (Weiss, 2014).

Despite academic approaches, there is a relatively small body of literature related specifically to police staffing. This literature falls into two primary categories: simple statistical accounts of current staffing with no analysis, and complex statistical analyses of the relationship between number of police and crime rates. The studies have widely varied and conflicting results, with no genuine consensus (Overman, 2014).

Traditionally throughout Queensland, the QPS predominantly utilised a 'Regional Allocation Model' for staffing, based upon the regional component of the State Government approved overall police strength, and allocates resources as equitable as possible between policing regions. This allocation has historically been based on statistics of population, crime, traffic incidents and other calls for service, together with indicators of urbanisation and isolation, and the staffing impacts are still visible in regional areas that utilise SOPs (QPS, 1999).

A recommendation from the Queensland Police Service Strategic Review (QPS, 2019) identified: 'a consistent and transparent methodology and business practice for resource allocation be developed which utilises the improved understanding of demand and considers this together with situational challenges including geography, population, and demography and other relevant factors. The improved business practice should then focus on ensuring resourcing matches need, across the State'. This recommendation recognises the need for staffing allocation based on 'relevant factors', which should include the demand drivers of public perception and opinion on crime.

2.2.3 Community Perceptions

A community's perceptions are essential to the QPS measure of success, this is evidenced by 6 of the 15 performance indicators referencing opinion or perception. This perception of crime has a major influence on a person's feeling of safety and their subsequent confidence in police (Borovec et al, 2019). It has been identified that it is a person's perception of crime that can have a greater impact on their quality of life than actual crime frequency, and perception of crime and its trends often do not correspond to the actual crime situation (Fielding & Innes, 2006).

Public opinion generally identifies rural areas are safer than urban areas, however research indicates that this is not always the case when the perception of crime is considered. It is determined that this fear is just as much of an issue amongst rural populations despite low crime rates, and that this fear extends beyond just the concern of being crime victims, but with what they perceive as a threat to their rural idyll (Ceccato, 2016).

Public perception of crime is often disconnected to actual crime rates, with people's views of crime in their neighbourhoods being far higher than actual levels of crime. Yet, in addition to the negative effects linked with actual crime, perceived crime rates also negatively affect life satisfaction. Combined, these findings imply that, regardless of changes in the actual crime rate,

social welfare might be greatly increased by lowering people's perceptions of crime (Manning & Fleming, 2017). Ambrey et al (2014) also identified that an individuals' perceptions of crime are far greater than actual levels of crime, that the gap between perceived and real crime is widening, and perceived rates of crime have an adverse impact on life satisfaction beyond those associated with real crime. This perception of crime has a major impact on an individual's feelings of safety, being a subjective feeling and related to perceived risk, or a feeling free from the fear of crime (Warr, 2000).

This fear can have a greater impact than just on QPS performance indicators, an increasing number of community members feeling unsafe may result in major implications for the community, including physical and psychological withdrawal from society, weakening informal social control, and diminished capacities of individuals and the community to jointly solve problems. A primary police focus should therefore be aimed at reducing a community members fear of crime (Borovec et al, 2019).

Perceptions of crime also impact heavily on confidence in police, or police legitimacy. It is recognised that a persons' satisfaction with police officers and subsequent police service delivery depends on their feeling of safety (Borovec et al, 2019). Confidence in police is influenced predominantly by impressions that crime has decreased in the community and significantly increases the feeling of safety (Nofziger & Williams, 2005). However, confidence in police does not increase with a decrease in crime frequency, highlighting the importance of other police factors instead of just reactive law enforcement. (Fielding & Innes, 2006). Presence, or visibility, can also have a positive impact on crime perception. Studies show that poor safety perceptions were linked to poor police presence (Abraham & Ceccato, 2022). Police visibility refers to police officers and staff having a physical presence in public and private spaces while conducting foot and vehicle patrols (Weston, 2021).

It is important to understand that the sense of safety is based on perception, in the same ways as assessment of the police and its visibility. Perception being so important, police efforts to reduce fear of crime or perception of crime will not be effective if they are not present in a community (Borovec et al, 2019). Considering the role police have in any community, and the increased functions they must perform in a rural setting, their presence and visibility can successfully reduce such fear in local communities and improve the overall sense of safety (Borovec et al, 2019).

Increased police presence, visibility, and informal contact with members of the public can improve public opinion (Maxson et al, 2003). Schorer (2007) also emphasises that presence, visibility, and contact are important to create a feeling of safety, to create safety in an objective and measurable way, as well as to encourage a relationship between the police and community members built on trust. Members of the public who are concerned over the lack of safety can only be reassured by an active and visible police presence, however fleeting visibility is insufficient to secure public satisfaction, positive informal contact is the key to improving public perception of crime, safety, service delivery satisfaction and policing legitimacy.

The amount of contact a community member has with police heavily impacts their satisfaction and perception, more so than other factors including age, race or socioeconomic status. It is also recognised that positive interaction with the police has a greater effect on the community supporting the police, than negative contact has with the community not supporting the police (Brown & Benedict, 2002).

These functions are recognised as key elements of policing success, however, overtime these functions have been systematically reduced or even abandoned. This is caused through police organisations striving to improve efficiency, which is based upon the non-human elements of performance indicators. With the increase in demand and technology, police officers were able to move and patrol in a quicker manner, covering a significantly larger area than in the past, in addition, the speed and number of reactive police interventions per day were improved. In other words, the police increased their efficiency in reacting to incidents, at the same time reducing meaningful visibility and informal community contacts. (Borovec et al, 2019).

Police programs aimed at increasing police visibility and making them more accessible to the public meet community expectations because they promote cooperation between the police and public, prevent crime, increase safety, and reduce fear of crime (Fleissner & Heinzelmann, 1996). Bradford et al (2009) identifies that: ‘we find that perceptions about the visibility of the police and how informed people feel are also linked to judgements about effectiveness, fairness and community engagement. These findings must be viewed in the light of the seemingly insatiable desire among the public for more ‘bobbies on the beat’, and certainly suggest that if people perceive a growth in patrol activity their opinions of the police will improve across the board. However, in the current context the importance of these more ephemeral forms of ‘contact’ may go beyond this, since our results suggest that opinions of police effectiveness can be enhanced by better communication and increased visibility’.

Collective efficacy refers to the ability of police to work with community members to reduce crime, and the fear of crime. One study shows levels of police visibility projected trust in police, this trust positively correlates to perceptions of police fairness, which in-turn predicted collective efficacy. In other words, police presence in neighbourhoods was associated with more positive views about officer behaviour, which in turn was associated with collective efficacy (Yesberg et al, 2021).

A more noticeable police presence can lessen residents' fears of crime and raise their perceptions of personal safety (Cops, 2013), and has a major and positive impact on confidence in police. However, it has also been observed that an increase in policing numbers can have a significant and positive effect above just visibility (Sindall & Sturgis, 2013). Sindall and Sturgis (2013) further stated: 'Moreover, because the extent to which police are visible in local areas is itself a function of the number of police employed, we find that the number of police has an additional indirect influence on public confidence through its direct effect on visibility. By implication, reducing police numbers is likely to erode public confidence in the police, even if frontline visibility is maintained through organisational efficiency'.

2.2.4 QPS Objectives and Performance Indicators

Each QPS strategic objective detailed in the Strategic Plan aligns with several performance indicators that allows a measure of success. Some of these performance indicators are statistical based and assessed through existing QPS data holdings. This data was formally requested through the QPS research and evaluation unit and provided by the QPS statistical services unit for public release. Detailed statistical analysis was not applied to this data as a recognised limitation of this research, this data will form part of the larger QPS practice-based project in which this research aims to support.

Although it will not be specifically supplied or referenced as part of this research, it is important to note that that crime data for all SOPS and TOPS is relatively low in comparison to other divisions, and the Townsville Policing District as a whole. Researcher knowledge, and the review of crime data utilised in the broader work-based project, reinforces that reported crimes within these divisions is traditionally considered minimal.

Some of these performance indicators pertain to the perception or opinion of the community. Traditionally, data for these indicators was not available at a divisional level, failing to offer an adequate measure of success for SOPS. This research aims to fulfil these information gaps and

obtain data at a divisional level for SOPS and TOPS within the Townsville Policing District, as it relates to satisfaction of police, perception of safety and crime, opinions of various policing aspects or tasks, and police honesty and professionalism. This data can then be associated with TOPS, and District level data to ascertain a comparable level of success or otherwise.

Table 2.3.4.1 identifies which divisional level performance indicators this research focuses on, for all TOPS and SOPS within the Townsville Policing District. As previously indicated, all existing QPS data that relates to performance indicators will not be included in this research but is being utilised in the larger QPS practice-based project.

Table 2.2.4.1 QPS performance indicators not addressed at a divisional level

Strategic Objective	Performance Indicator #	Performance Indicator Description	Data Source
Stop crime	1	Increase of code 1 & 2 within 12 minutes	Existing QPS data
	2	Increase of offences cleared within 30 days	Existing QPS data
	3	Increase perception of crime safety	Information gap
	4	Reduce rate of crime victims	Existing QPS data
Make the community safer	5	Increase of public satisfaction with police dealings with public order	Information gap
	6	Decrease crash fatalities and hospitalisation	Existing QPS data
	7	Increase of public satisfaction with police dealings with emergencies and disasters	Information gap
	8	Reduce youth re-offending	Existing QPS data
	9	Offender diversions vs. processing	Existing QPS data
Strengthen relationships with the community	10	High levels of perception of public confidence and police professionalism	Information gap
	11	Increase public perception of police honesty and equitable behaviour	Information gap

	12	Decrease complaints against police	Existing QPS data
	13	Increase satisfaction with police – contact within last 12 months	Information gap
Equip workforce for the future	14	Increased agency engagement	Existing QPS data
	15	Increased diversity	Existing QPS data

2.3 Research Question

When considered in isolation, the nominated areas have been investigated by a significant amount of literature. However, when applied to the QPS and SOPS, there is minimal literature to guide strategic decision making within the QPS. This information has an impact on budgets, organisational objectives, and overall effectiveness, but more importantly it can have a major impact on officer safety and community perception. The key question this study will therefore aim to answer in relation to SOPS is: ‘How effective are the operational actions and organisational structures of the Queensland Police Service, which are used by Single-Officer Police Stations in delivering police services in rural areas compared to Two -Officer Police Station?’

This study will further seek to explore sub-research questions, that will address the above overarching research question. These sub-research questions are:

Sub-research question 1: What is the most important policing aspect within Single-Officer Police Station divisions; are there differences between the perspectives of police officers and the citizens they serve, and are there differences in relation to the areas covered by TOPS?

Sub- research question 2: How well are the Queensland Police Service performance indicators, which rely on perception, achieved within SOPS compared to TOPS?

Sub- research question 3: In what way do Queensland Police Service structures utilising Single-Officer Police Stations impact service delivery and officers?

Sub- research question 4: Is there a relationship between community perceptions about police legitimacy, safety, and service delivery and do the SPOS and TOPS communities differ in those areas?

2.4 Conclusion

Literature regarding rural policing, staffing allocation, and community perceptions will be considered as it relates to the analysis of data pertaining to QPS performance indicators to determine if operational actions and organisational structures within the Queensland Police Service that utilise Single-Officer Police Stations are the most effective way to deliver policing services?

Crime in rural areas can be considered relatively low, despite that policing in rural environments is challenging and unique. Officers are required to take on increased roles and responsibilities beyond just law enforcement, including an expectation that they will become an enmeshed community member. Due to traditional demand drivers including crime and population, staffing allocation in such places is limited to a Single-Officer, which can have a negative impact on service delivery, officer welfare and public perception.

The perception of crime, as opposed to actual crime trends, can have a major impact on the community's perception of safety, satisfaction of service delivery and policing legitimacy (Fielding & Innes, 2006). This perception is also impacted by the manner and volume in which the media and community portray crime, with the actual increase in the volume or severity of crimes not being as important as how it is portrayed by the media and other residents through rumour and hearsay (Lowry et al., 2003). This perception can however be improved through policing visibility, presence and increased informal contacts (Abraham & Cecato, 2022).

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction and research setting

For the effective implementation of the organisation's corporate strategy, the QPS implement a structure that enhances achievement of its objectives, being 1) stopping crime; 2) making the community safer; 3) strengthening relationships with the community; and 4) equipping the workforce for the future. This structure facilitates the co-ordination of activities and control the action of members and impacts upon decision-making, processes and procedures and job design.

The Commissioner of the Queensland Police, in accordance with s. 4.8 of the Police Service Administration Act 1990, is responsible for determining the appropriate organisational structure of the Queensland Police Service. Through the issue of executive directions, the Commissioner has established that the structure of the Service is to include commands, regions, districts and divisions (QPS, 2020).

Commands are a grouping of sections or business units that are similar in output or complement each other and have the whole jurisdictional area of Queensland as the geographical area of responsibility or operating area. Regions, districts and divisions are based on smaller geographical locations and divide the state into various areas of responsibility. Regions are made up of numerous districts, districts are made up of various patrol groups and these patrol groups are made up of various divisions. The State of Queensland is divided into seven policing regions, one of which is the Northern region, as displayed in Figure 3.1.1 (QPS, 2021).

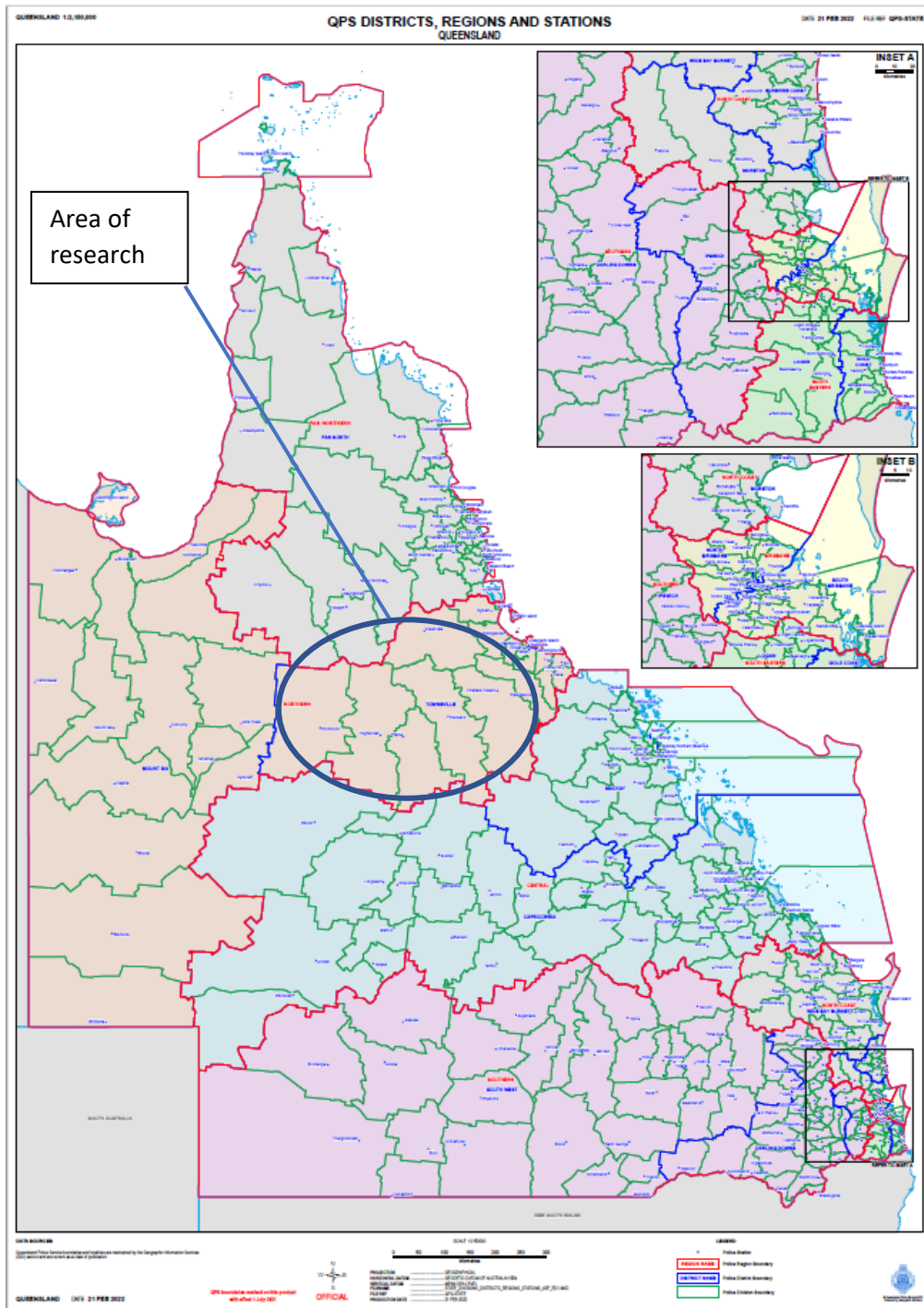


Figure 3.1.1 Map of Queensland with QPS Region, District and Divisional boundaries

The Northern region is further broken down into the Mount Isa District and the Townsville District. The Townsville Policing District is further broken down into four geographically based patrol groups, including the Townsville Western Patrol Group, as displayed in Figure 3.1.2 (QPS, 2021). This Patrol Group is divided into various policing divisions that each

accommodate a police station. Four of these divisions are Single-Officer Stations: Ravenswood, Pentland, Greenvale and Prairie.

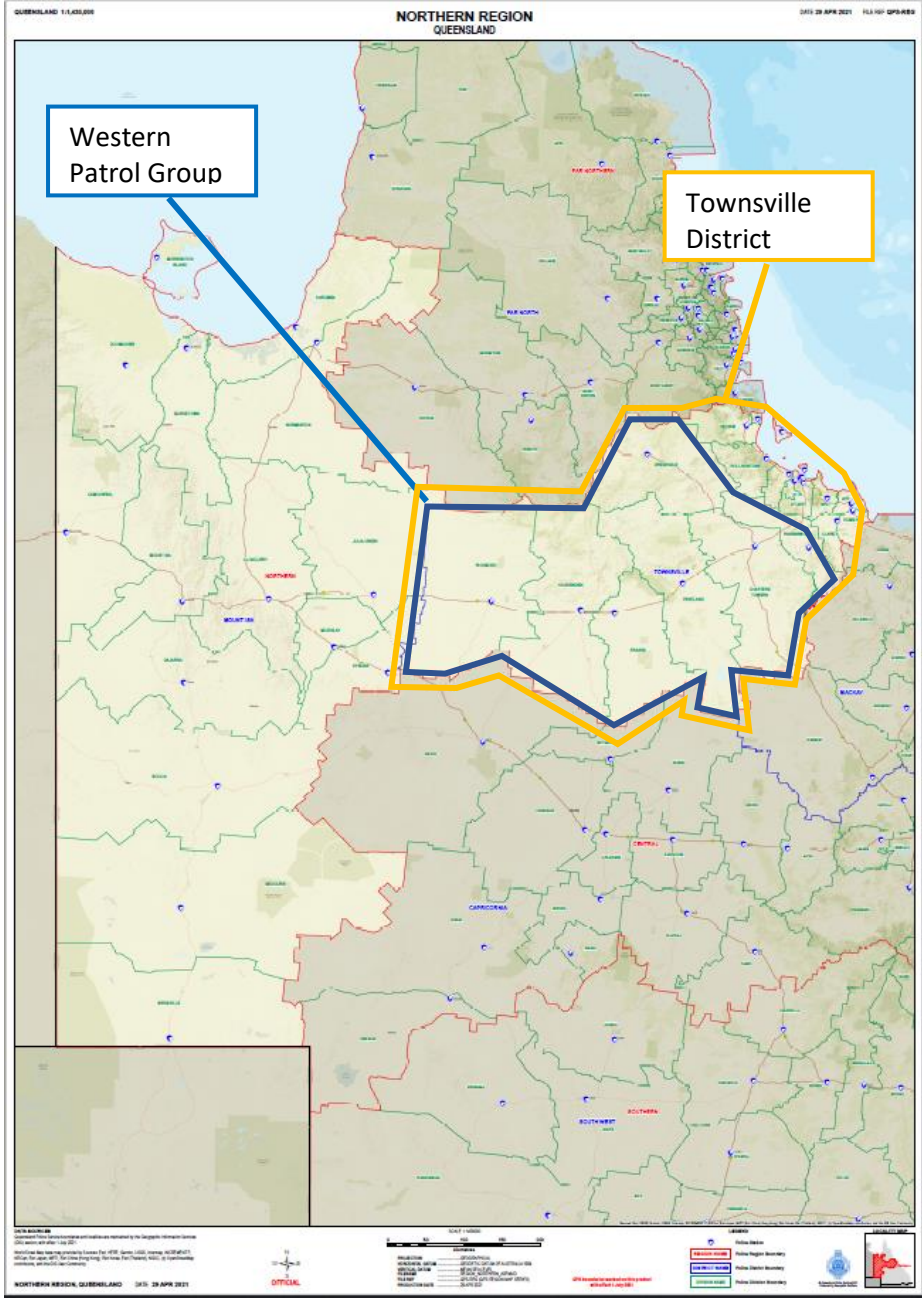


Figure 3.1.2 Map of Queensland displaying Northern region, Townsville policing district and Townsville Western patrol group boundaries

Other patrol groups within the Townsville Policing District, to the North and South of the city area, also accommodate single and Two-Officer stations. Data relevant to all SOPS and TOPS

were gathered and analysed to assist with this research, however the primary focus of this research remains the SOPS within the Townsville Western patrol group, being Ravenswood, Greenvale and Pentland. Data includes existing statistics held by the QPS, information from existing surveys and new data sourced from surveying police and community members, this will be explained further in section 3.4. Figure 3.1.3 depicts police stations within the Townsville Policing District, Northern Region. Not all police stations have been labelled, the Townsville metro area has numerous stations which extend North in the vicinity of Ingham, and South in the vicinity of Ayr.



Figure 3.1.3 Towns and associated police stations relevant to this research within Townsville Policing District: Ravenswood, Greenvale and Pentland identified.

All SOPS and TOPS within the Townsville Policing District, including their patrol group name, number or permanent officers, and distance from closest larger officer station is detailed in Table 3.1.1.

Table 3.1.1 Single or Two-Officer stations within Townsville district

Station	Patrol Group	Permanent Officers	Distance from Closest Four+ Officer Station (Km)
Ravenswood	Western	1	88.9
Greenvale	Western	1	205.4
Pentland	Western	1	107.6
Richmond	Western	2	115.2
Halifax	Northern	2	19.3
Rollingstone	Northern	2	36.5
Giru	Southern	2	40.4
Clare	Southern	1	33.2
Prairie	Western	1	33.0

The unique environmental challenges in rural communities and increased community expectations on police officers are not often considered in generic staffing allocation models deployed throughout policing organisations. All single-officer and two-officer stations within the Townsville Policing District have unique differences, including varied challenges and opportunities, with individual personalities having an impact on policing. However, in general terms they still present similar operating environments for policing when considering all demographics, proximity to a larger regional centres, population, industry, events, policing administration, and community safety. Detailed environmental and demographic data was sourced from POLSIS profiles through the Queensland Government Statistician’s Office and is available in appendix A, summarised information is outlined below (Queensland Government Statistician’s Office, 2021).

All SOPS within the Townsville Policing District, excluding Prairie, were examined and determined to have a similar population statistic, with total population between 317 and 516 people for an average of 403, and negligible population growth rates of between 0.04% and 0.05%. Populations for TOPS were also similar, with between 835 and 2079 people for an average of 1566, and population growth rates of 0.05%.

People that usually resided in a different address five years ago were similar for SOPS, with between 4% and 8% of the population changing address in each five-year period. TOPS were

between 23% and 37%. People born overseas were similar for all areas, varying only between 4.3% and 10.2%.

Family composition in all areas was similar. The percentage of residents who were couples with children varied between 36% and 44% for an average of 41%. Privately owned and occupied dwellings in all areas varied between 36% and 43%, except in Halifax which was 50%.

Average annual income varied minimally, between \$71,000 and \$78,000, except in Giru which was \$85,000. The unemployment rate was similar within all divisions, SOPS and TOPS included, only varying between 2.1% in Pentland to 4.5% in Rollingstone.

The main industry in all areas was agriculture, except in Rollingstone where the main industry was construction, followed by agriculture. Building approvals in the previous year remained minimal in SOPS, either 0 or 1 per year, but varied considerably in TOPS between 1 in Richmond and 28 in Giru.

Differences were identified in the land area of the divisions for the relevant SOPS, which varied between 1,755km² in Clare to 22,000km² in Pentland. TOPS varied between 1,200km² in Giru to 35,000km² in Richmond.

These data highlight similar environments and demographics for all SOPS and TOPS within the Townsville Policing District.

3.2 Justification for the paradigm and methodology

It is understood that the nature of research is influenced by the researcher's theoretical framework. This framework is referred to as the paradigm and influences the way knowledge is studied and interpreted (Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006). The choice of paradigm establishes the intent, motivation, and expectations for the research. Without nominating a paradigm in the first step, there is no basis for subsequent choices (Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006). A Pragmatist paradigm will be utilised in this study as it focuses on the 'what' and 'how' of the research problem. The research question will be placed as central, and all research methods and sub-research questions will be focused on understanding the problem (Creswell, 2009).

Pragmatism will further aid avoiding one of the reasons for a slow and uncertain translation of research into practice, moving from an emphasis on explanatory models and efficacy designs to more pragmatic approaches (Glasgow, 2013). As the Pragmatist paradigm sets the intent, motivation, and expectations for the research, it will also support the intended research outcomes that aim to address a real-world problem within a timely manner (Fergusson, 2019).

This is further explained by Fergusson (2019, p.110) who identifies that ‘work-based research seen through a Pragmatist lens (the single most common WBL paradigm), seeks to identify solutions to problems, and to make recommendations and improvements related to them; in this orientation the consequences of action are highlighted. Thus, Pragmatism mostly asks “what”, “how” and “to what extent” research questions and is therefore well aligned to the standard academic view of decision making and problem solving’.

Pragmatism is further relevant to this research as it allows for researcher autonomy in collecting and analysing data from numerous sources, as it is seen as the paradigm that provides the underlying philosophical framework for practice-based research (Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006, 197). It supports the researcher’s belief that knowledge can be obtained by a quantitative approach. Instead of method being important, the problem is most important, and all approaches can be used to understand the problem statement. Pragmatism is therefore not affiliated with any system or philosophy; the essential issue is to find the best techniques and procedure of research that address the problem statement (Rahi, 2017).

The Pragmatist paradigm also provides an opportunity for different worldviews and assumptions, as well as different forms of data collection and analysis (Creswell, 2009). This is important as the researcher is relying on quantitative data analysis from existing statistics, and community perceptions and opinions that offer further insight into optimal staffing structures and options.

3.3 Research method

To adequately answer the overarching research question, being ‘How effective are the operational actions and organisational structures of the Queensland Police Service, which are used by Single-Officer Police Stations in delivering police services in rural areas compared to Two -Officer Police Station?’, and sub-questions, this research will utilise a quantitative method. It will adopt a major quantitative focus to collect and analyse data, with some open-ended qualitative questions through surveys to inform discussion and allow deeper analysis to assist in developing alternative service delivery options.

Quantitative research utilises a diverse set of methods to systematically investigate the problem at hand utilising statistical or numerical data. The aim is to analyse the data for trends and relationships (Watson, 2015). Quantitative researchers use numbers to quantify participant responses and subsequently interpret them to make conclusions. The quantitative research will

therefore be utilised to statistically identify trends and correlations in performance indicators based on survey responses that may assist in determining efficacy in staffing structures.

3.4 Research design

The overall practice-based project was instigated by the researcher to test the efficacy and effectiveness of SOPS within the Townsville Policing District, to ensure the district is operating in the most efficient manner. The research project was developed to assist in the overall practice-based project by fulfilling data gaps and answering research questions that could not be ascertained through existing data.

Figure 3.4.1 illustrates the relationship between the practice-based project and the research-based project, and how the data will be utilised. Upon completion of all data collection and organisation, analysis of the data as it relates to the specific performance indicators will be completed. Data will also be analysed and considered within the context of the relevant research sub-question and literature review topics. Questions relating to ‘analysing the environment’ in surveys was included to inform the practice-based project and detailed analysis was not included in this research.

The identified data gaps relate to perception-based performance indicators for the communities in SOPS divisions within the Townsville Policing District. The QPS strategic objectives and subsequent performance indicators are an important benchmark to determine effective service delivery, and extensive data exist to measure and analyse performance indicators at a broad district level, but not all data satisfy divisional-level performance and as some performance indicators rely solely on community perception and communities can differ in their perception, it is integral to satisfy this data gap and obtain this data at a divisional level.

This research aims to gather and analyse data which address the following performance indicators, which are included in the QPS strategic plan, for the SOPS within the TWPG. Performance indicators include:

- Increase perception of crime safety
- Increase of public satisfaction with police dealings with public order
- Increase of public satisfaction with police dealings with emergencies and disasters
- High levels of perception of public confidence and police professionalism
- Increase public perception of police honesty and equitable behaviour
- Increase satisfaction with police – contact within last 12 months

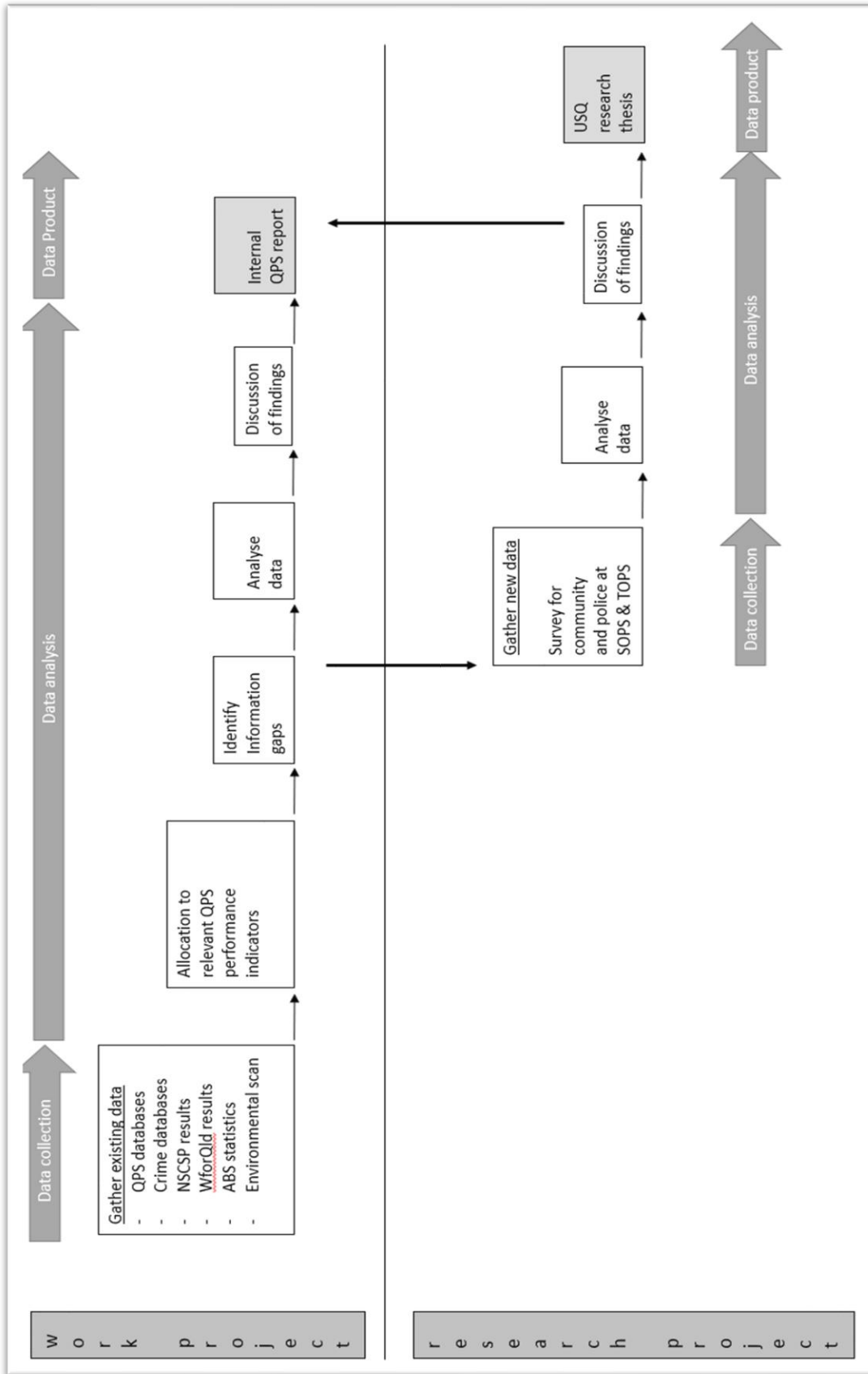


Figure 3.4.1 Relationship between practice-based and research-based project relationship

These performance indicators were selected as they are an identified information gaps in relation to SOPS at a divisional level, but this research will also examine community and police perceptions regarding structure and service delivery within SOPS and TOPS operating environments. The data analysed in this research-based project will later be included in the practice-based project, allowing for divisional level data from all fifteen performance indicators to be considered.

Data were gathered through surveying members of the public and police from communities that incorporate SOPS and TOPS within the Townsville Policing District. Survey data were utilised to answer sub-questions 1 to 5, along with information from staffing allocation literature, environmental scans, industry overviews, demographics, and other statistical sources. District level data from the National Survey Community Satisfaction with Police survey (NSCSP) will also be utilised for comparison with data derived from this research which utilises similar questions, these data will be allocated to the performance indicators which they represent.

3.4.1 Survey Process

Participants were grouped into four distinct sections: 1) SOPS police; 2) TOPS police; 3) SOPS community (i.e., community members residing in a SOPS division); and 4) TOPS community (i.e., community members residing in a TOPS division). Initial information was provided to all officers currently or previously attached to all SOPS and TOPS within the Townsville Policing District via email. Information included broad details and an introduction to the research project, details of the research being endorsed but remaining separate from the QPS, the voluntary nature of any responses, and brief details of subsequent community and police surveys.

Police participants were limited to officers currently in the selected divisions, or who had been stationed in those areas in the preceding five years. Participation in surveys was voluntary and this was clearly articulated in all documentation.

An email was then sent to all potential police participants from a QPS Administration Officer, inviting them to complete the online survey and providing an online link. An administration officer was utilised as consideration was given to any perceived unequal power-relations that may exist between the researcher and other police officers conducting the survey. This police survey remained open for 39 days, from 10 January 2021 to 17 February 2021.

Community members were limited to adult (18 years and over) members of the public who were currently residents of the selected divisions, or who had resided in those areas within the preceding five years. Participation in surveys was voluntary and this was clearly articulated in all public documentation.

An email was also sent to all QPS Officers in Charge of participating stations that included details of the community survey and provided the online survey link. Officers distributed an information poster through various means within the community to invite community participants, including displaying in public areas, police stations, via social media posts and instigating word of mouth. Residents were also able to seek assistance from police to access the link via a QPS computer if necessary. This community survey remained open for 39 days, from 10 January 2021 to 17 February 2021.

Participants were provided one of two distinct surveys, being a police or community survey. The surveys are predominantly quantitative, with some open-ended questions. This initially resulted in two distinct demographic groups being police (from SOPS and TOPS), and community (from SOPS and TOPS).

These two groups were thus able to be divided into four distinct groups for the purpose of analysis, being: Group 1) police from SOPS; Group 2) police from TOPS; Group 3) community from SOPS; and Group 4) community from TOPS. This survey process allowed for data to be gathered and analysed which fulfilled information gaps, then for the distinction to be made between the police and community members in the two different types of police divisions, which allowed for a deeper analysis of SOPS service delivery and a comparison to TOPS. Figure 3.4.1.1 outlines this survey process.

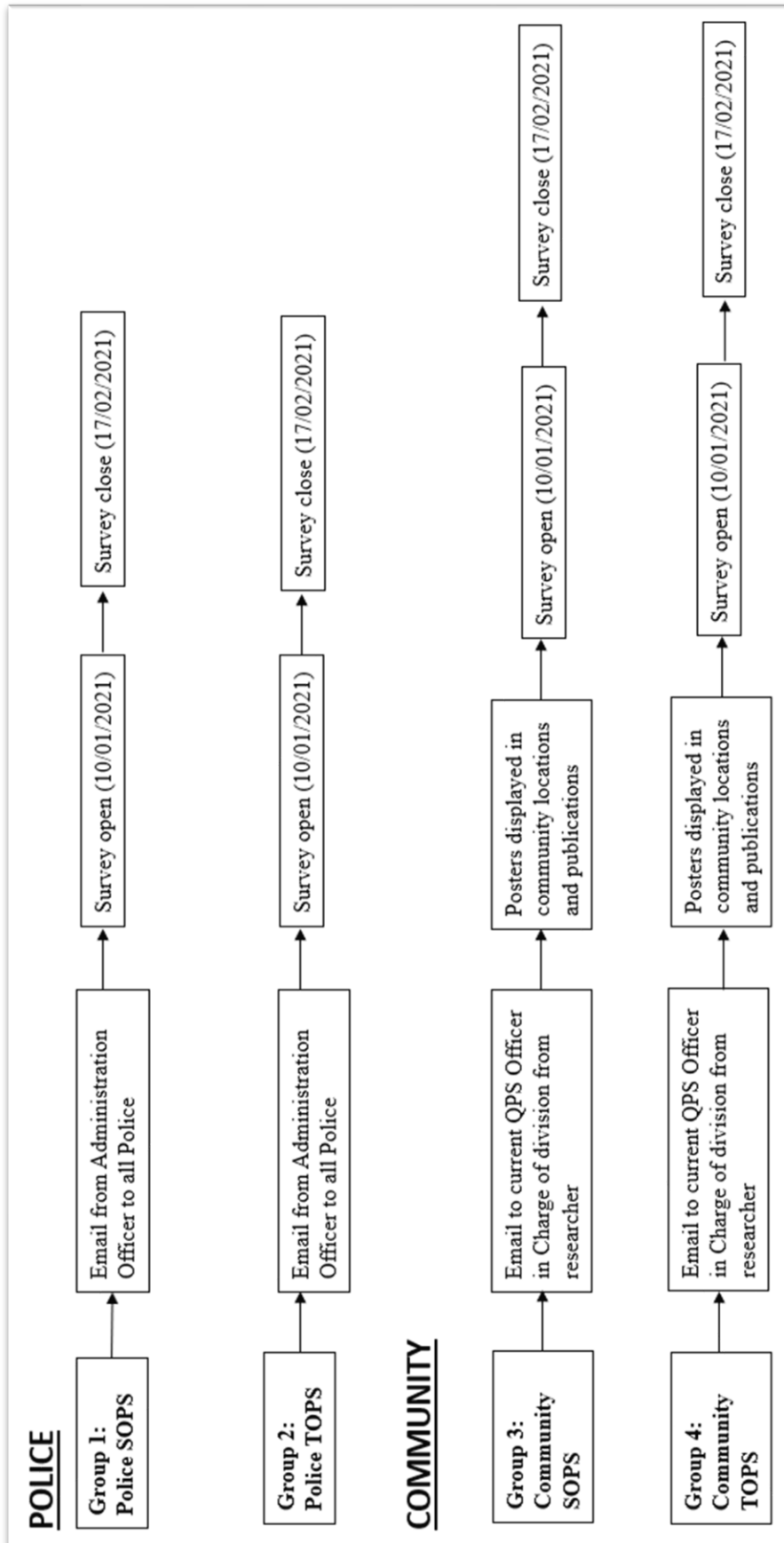


Figure 3.4.1.1 Survey process

3.5 Participants

Eligible police participants included sworn officers of the QPS who were currently stationed, or had been stationed within the preceding five years, at the SOPS of either Ravenswood Policing Division, Greenvale Policing Division, Pentland Policing Division, or Clare Policing Division, or the TOPS of Richmond Policing Division, Rollingsstone Policing Division, Halifax Policing Division, or Giru Policing Division. These SOPS and TOPS, and the subsequent number of officers invited, are detailed in Table 3.5.1.

Table 3.5.1 Single and Two-Officer stations in Townsville Policing District, and number of officers invited to participate in survey.

Station	Police invited to respond
Ravenswood	2
Greenvale	3
Pentland	3
Richmond	3
Halifax	2
Rollingsstone	2
Giru	2
Clare	2
TOTAL	19

It should be noted that the relatively small number of potential participants due to the small number of police attached to these stations, the small number of stations included in the selected research area, and the low turnover rate of police occupying these stations. However, it should also be noted that these participants represent the total number of police in SOPS and TOPS in the Townsville Policing District. Analysis was conducted on 15 police participants, with one participant from each of Ravenswood, Greenvale, Giru and Halifax not responding.

Community or resident participants included permanent residents who were currently living or had been a permanent resident who had been living within the preceding five years, in the towns of either Ravenswood, Greenvale, Pentland, Richmond, Rollingsstone, Halifax, Giru or Clare.

One hundred and eight community participants commenced the survey. Three did not meet the eligibility questions at the start of the survey, i.e., minimum age or resident location, and 25

were missing most of variables and were subsequently not considered during analysis. Analysis was conducted on 80 community participants.

3.5.1 Police: Single-Officer Police Stations (Group 1)

Participants included Constables and Senior Constables who are currently stationed at Pentland Station, Ravenswood Station, Greenvale Station or Clare Station. It further included Constables and Senior Constables who have been stationed at Pentland Station, Ravenswood Station, Greenvale Station or Clare Station within the previous 5 years.

Generally, these Constables and Senior Constables have anywhere from 1 to 35 years' service within the QPS, and differing levels of experience. Length of service at their respective SOPS varied, with the minimum amount of service being 21 days, and the maximum being 3070 days. Average length of service at their respective SOPS was 655 days, or 1.8 years.

Ten participants invited to partake in survey, with nine completing it. Eight participants were male and one female. Two of these participants were from Pentland Station, two from Ravenswood Station, three from Greenvale Station and two from Clare Station.

3.5.2 Police: Two-Officer Police Stations (Group 2)

Participants included Constables, Senior Constables and Sergeants who are currently stationed at Richmond Station, Giru Station, Rollingstone Station or Halifax Station and Constables, Senior Constables and Sergeants who were stationed at Richmond Station, Giru Station, Rollingstone Station or Halifax Station within the previous 5 years.

Generally, these Constables, Senior Constables and Sergeants have anywhere from 1 to 35 years' service within the QPS, and differing levels of experience. Length of service at their respective TOPS varied, with the minimum amount of service being 21 days, and the maximum being 2190 days. Average length of service at their respective SOPS was 855 days, or 2.3 years.

Nine participants were invited to partake in survey, with six completing it. All six were male. Three participants were from Richmond Station, one from Giru Station, and two from Rollingstone Station. There were no participants from Halifax Station.

3.5.3 Community: Single-Officer Police Stations (Group 3)

Community or resident participants included permanent residents who were currently living or had been a permanent resident who had been living within the preceding 5 years, within the towns of either Ravenswood, Greenvale, Pentland or Clare. Participants were also required to be over the age of 18 years.

There were thirty-eight total participants from SOPS. Eighteen of these participants were from Ravenswood division, eleven from Greenvale division, and nine from Pentland division. There were no participants from Clare division.

Community from these areas had resided there for an average of 146.86 days, with a minimum of 0 days and a maximum of 1095 days. It is a possibility that the minimum of 0 is a recording error, and the average is greater. The average age of participants was 48.45 years, with a minimum of 18 years and a maximum of 79 years.

3.5.4 Community: Two-Officer Police Stations (Group 4)

Community or resident participants included permanent residents who were currently living or had been a permanent resident who had been living within the preceding 5 years, within the towns of either, Richmond, Rollingstone, Halifax or Giru. Participants were also required to be over the age of 18 years.

There were 42 total participants from TOPS. Twenty-one of these participants were from Richmond division and twenty-one from s from Rollingstone division. There were no participants from Halifax or Giru divisions.

Community representatives from these areas had resided there for an average of 147 days, with a maximum of 1,095 days. The average age of participants was 48 years, with a minimum of 18 years and a maximum of 79 years.

3.6 Instrumentation

The two surveys were utilised to fill information gaps where data could not be obtained through existing data holdings. Questions were designed to compare answers from police in both SOPS and TOPS, with answers from community members in corresponding divisions. This aimed to identify any similarities or differences in occurrences, perceptions, and observations between

the groups. Categories of questions included police tasking, police legitimacy, satisfaction with police service delivery, feelings of community safety, staffing numbers, contact with police, policing autonomy, officer welfare and service delivery.

All questions were quantitative, with minor free narrative comment availability for participants for some questions. All questions were designed to provide a result that specifically relate to one or more of the performance indicators allocated to the QPS strategic objectives, or the main categories being researched, and therefore relate to one or more of the research sub-questions. A 5-point Likert scale was predominantly used throughout surveys, being a psychometric response scale in which police and community participants specify their level of agreement to a statement, for example (1) Strongly disagree; (2) Disagree; (3) Neither agree nor disagree; (4) Agree; (5) Strongly agree.

Some questions originate from the NSCSP survey, which is utilised by the Queensland Government and QPS to determine performance indicators, however, traditionally do not extend down to a divisional level and but remain as a broader geographical area. The NSCSP is an annual survey commissioned by the Australia New Zealand Policing Advisory Agency on behalf of Australian police jurisdictions. It aims to monitor levels of satisfaction with policing services and feelings of public safety. The results of the survey are both used by policing agencies and published annually in the Report on Government Services (Social Research Centre, 2020). Some questions are the same as those presented in the NSCSP, others are derived from them. Examples listed in Table 3.6.1.

Table 3.6.1 NSCSP survey questions compared to survey questions from this research

Sample NSCSP survey questions	Sample survey questions from this research
<p>To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about police?</p> <p>I think the police perform their job professionally</p> <p>Police treat people fairly and equally.</p> <p>Police are honest.</p> <p>I have confidence in the police</p> <p>I trust the police</p>	<p>Q. 9: How would you rate the honesty of police in your town?</p>

How satisfied were you with the service you received during your most recent contact with police?	Q. 13: How satisfied were you with the service you received during your most recent contact with police?
Sample NSCSP survey questions	Sample survey questions from this research
How satisfied are you in general with the job police are doing in responding to emergencies and disasters?	Q. 14c: How satisfied are you in general with the job the police are doing in responding to disasters?
How safe do you feel at home by yourself during the night?	Q. 15a: How safe do you feel at home by yourself during the night?
How satisfied are you in general with the ease of accessing police services, whether it's online, over the phone, or in person?	Q. 16: To what extent do you agree with the following statement? 'I am able to get in contact with the police in my town at all times?'
Would you please say how satisfied you are in general with the services provided by the police?	Q. 17: How do you rate the service delivery provided by the police in your town?

To ensure the quality of this research, reliability and validity were considered throughout the entire process. Reliability is concerned with the consistency of the measure; it is a concept that results can be reproduced when the research is repeated under the same conditions (Bannigan & Watson, 2009). Joppe (2006) defined reliability as:

...The extent to which results are consistent over time and an accurate representation of the total population under study is referred to as reliability and if the results of a study can be reproduced under a similar methodology, then the research instrument is considered to be reliable (p. 1).

The surveys met this requirement by checking for consistency across all four survey groups, consistency and dependability will be prioritised through the development of a clear and concise survey that focuses on obtaining unambiguous results. The same survey was provided to each participant who were required to satisfy eligibility criteria, questions and answer scales were also consistent throughout all surveys. USQ LimeSurvey survey tool was utilised to design, create, and distribute all surveys. This tool ensured all data collection and analysis was

compliant with USQ policies and procedures including privacy, data management, employee conduct, research conduct and student communication policies.

Cronbach alpha testing, being a statistical test of internal survey consistency, was applied to the community surveys and the police surveys separately, to determine if survey questions relate to each other. The results indicate internal reliability was low for the police survey. For example, the consistency between question 6 “How do you rate the service delivery you are able to provide to the public?” And question 7 “To keep the public safe, I should spend more of my discretionary time at the police station Counter] was $\alpha = 0.59$ and between question 6 and question 10 “What percentage of calls for service do you attend as a Single-Officer?” was $\alpha = 0.54$. However, this was likely due to the small number of police participants in the police survey rather than the actual internal consistency between questions (Bujang et al, 2018), although Ercan et al. (2007) argue Cronbach alpha coefficients should remain stable irrespective of sample size.

With a larger sample size, the internal reliability of the community survey was more convincing. For example, consistency between question 7 “How would you rate the professionalism of police in your town when dealing with you?” and question 8 “How confident are you that the police in your town create and maintain strong relationships within the community?” was $\alpha = 0.84$ and between question 9 “How would you rate the honesty of police in your town?” and question 10 “How would you rate the fairness of police in your town?” was $\alpha = 0.89$, indicating a high level of internal reliability in the community survey.

Although the research instrument may be repeatable and have acceptable levels of internal consistency, this does not automatically mean it is valid. Validity is concerned with the accuracy of the measure (Bannigan & Watson, 2009). Joppe (2006) provides the following clarification for this concept:

Validity determines whether the research truly measures that which it was intended to measure or how truthful the research results are. In other words, does the research instrument allow you to hit "the bull's eye" of your research object? Researchers generally determine validity by asking a series of questions and will often look for the answers in the research of others (p. 1).

To ensure the surveys accurately measured what they were intended to measure, all survey questions were cross referenced against the relevant QPS performance indicator, sub-research question and literature review topic. This is illustrated in Tables 3.6.2 and 3.6.3. Questions

throughout the surveys were also derived from the well-established NCSPS survey (Social Research Centre, 2020), which addresses the same points throughout this research.

Internal consistency and researcher bias will be addressed through the processes of cross-checking data with survey results, ensuring there is no drift in analysis and cross-checking definitions. Further to this, all analysis techniques and primary data are available for future reference. Obtaining data from multiple existing databases as well as new data through a survey sample of 80 people, will provide for triangulation through the use and convergence of several sources of data. Peer debriefing and controlling researcher bias will also be incorporated into the research. (Creswell, 2009).

Face validity was met through Alpha and Beta testing of both surveys. Two police officers of similar eligibility to eventual participants, but from outside the Townsville Policing District, completed the survey during initial and early stages, prior to surveys being implemented, without concern. Beta testing was performed by two officers who met eligibility for participation after the final survey was developed, without concern.

Two community members of a similar eligibility of participants, however from outside the SOPS or TOPS areas, also completed the survey without concern. Beta testing was performed by two community members who met eligibility for participation after the final survey was developed, without concern.

3.6.1 Police survey

Survey number 125535 titled ‘Policing in rural communities – Police Survey’ was developed utilising the USQ LimeSurvey platform. Questions were designed to address specific sub-research questions, performance indicators and/or topics detailed in the literature review. The police surveys consisted of 24 questions. Questions 1, 2 and 3 were demographic based to determine participant eligibility and length of time in relevant division. Remaining questions related to the operating environment (PESTEL), police tasking, police legitimacy, satisfaction with police service delivery, feelings of community safety, staffing numbers, contact with police, policing autonomy, officer welfare and service delivery.

The table below shows the survey questions with the corresponding performance indicators, sub- research question, NSCSP link, type of scale used, qualitative narrative use and literature review link for police surveys.

Table 3.6.1.1 Police survey question links

Survey question	QPS Performance Indicator	Sub-Research Question	NSCSP link	Scale used	Qualitative Narrative	Literature Review Topic
1	n/a	n/a	No	Categorical	No	n/a
2	n/a	n/a	No	Categorical	No	n/a
3	n/a	n/a	No	n/a	No	n/a
4	n/a	1	No	Categorical	No	1
5	n/a	3	No	Interval	Yes	1, 3
6	3, 10, 13	2	No	Interval	Yes	1,2,3, 4
7	3, 10, 13	1,2,3,4	Yes	Interval	No	1,2, 3, 4
8	3, 10, 13	1,2,3,4	Yes	Interval	No	1,2, 3, 4
9	3, 10, 13	1,2,3,4	Yes	Interval	No	1,2, 3, 4
10	n/a	3,4	No	Nominal	No	1, 2, 3
11	n/a	3,4	No	Categorical	No	1,2, 3
12	n/a	3,4	No	Interval	No	1,2, 3
13	n/a	3,4	No	Interval	No	1,2, 3
14	n/a	3,4	No	Interval	No	1,2, 3
15	n/a	3,4	No	Interval	No	1,2, 3
16	n/a	3,4	No	Nominal	No	1,2, 3
17	n/a	1,3,4	No	n/a	No	1, 2, 3
18	n/a	3,4	No	Nominal	No	1,2,3
19	n/a	3,4	No	Nominal	No	1,2,3
20	n/a	3,4	No	Interval	Yes	1,2, 3
21	n/a	3,4	No	Interval	Yes	1,2, 3
22	n/a	3,4	No	Interval	No	1,2, 3
23	n/a	3	No	Interval	Yes	1,2, 3
24	n/a	3	No	n/a	Yes	1,2, 3

3.6.2 Community survey

The community surveys consisted of 22 questions. Questions 1, 2, 3 and 4 were demographic based to determine eligibility and length of time in relevant division. Remaining question relate to the operating environment (PESTEL), police tasking, police legitimacy, satisfaction with

police service delivery, feelings of community safety, staffing numbers, contact with police, policing autonomy, officer welfare and service delivery.

The table below depicts the survey questions with the corresponding performance indicators, research sub-question, NSCSP link, type of scale used, qualitative narrative use and literature review link for community surveys.

Table 3.6.2.1 Community survey question links

Survey question	QPS Performance Indicator	Research sub question	NSCSP link	Scale used	Qualitative narrative available	Literature review topic
1	n/a	n/a	No	Categorical	No	n/a
2	n/a	n/a	No	Categorical	No	n/a
3	n/a	n/a	No	n/a	No	n/a
4	n/a	n/a	No	n/a	No	n/a
5	3	1,2,3	No	Categorical	Yes	1,2,3,4
6	n/a	n/a	No	Interval	No	3
7	10,11	2,3,4	Yes	Interval	Yes	1, 3, 4
8	3, 10,11	2,3,4	Yes	Interval	No	1, 3, 4
9	3	2,3,4	Yes	Interval	No	1, 4
10	3	2,3,4	Yes	Interval	No	1, 4
11	13	2,3,4	Yes	Nominal	Yes	1, 3, 4
12	13	2,3,4	Yes	Nominal	Yes	1, 3, 4
13	13	2,3,4	Yes	Interval	Yes	1, 3, 4
14	5, 7	2,3,4	Yes	Interval	No	1, 4
15	3	2,3,4	Yes	Interval	No	1,3, 4
16	3	2,3,4	No	Interval	No	1,2, 4
17	n/a	2,3,4	No	Interval	Yes	1,2,3
18	3, 10, 13	1,2,3,5	Yes	Interval	No	1,2, 3, 4
19	3, 10, 13	1,2,3,5	Yes	Interval	No	1,2, 3, 4
20	3, 10, 13	1,2,3,5	Yes	Interval	No	1,2, 3, 4
21	n/a	1,2,3,5	No	Nominal	Yes	1,2
22	n/a	1,2,3,5	No	n/a	Yes	1,2, 3

3.7 Data analysis

Data obtained from both police and community surveys were analysed independently and by SOPS and TOPS groupings, using SPSS version 2.7. Descriptive statistics of frequency, mean, standard deviation, skewness and kurtosis were considered.

Measures of frequency were conducted to determine how often responses were given, measures of central tendency through means to determine the average or most common response, measures of variance through standard deviation to indicate the spread of data, measures of skewness to illustrate how much the probability distribution of a random variable deviates from the normal distribution, and measures of kurtosis to measure whether the data is heavy-tailed or light-tailed relative to the normal distribution were employed. Skewness and kurtosis are important because correlational analysis and analysis of variance (ANOVA) are predicated on an assumption that data are normally distributed.

Welch's analysis of variance (ANOVA) for non-parametric data will be utilised where data are not normally distributed and a Games-Howell *post hoc* test for non-parametric data to determine where the differences are between groups will be performed as required. This test will be utilised as it is most suitable for small sample sizes, and for non-normally distributed data. It is acknowledged that the relatively low number of police participants may result in a high degree of variance as measured by standard deviation, and thus not all data may be normally distributed. Correlational analysis using Pearson product moment coefficients (r) for continuous variables and point biserial (r_{pb}) correlation for continuous and binomial variables will be utilised on the community-based survey data to identify relationships between variables.

3.8 Ethical considerations

This research was approved by the University of Southern Queensland research ethics committee after a human research ethics application, and conducted under reference H19REA190, was determined to meet the requirements of the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human research (2007) on 19 August 2019. The research was also approved by the QPS research committee prior to commencement. Strict ethical considerations and conduct within this research were ensured through the compliance of USQ and QPS policies, legislative requirements pertaining to privacy and information standards, and maintaining researcher integrity and transparency. Ethics practices were also upheld by ensuring informed consent of participants, transparency regarding the purpose of the research, explanation regarding private

research (not QPS), clear explanation of the possible outcomes of the research and open and honest reporting of data analysis, this was articulated in the community poster and survey information page. The USQ Research Code of Conduct Policy provided guidance to ensure all research was conducted with respect for persons, justice, and beneficence as underlying considerations.

Formal approval was obtained from QPS, through the Townsville Policing District Officer and the Research and Evaluation Committee to ensure support and endorsement. Adherence to QPS obligations was ensured through legislative compliance regarding the collection, presentation, and storage of data. Only publicly available statistics were utilised to ensure compliance with the Information Privacy Principles. Compliance of policy regarding research and release of information will be ensured. An administration officer was utilised to communicate with police officers regarding survey participation as consideration was given to any perceived unequal power-relations that may exist between the researcher and other Police Officers conducting the survey.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

The primary aim of this research was to examine the effectiveness of SOPS, this chapter provides the data obtained through the police and community surveys with the presentation and analysis of descriptive data, being means, standard deviation, skewness, kurtosis and frequency. Frequencies in tables incorporate the combined results of top two positive results unless otherwise stated, for example if the survey question asks, 'How satisfied are you'? the results will be a combined total of the frequencies for 'very satisfied' and 'satisfied'.

Analyses of variance for between-group differences are then presented for variables of significance. Pearson's correlations have been computed for all variables between SOPS and TOPS but will only be presented for the community survey due to the small number of participants of eligible police, with point biserial correlation coefficients being utilised for community and police correlations. Police data are advanced tentatively considering group sizes. However, these are deemed important to include in this research to provide context and ability for comparison.

Descriptive data obtained from the NSCSP are also presented to identify frequencies at State levels to allow comparison of results at the SOPS and TOPS divisional level for similar questions.

4.2 Descriptive Analysis

In determining what policing aspect was deemed most important, community and police survey participants selected between 1) Ensuring the safety of the public, 2) Being accessible to the public, or 3) Providing service to the public. Frequency for all groups identified that ensuring the safety of the public was determined to be the most important aspect, as shown in Figure 4.2.1.

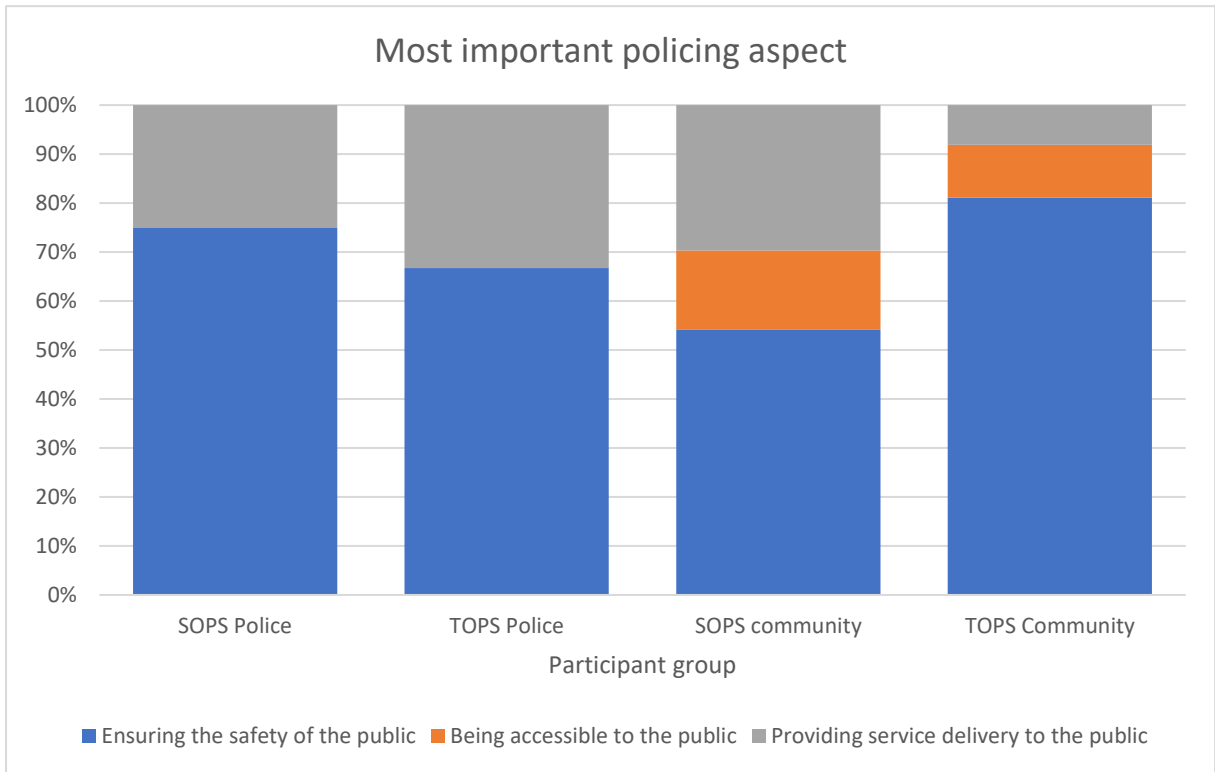


Figure 4.2.1 Frequencies for most important policing aspect

In Table 4.2.1, data for these three main variables are presented with the highest results displayed. Percentages in bold relate to the grouping of strongly disagree and disagree, while percentages in plain text relate to the grouping of strongly agree and agree. The duties listed under the three different variables in the first column represent 1) spending more discretionary time at the counter 2) spending more discretionary time patrolling the highway 3) spending more discretionary time patrolling rural areas 4) spending more discretionary time patrolling events 5) spending more discretionary time patrolling the town area 6) increasing the number of police at the station or 7) ensuring the community can immediately contact police within that town 24 hours a day.

Table 4.2.1 Frequency data relating to most important duty to achieve a relevant

	SOPS		TOPS	
	Community %	Police %	Community %	Police %
ENSURING THE SAFETY OF THE PUBLIC				
Counter	33	88	41	100
Highway	36	88	43	100
Rural	26	75	51	67
Events	39	63	66	100
Town area	37	38 / 38	64	83
More police	43	75	33	50
Contact 24/7	55	75	82	67
BEING ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC				
Counter	28	63	32	17 / 17
Highway	16	38 / 38	46	67
Rural	87	63	53	50
Events	31	88	62	83
Town area	31	75	68	67
More police	46	88	38	83
Contact 24/7	39	75	84	67
PROVIDING SERVICE TO THE PUBLIC				
Counter	27	50	29	100
Highway	21	88	49	83
Rural	18	63	49	50
Events	30	88	66	83
Town area	24	75	63	83
More police	45	88	34	67
Contact 24/7	39	75	71	83

All participating police officers from SOPS and TOPS were questioned regarding what percentage of time was spent on various tasks including station administration, responding to calls for service, proactive patrols, traffic enforcement, event management, calls for service-

related administration, counter duties, community meetings, training, station maintenance, travel/transport and internal meetings.

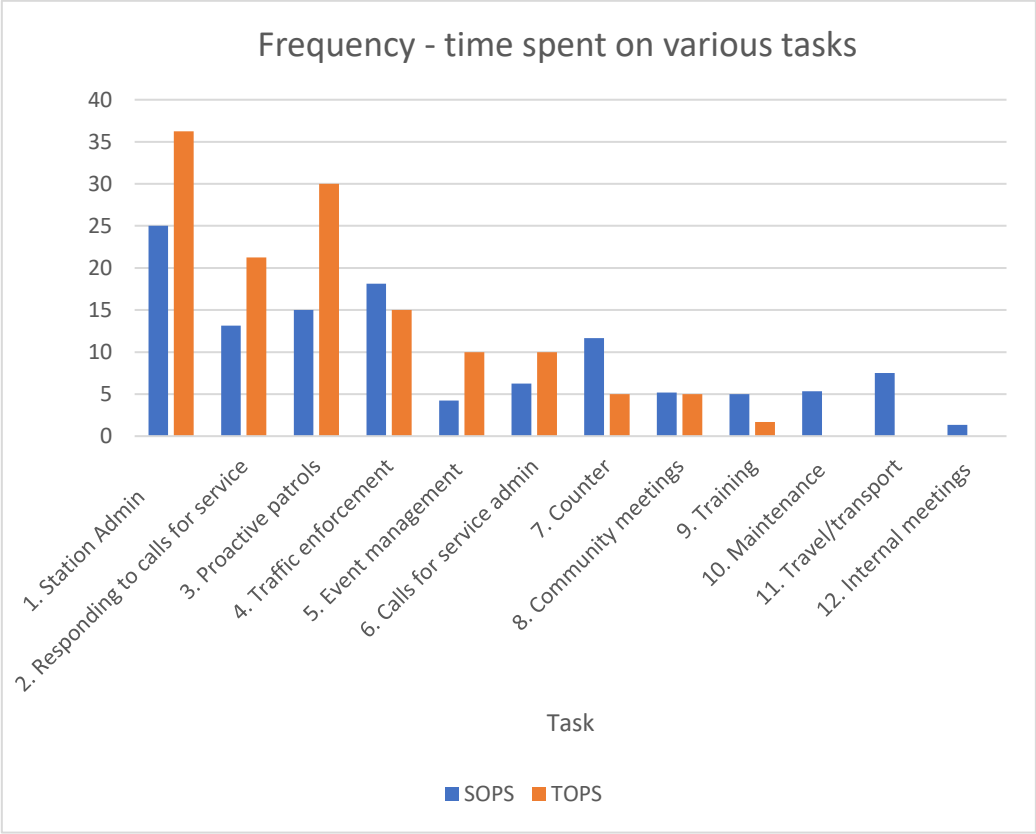


Figure 4.2.2 Mean percentage of time spent on tasks

Results relating to how the community viewed key QPS performance indicators were captured in the community survey and are displayed in Tables 4.2.2 and 4.2.3. Frequency represents the percentage of answers in the top two categories of response e.g. strongly agree combined with agree. It is acknowledged that some skewness and kurtosis results are not normally distributed, therefore having implications with the trustworthiness of other results.

Table 4.2.2 Descriptive statistics for results relating to QPS performance indicators

	How confident are you that the police in your town create and maintain strong relationships within the community?		How confident are you that the police in your town make the community safer?		How confident are you that the police in your town stop crime?		How do you rate the service delivery in general provided by the police in your town?	
	SOPS	TOPS	SOPS	TOPS	SOPS	TOPS	SOPS	TOPS
Mean	2.23	2.10	2.11	2.18	2.17	2.46	2.34	1.92
SD	1.26	1.05	1.23	1.05	1.15	1.14	1.40	0.81
Skew	0.75	1.24	0.87	1.07	0.88	0.66	0.79	1.09
Kurt	0.54	1.54	0.17	1.12	0.26	0.02	0.48	1.47
Freq %	65.7	76.9	65.7	71.8	65.7	56.4	60.6	86.8

Table 4.2.3 descriptive statistics for results relating to QPS performance indicators

	How would you rate the honesty of police in your town?		How would you rate the fairness of police in your town?		How satisfied were you with the service you received during your most recent contact with police?		How would you rate the professionalism of police in your town when dealing with you?		How would you rate the professionalism of police in your town when dealing with others?	
	SOPS	TOPS	SOPS	TOPS	SOPS	TOPS	SOPS	TOPS	SOPS	TOPS
Mean	2.0	2.0	2.18	2.18	1.74	2.0	2.8	2.0	2.8	2.0
St Dev	1.07	0.89	1.11	1.00	0.86	1.10	1.87	1.35	1.87	1.35
Skew	1.25	1.09	0.89	1.30	1.77	0.97	0.93	2.06	0.93	2.06
Kurt	1.70	2.12	0.57	1.94	4.61	0.26	0.59	4.20	0.59	4.19
Freq %	73.5	76.9	64.7	76.9	60	72.2	60	81.6	60	78.6

Results relating to the amount of contact community members have had with police in their respective divisions in the previous 12 months is identified for both SOP and TOP in Figure

4.2.3. A majority of both groups have had between three to five contacts, with SOPS having a higher percentage of ‘no contacts at all’. Frequency represents the percentage of answers in the top two categories of response.

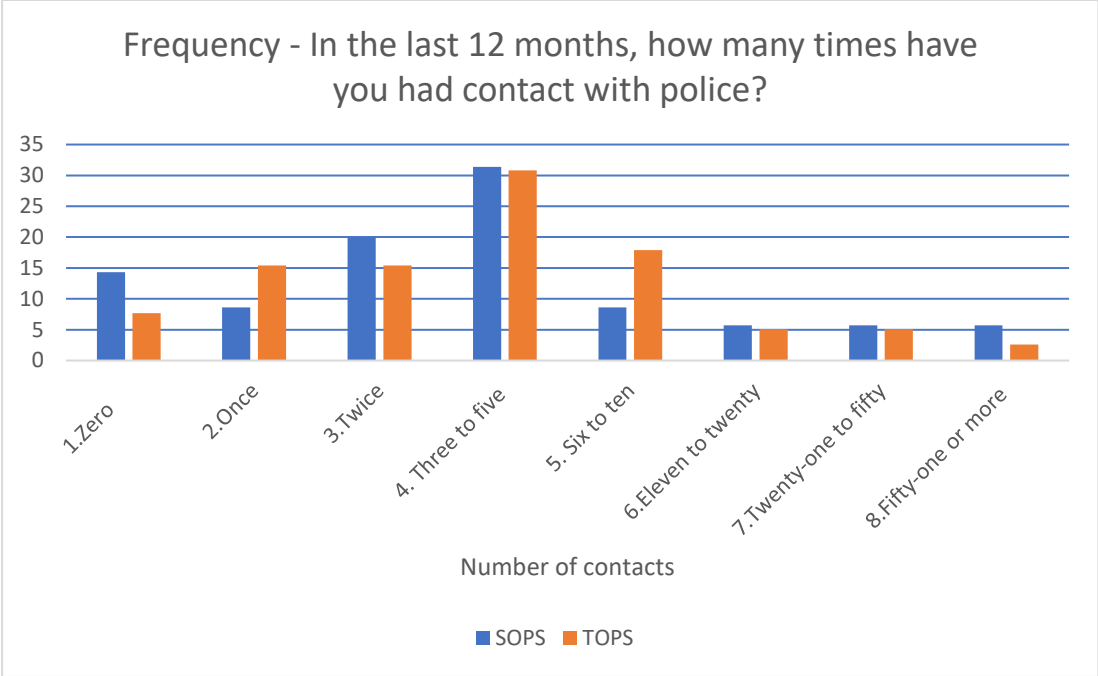


Figure 4.2.3 Frequency for number of police contacts within 12 months

The main reason for police contacts for both SOPS and TOPS is detailed in figure 4.2.4, the highest frequency for SOPS was assisting police with an inquiry and large frequencies were observed for both groups when attending a community meeting. Higher frequencies exist for traffic related enforcement for TOPS as opposed to SOPS.

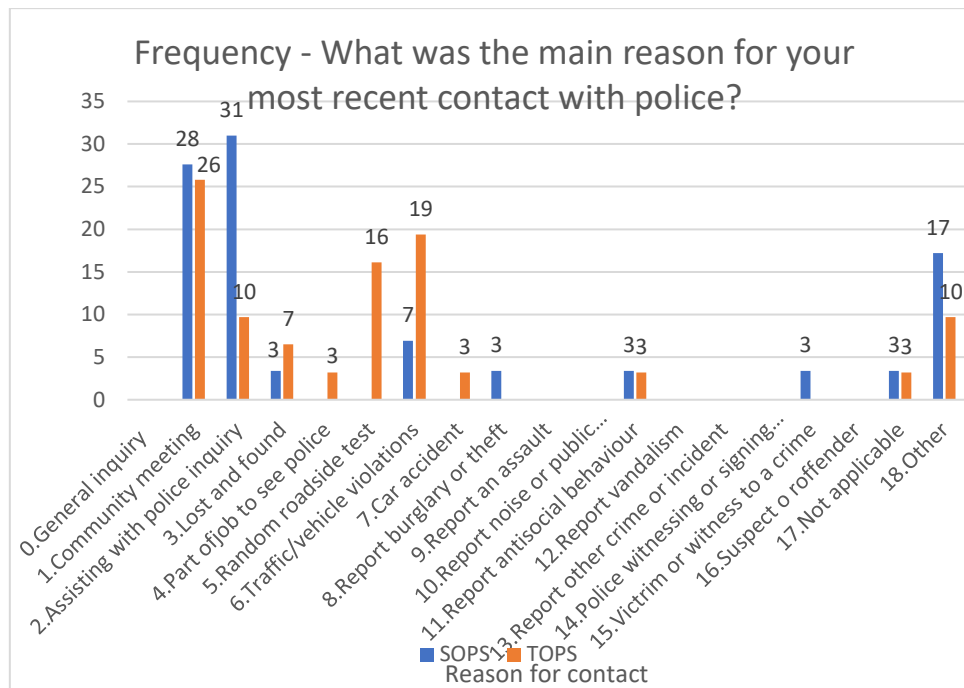


Figure 4.2.4 Frequency results for main reason for contact with police

Safety and satisfaction results from SOPS and TOPS community participants are detailed in Tables 4.2.4 and 4.2.5.

Table 4.2.4 Descriptive statistics for safety and satisfaction results

	How satisfied are you in general with the job police are doing in dealing with public order problems such as vandalism, gangs or drunken and disorderly behaviour?		How satisfied are you in general with the job police are doing in responding to emergencies?		How satisfied are you in general with the job the police are doing in responding to disasters?		How safe do you feel at home by yourself during the day?		How safe do you feel at home by yourself during the night?	
	SOPS	TOPS	SOPS	TOPS	SOPS	TOPS	SOPS	TOPS	SOPS	TOPS
Mean	2.30	2.41	1.76	1.82	1.94	1.67	1.34	1.59	1.4	1.92
St Dev	1.07	1.14	0.71	0.79	0.86	0.74	0.48	0.79	0.60	0.90
Skew	0.47	0.79	0.39	0.67	0.43	1.05	0.69	1.58	1.26	1.53
Kurt	0.30	0.16	0.87	0.02	0.76	1.22	1.62	2.78	0.67	3.25
Freq %	57.6	61.5	84.8	82.1	72.7	89.7	90.3	92.3	94.3	87.2

Table 4.2.5 Descriptive statistics for safety and satisfaction results

	How safe do you feel when you are by yourself, walking in your town during the day?		How safe do you feel when you are by yourself, walking in your town during the night?		How safe do you feel driving on roads and highways throughout your town?		How safe do you feel during major events and celebrations in your town?	
	SOPS	TOPS	SOPS	TOPS	SOPS	TOPS	SOPS	TOPS
Mean	1.32	1.54	1.6	2.41	1.63	2.13	1.74	1.87
SD	0.47	0.64	0.69	1.07	0.81	1.00	0.89	0.70
Skew	0.79	0.79	0.74	0.18	1.51	1.37	1.62	0.67
Kurt	1.47	0.34	0.56	1.17	2.48	2.12	3.98	1.15
Freq %	100	92.3	88.6	56.4	91.4	79.5	85.7	87.2

The frequencies for the NSCSP survey for June 2021 are displayed in table 4.2.6 at a State level. These data identify the percentage of the population who are satisfied or are in agreement with the question or topic.

Table 4.2.6 Frequency statistics for NSCSP survey

NSCSP questions	State (QLD)
% Satisfied with police during last dealing	77.9
% Satisfied with police in dealing with public order	60
% Agree police perform job professionally	85.6
% Agree police treat people fairly and equally	69.9
% Agree police are honest	69.9
% Agree they have confidence in the police	80.3
% Feel safe at home during the night	87.9
% Feel safe in neighbourhood during the day	90.3
% Feel safe in neighbourhood during the night	51.8
% Satisfied with the service delivery from police	77.9
% Satisfaction with police response to emergencies and disasters	79.9

Results relating to contact and accessibility for community and police in both SOPS and TOPS, is detailed in Table 4.2.7.

Table 4.2.7 Descriptive statistics for the contact and accessibility of community and police.

	I am able to get in contact with the police in my town at all times		The public in my town are able to get in direct and timely contact with me, or other police in my town, at all times		What impact would extra police have on achieving performance indicators in your division, including public perception?	
	Community		Police		Police	
	SOPS	TOPS	SOPS	TOPS	SOPS	TOPS
Mean	3.09	2.72	3.25	1.28	2.86	2.75
SD	1.47	0.70	1.16	0.61	0.38	0.5
Skew	0.09	0.04	0.09	2.11	2.65	2.0
Kurt	1.42	1.19	1.61	3.30	7.0	4.0
Freq %	42.4	48.7	37.5	88.3	85.7	75.0

Results relating to police autonomy, welfare and service delivery in both SOPS and TOPS are detailed in Tables 4.2.8 and 4.2.9.

Table 4.2.8 Descriptive statistics for police participants relating to police autonomy, police welfare and service delivery.

	If you perform work as a Single-Officer Patrol, how isolated do you feel?		I carry all the responsibility for the policing response in my division		How would you rate the service delivery you are able to provide to the public?		If extra staff were available in my division, I would have attended some of my previous calls for service with the extra officer/s	
	SOPS	TOPS	SOPS	TOPS	SOPS	TOPS	SOPS	TOPS
Mean	1.86	1.25	1.29	2.5	2	1.34	1.13	2.4
SD	1.21	0.5	0.49	1.73	0.93	0.51	0.35	1.67
Skew	1.15	2	1.23	1.54	1.44	0.97	2.83	1.09
Kurt	0.06	4	0.84	2.89	3.5	1.88	8	0.54
Freq %	71.4	100	100	75	87.5	100	87.5	40

Table 4.2.9 Descriptive statistics for police participants relating to police autonomy, police welfare and service delivery.

	How safe do you feel working as a Single-Officer patrol?		I have previously not taken a suspect into custody due to operating as a Single-Officer patrol, who would have been taken into custody if you had other officers readily available	
	SOPS	TOPS	SOPS	TOPS
Mean	2.88	3.0	1.75	3.2
SD	0.83	1.22	0.71	1.64
Skew	0.28	1.36	0.40	-0.52
Kurt	1.39	2	0.23	1.69
Freq %	37.5	40	87.5	40

Frequency results for police participant relating to the autonomy of police, divisional staffing and reliance of other resources to assist in their divisions, are detailed in Tables 4.2.10, 4.2.11, 4.2.12, 4.2.13, 4.2.14, 4.2.15 and 4.2.16.

Table 4.2.10 Frequency results relating to calls for service attended as a Single-Officer

Percentage of calls for service attended as a Single-Officer	%	
	SOPS	TOPS
Zero	0	0
1% to 25%	0	33.3
26% to 50%	0	33.3
51% to 75%	0	33.3
76% to 95%	12.5	0
96% to 99%	62.5	0
100%	25	0

Table 4.2.11 Frequency results relating to external resources required to manage calls for service

Average occasions per year external resources required to manage calls for service	%	
	SOPS	TOPS
Zero	0	0
One	12.5	20
Two	0	20
Three	12.5	0
Four	0	20
Five	12.5	40
Six to ten	12.5	0
11 or more	50	0

Table 4.2.12 Frequency results relating to external resources required to manage events

Average occasions per year external resources required to manage events	%	
	SOPS	TOPS
Zero	0	20
One	0	0
Two	25	0
Three	12.5	20
Four	25	0
Five	12.5	20
Six to ten	0	40
11 or more	25	0

Table 4.2.13 Frequency results relating to another officer attending for assistance

Average time it takes for another officer to attend for assistance	%	
	SOPS	TOPS
0-12 mins	0	20
20-40mins	12.5	20
40-60mins	25	60
1-2hrs	25	0
2-3hrs	37.5	0
3+ hrs	0	0

Table 4.2.14 Frequency results relating to number of days per year a division remains unstaffed

Average number of days per year a division remains unstaffed	%	
	SOPS	TOPS
Never	0	100
1-10 days	0	0
10-20 days	0	0
20-30 days	25	0
30-50 days	50	0
50+ days	25	0

Table 4.2.15 Frequency results relating to number of hours per week a division has rostered staff on duty available to respond to calls for service

Average number of hours per week a division has rostered staff on duty available to respond to calls for service	%	
	SOPS	TOPS
Never	0	0
10-20 hrs	0	0
20-30hrs	14.3	0
30-40hrs	71.4	0
40-50hrs	0	0
50+hrs	14.3	100

Table 4.2.16 Frequency results relating to opinion of number of permanent police that should be allocated to the town.

Number of permanent police that should be allocated to the town	%			
	SOPS community	TOPS community	SOPS Police	TOPS Police
Zero	5.9	2.9	0	0
One	52.9	0	0	0
Two	41.2	57.1	100	25
Three	0	37.1	0	75
Four	0	2.9	0	0
Five	0	0	0	0
Six to ten	0	0	0	0
Eleven or more	0	0	0	0

4.3 Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)

A Welch's one-way ANOVA was completed for all four groups, being SOPS community, TOPS community, SOPS police and TOPS police. Tests of difference between community and police were only conducted for questions that were identical in the relevant surveys. The variables (questions) considered statistically significant between at least two of the groups, having a *p*-value equal to or less than 0.05, are identified by the bold and underlined text. Some *p*-values that have been slightly greater than 0.05 have been included below due to their relevance to the research question. A post hoc Games Howell test was completed to determine which group was statistically different. This test was chosen due to the small sample sizes, and non-normally distributed data.

Variables that did not result in a statistically significant difference, but are relevant to the research questions, have also been also included and are depicted through plain text.

Table 4.3.1 Four-way ANOVA between-group results for all groups (SOPS and TOPS, police and community).

Variable (Question)	F	p
I am able to get in contact with the police in my town at all times	0.94	.45
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SOPS community and TOPS community • SOPS community and SOPS police • TOPS community and TOPS police • SOPS police and TOPS police 		.80 .97 .79 .48
How do you rate the service delivery provided by the police in your town?	3.27	.05
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SOPS community and TOPS community • SOPS community and SOPS police • TOPS community and TOPS police • SOPS police and TOPS police 		.54 .86 .13 .36
To KEEP ME SAFE, police in my town should spend more of their discretionary time at the police station counter	11.51	< .001
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SOPS community and TOPS community • SOPS community and SOPS police • TOPS community and TOPS police • SOPS police and TOPS police 		1.00 .008 .003 .15
To KEEP ME SAFE, police in my town should spend more of their discretionary time patrolling the Highways.	8.41	< .001
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SOPS community and TOPS community • SOPS community and SOPS police • TOPS community and TOPS police • SOPS police and TOPS police 		1.00 .03 .01 .99
To KEEP ME SAFE, police in my town should spend more of their discretionary time patrolling rural areas.	1.39	.28
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SOPS community and TOPS community • SOPS community and SOPS police • TOPS community and TOPS police • SOPS police and TOPS police 		.56 .33 .97 .98
To KEEP ME SAFE, police in my town should spend more of their discretionary time engaging in community events.	4.00	.03
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SOPS community and TOPS community • SOPS community and SOPS police • TOPS community and TOPS police • SOPS police and TOPS police 		.36 .94 .16 .31
Variable (Question)	F	p
To KEEP ME SAFE, police in my town should spend more of their discretionary time in the town area	3.54	.04
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SOPS community and TOPS community • SOPS community and SOPS police • TOPS community and TOPS police • SOPS police and TOPS police 		.05 .99 .74 .22
To KEEP ME SAFE, there needs to be more police in my town.	2.49	.10
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SOPS community and TOPS community • SOPS community and SOPS police • TOPS community and TOPS police • SOPS police and TOPS police 		.60 .06 .10 .60
To KEEP ME SAFE, I should be able to immediately contact the police in my town 24 hours a day	2.85	.07
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SOPS community and TOPS community 		.02

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SOPS community and SOPS police • TOPS community and TOPS police • SOPS police and TOPS police 		.69 .83 .99
To BE MORE ACCESSIBLE to me, there needs to be more police in my town.	9.78	< .001
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SOPS community and SOPS police 		< .001
To BE MORE ACCESSIBLE to me, I should be able to immediately contact the police in my town 24hrs a day	6.25	.005
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SOPS community and TOPS community 		< .001
To IMPROVE SERVICE DELIVERY to my town, there needs to be more police in my town	7.18	.003
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SOPS community and SOPS police 		< .001
To IMPROVE SERVICE DELIVERY to my town, I should be able to immediately contact the police in my town 24hrs a day.	4.28	.02
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SOPS community and TOPS community 		.01

Table 4.3.2 Two-way ANOVA between-group results for SOPS community and TOPS community.

Variable (Question)	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
How would you rate the professionalism of police in your town when dealing with YOU?	1.35	.25
How would you rate the professionalism of police in your town when dealing with OTHERS?	0.01	.92
How confident are you that the police in your town make the community safer?	0.06	.81
How would you rate the honesty of police in your town	0.05	.83
How would you rate the fairness of police in your town	1.47	.99
How satisfied were you with the service you received during your most recent contact with police?	4.18	.05
Variable (Question)	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
How satisfied are you in general with the job police are doing in dealing with public order problems such as vandalism, gangs or drunken and disorderly behaviour?	0.17	.68
How satisfied are you in general with the job police are doing in responding to emergencies?	0.13	.72
How satisfied are you in general with the job the police are doing in responding to disasters?	2.03	.16
How safe do you feel at home by yourself DURING THE DAY?	2.72	.10
How safe do you feel at home by yourself DURING THE NIGHT?	8.77	.004
How safe do you feel when you are by yourself, walking in your town DURING THE DAY	2.68	.11
How safe do you feel when you are by yourself, walking in your town DURING THE NIGHT	15.24	< .001

How safe do you feel driving on roads and highways throughout your town?	5.60	.02
How safe do you feel during major events and celebrations in your town?	0.48	.49

4.4 Correlational Analysis

Pearson product moment correlation coefficients and point biserial correlation coefficients were computed for all variables between SOPS and TOPS. However, only those correlations for the community survey have been presented due to the small number of participants of eligible police making those correlation results unreliable. Strong correlations are depicted below, correlations with a *p*-value equal to or less than 0.5 were considered statistically significant and are identified with an Asterix. Statistically significant results with an *r*-value less than $r = .40$ are indicative but not very reliable, even though $p < .05$. Full relevant correlation results are contained in Appendix B.

4.4.1 Aspect of keeping community safe: Police tasking

Correlations relating to specific tasking community members, in both SOPS and TOPS, believe police should spend more time on to keep them safe are detailed in Table 4.4.1 as they relate to questions from each category. Representative questions for each category are presented below if no correlation pattern was identified.

Table 4.4.1 Correlation results for police tasking

	POLICE TASKING				
VARIABLES (Questions)	To keep me safe, police in my town should spend more of their discretionary time at the police station counter	To keep me safe, police in my town should spend more of their discretionary time patrolling the highways.	To keep me safe, police in my town should spend more of their discretionary time patrolling rural areas.	To keep me safe, police in my town should spend more of their discretionary time engaging in community events.	To keep me safe, police in my town should spend more of their discretionary time in the town area
CONTACT To improve service delivery	0.26*	0.25*	0.25*	0.3*	0.5*

24hr contact with my police					
TASKING To keep safe more time patrolling Highways	0.29*	1*	0.61*	0.13	0.39*

* $p < .05$

4.4.2 Performance indicators: Police legitimacy

Correlations relating to police legitimacy, being opinions regarding confidence in police, professionalism, fairness, and honesty, for community members in both SOPS and TOPS, are detailed in table 4.4.2 as they relate to questions from each category.

Table 4.4.2 Correlation results for police legitimacy

VARIABLES (Questions)	POLICE LEGITIMACY (VS LEGITIMACY / SERVICE DELIVERY / SAFETY)						
	Professionalism of police in your town when dealing with YOU	Professionalism of police in your town when dealing with OTHERS	Police in your town create and maintain strong relationships	Police in your town make the community safer	Police in your town stop crime	Honesty of police in your town	Fairness of police in your town
LEGITIMACY Professionalism of police in your town when dealing with you		0.76*	0.79*	0.73*	0.84*	0.77*	0.76*
LEGITIMACY Professionalism of police in your town when dealing with others			0.78*	0.83*	0.73*	0.77*	0.75*
LEGITIMACY Police in your town create and				0.85*	0.80*	0.71*	0.82*

maintain strong relationships								
LEGITIMACY Police in your town make the community safer					0.86*	0.73*	0.81*	
LEGITIMACY Police in your town stop crime						0.74*	0.75*	
LEGITIMACY Honesty of Police in your town							0.80*	
SERVICE DELIVERY Satisfied service delivery by police	0.75*	0.68*	0.76*	0.83*	0.70	0.68*	0.74*	
SERVICE DELIVERY Satisfied in general with the police dealing with public order	0.59*	0.63*	0.69*	0.69*	0.69*	0.64*	0.68*	
POLICE LEGITIMACY (VS LEGITIMACY / SERVICE DELIVERY / SAFETY)								
VARIABLES (Questions)	Professionalism of police in your town when dealing with YOU	Professionalism of police in your town when dealing with OTHERS	Police in your town create and maintain strong relationships	Police in your town make the community safer	Police in your town stop crime	Honesty of police in your town	Fairness of police in your town	
SERVICE DELIVERY Satisfied in general with responding to emergencies	0.51*	0.52*	0.65*	0.64*	0.64*	0.53*	0.56*	
SERVICE DELIVERY Satisfied with police responding to disasters	0.55*	0.55*	0.66*	0.64*	0.60*	0.56*	0.59*	
SAFETY Safe at home day	0.47*	0.48*	0.50*	0.57*	0.54*	0.57*	0.58*	
SAFETY	0.38*	0.43*	0.48*	0.53*	0.50*	0.52*	0.54*	

Safe at home night							
SAFETY Safe walking in your town day	0.41*	0.49*	0.45*	0.54*	0.53*	0.56*	0.48*
SAFETY Safe driving on roads in town	0.51*	0.48*	0.44*	0.52*	0.49*	0.54*	0.52*
SAFETY Safe during major events	0.52*	0.57*	0.53*	0.61*	0.51*	0.59*	0.56*

* $p < .05$

4.4.3 Performance indicators: Service delivery

Correlations relating to service delivery perceptions for the performance indicators, for community members in both SOPS and TOPS, are detailed in table 4.4.3 as they relate to questions from each category. Representative questions for each category are presented below if no correlation pattern was identified.

Table 4.4.3 Correlation results for service delivery

	SERVICE DELIVERY (VS SERVICE DELIVERY / SAFETY)				
VARIABLES (Questions)	Satisfied service delivery by police	Satisfied with most recent service	Satisfied in general with the police dealing with public order	Satisfied in general with responding to emergencies	Satisfied with police responding to disasters
SERVICE DELIVERY Satisfied service delivery by police		0.46*	0.68*	0.57*	0.65*
SERVICE DELIVERY Satisfied in general with the police dealing with public order				0.68*	0.70*

SERVICE DELIVERY Satisfied in general with responding to emergencies					0.75*
SAFETY Safe at home day	0.53*	0.20	0.56*	0.54*	0.49*
SAFETY safe at home night	0.51*	0.23	0.58*	0.56*	0.43*
SAFETY Safe walking in your town during day	0.50*	0.14	0.53*	0.51*	0.42*
SAFETY Safe driving on roads in town	0.46*	0.26	0.55*	0.43*	0.37*
SAFETY Safe during major events	0.71*	0.28	0.57*	0.51*	0.54*

* $p < .05$

4.4.4 Performance indicators: Safety

Correlations relating to perceptions of safety for the performance indicators, for community members in both SOPS and TOPS, are detailed in table 4.4.4 as they relate to questions from each category. Representative questions for each category are presented below if no correlation pattern was identified.

Table 4.4.4 Correlation results for safety

VARIABLES (Questions)	SAFETY (VS SAFETY)					
	Safe at home day	Safe at home night	Safe walking in your town day	Safe walking in your town night	Safe driving on roads in town	Safe during major events
SAFETY Safe at home day		0.87*	0.83*	0.63*	0.67*	0.66*
SAFETY			0.72*	0.70*	0.64*	0.67*

Safe at home night						
SAFETY Safe walking in your town day				0.66*	0.59*	0.67*
SAFETY Safe walking in your town night					0.55*	0.56*
SAFETY Safe driving on roads in town						0.51*

* $p < .05$

4.4.5 Contact with police

Correlations relating to police contact with community members in both SOPS and TOPS, are detailed in table 4.4.5 as they relate to questions from each category. Representative questions for each category are presented below if no correlation pattern was identified.

Table 4.4.5 Correlation results for contact with police

VARIABLES (Questions)	CONTACT WITH POLICE (VS LEGITIMACY / SERVICE DELIVERY / SAFETY)				
	Number of contacts with police in 12 months	Can contact police at all times	To keep safe, need 24hr contact with my police	To be more accessible, need 24hr contact with my police	To improve service delivery 24hr contact with my police
LEGITIMACY Professionalism of police in your town when dealing with you	-0.22*	0.58*	0.01	0.06	-0.07
LEGITIMACY Professionalism of police in your town when dealing with others	-0.27*	0.53*	-0.18	-0.10	-0.18
LEGITIMACY	-0.24*	0.64*	-0.13	-0.02	-0.13

Police in your town create and maintain strong relationships					
LEGITIMACY Police in your town make the community safer	-0.28*	0.65*	-0.13	-0.04	-0.17
LEGITIMACY Police in your town stop crime	-0.18*	0.53*	-0.02	0.01	-0.12
LEGITIMACY Fairness of police in your town	-0.20*	0.59*	-0.06	0.00	-0.15
CONTACT WITH POLICE (VS LEGITIMACY / SERVICE DELIVERY / SAFETY)					
VARIABLES (Questions)	Number of contacts with police in 12 months	Can contact police at all times	To keep safe, need 24hr contact with my police	To be more accessible, need 24hr contact with my police	To improve service delivery 24hr contact with my police
SERVICE DELIVERY Satisfied service delivery by police	-0.36*	0.76*	-0.08	0.01	-0.18*
SERVICE DELIVERY Satisfied with most recent service	-0.57*	0.40*	0.04	0.06	0.01
SERVICE DELIVERY Satisfied in general with the police dealing with public order	-0.37*	0.57*	-0.14	-0.08	-0.24*
SERVICE DELIVERY Satisfied with police responding to disasters	.30*	.55*	.01	.05	.10

* $p < .05$

4.4.6 Police staffing numbers

Correlations relating to police staffing numbers, for community members in both SOPS and TOPS, are detailed in table 4.4.6 as they relate to questions from each category. Representative questions for each category are presented below if no correlation pattern was identified.

Table 4.4.6 Correlation results for police staffing numbers

	POLICE STAFFING (VS LEGITIMACY / SERVICE DELIVERY / SAFETY/TASKING)			
VARIABLES (Questions)	Number of police that should be allocated	keep safe: more police	be more accessible: more police	improve service delivery: more police
SOPS OR TOPS	0.63*	-0.15	-0.17	-0.22

* $p < .05$

4.5 Conclusion

Descriptive, analysis of variance and correlational data have been presented for community and police surveys. Existing NSCSP survey data were also presented for the purpose of comparison. These data were necessary to answer the sub-research and research questions, to determine the effectiveness of SOPS.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

5.1 Introduction

To determine if operational actions and organisational structures within the Queensland Police Service that utilise Single-Officer Police Stations are the most effective way to deliver policing services, it is important to consider the results as they relate to the most important policing aspect and specific operational tasks, QPS performance indicators, and the impact a SOPS structure has on service delivery and officers.

In Chapter 5, the results were discussed and interpreted with consideration of the existing literature and the setting within the Townsville Western Patrol Group. The discussion begins with the analysis of data regarding the most important policing aspect and specific operational tasks within SOPS in section 5.2, then discusses QPS objectives and performance indicators through the topics of 5.3.2: perception of safety, 5.3.3: public order problems, 5.3.4: emergencies and disasters, 5.3.5: police professionalism and public confidence, 5.3.6: police honesty and fairness, and 5.3.7: satisfaction in general with police. Section 5.4 discusses SOPS impact on service delivery and officers through the attention on 5.4.1: autonomy, 5.4.2: contact, 5.4.3: welfare, 5.4.4: number of police, and 5.4.5: service delivery.

5.2 Discussion regarding important policing aspect or focus

Most officers and community members from both SOPS and TOPS identified that ensuring the safety of the public was the most important aspect to be achieved within their divisions. This was articulated by community participant 56: ‘Everyone is connected in a small town, and everyone is affected if anything negative happens - safety is key’. ANOVA for all four groups, being police and community members within SOPS and TOPS, confirmed that there were no statistically significant differences between group means as determined by one-way ANOVA ($F = 2.71, p = 0.08$). This aspect aligns with the QPS strategic objective of making the community safer (QPS, 2019), and indicates that proactive police actions should align with tasking that increase the perception of safety for the community. The importance of this was also reported by community participant number 82: ‘Police in this town make themselves part of the community and keep the town feeling safe and trouble free’.

To ensure community safety, most officers from both groups identified that they should not be spending more discretionary time at the counter. It is noted however that SOPS are required to

spend more time completing this duty than TOPS, being approximately 12% compared to 5% for TOPS. Community members also clearly indicated that they do not want police officers spending more time at the counter. Despite this sentiment, community members still require increased ability to interact with officers, as articulated by community participant 95: 'In-office communication is very limited due to hours of operation and services available to be conducted. Hard to contact local station as business hours are not user friendly' and community participant 96: 'Station is very rarely manned. Hours are limited to 1 day a week but even on that day contact cannot always be made'.

Descriptive data indicates that police and community members agree that police should not spend an increased amount of time at the police station counter, however police were overwhelmingly more conflicted than the community regarding not wanting to spend more time on this tasking. A statistically significant difference was identified with SOPS community and SOPS police ($p = .008$), and TOPS community and TOPS police ($p=0.003$). A link between increased contact with police, and therefore police presence and accessibility, was identified as having a positive effect on public perception of safety and service delivery. One common tasking for police to increase accessibility is to open a police station counter to the public, allowing the public access to police.

Officers in SOPS generally complete this one standard day per week and remain within the station unless an emergency dictates otherwise. The staffing structure at TOPS however allows an unsworn QPS Administration Officer, generally a local member of the community, to be employed for three days per week, which results in the station counter being routinely open to the public three or more days per week, whilst still allowing police the ability to complete proactive duties away from the station. This is recognised by community participant 14: 'Have a full-time administrative person man the police station and be accessible to the officers at all times'.

Officers from both groups agreed they should spend more discretionary time policing events, however minimal time is available to be spent on this tasking for SOPS officers, who only spend 4.3% of their time completing these duties, compared to TOPS officers who spend 10% of their time doing so. Most community members from both groups also request this task to ensure the safety of the public, representing the highest response.

SOPS officers indicated they should not spend time patrolling the town area, and this opinion is operationalised as they only spend an average of 15% of their time completing this duty. This

contrasts with TOPS officers with a majority believing they should patrol the town area, and this duty takes up 30% of their time. The second highest response within SOPS and TOPS communities was for officers to spend an increased amount of time patrolling the town area. The reduced time SOPS spend within the town area reduces visibility and can have a negative impact on the perception of service delivery. Opinions between police in SOPS and the other groups differ with other tasking, community from both SOPS and TOPS, and police from TOPS, highlighting the requirement for police to be spending most time within the town area, and at events, to keep them safe, however there is a statistically significant difference between the number of SOPS community who require this, versus an increased portion of the TOPS community who require those tasking.

Police opinions from SOPS contrast this view, with a belief that they should be spending more time in rural areas and on the highways. Police from TOPS also believe more discretionary time should be spent patrolling the highway, but this is matched with their view on also spending more time within the town area. This police view on the importance of spending more time on the highways is significantly different to that of the community in both areas. A statically significant difference was identified with SOPS community and SOPS police ($p=.03$), and TOPS community and TOPS police ($p = 0.01$). This could reflect road trauma tasking regularly allocated to rural officers from supervisors.

A pattern of significant positive correlations existed for the safety variables relating to police tasking throughout the town and rural areas, and the need for 24-hour contact with police within that division to keep the community safe and improve service delivery. For example, community members who identified police should spend more time patrolling rural areas, positively correlates to the variable requiring 24-hour contact with police for safety ($r = .39$) and requiring 24-hour contact with police to improve service delivery ($r = .25$). Similarly, community members who identified police should spend more time patrolling within the town area, positively correlates to the variable requiring 24-hour contact with police for safety ($r = .39$) and requiring 24-hour contact with police to improve service delivery ($r = .50$).

Further to this, community members who identified police should spend more time patrolling rural areas, positively correlates to the variable requiring more police to improve safety ($r = .42$), more police to improve accessibility ($r = .42$) and requiring more police to improve service delivery ($r = .38$). Similarly, community members who identified police should spend more time patrolling within the town area, positively correlates to the variable requiring more police

to improve safety ($r = .37$), more police to improve accessibility ($r = .41$) and requiring more police to improve service delivery ($r = .38$).

There was also a significant positive correlation for the variable where community members required more police to patrol within the town area, with the variables requiring police to spend more time patrolling highways ($r = .39$), rural areas ($r = .38$), and community events ($r = .35$).

Specific tasking required by the community to keep them safe, be it in the town area, rural area or at events, did not generally correlate to any perceptions about police legitimacy, satisfaction of service delivery or feelings of safety. However, the strong correlation between the public need for patrols in all areas, and the importance placed on being able to contact the police 24-hours a day and the need for more police indicates that a community's perception about crime and police may not be directly affected by the actual police tasking they articulate, but a request for increased tasking reflects a need for increased police visibility and access to police. This is articulated by community participant 102: 'They need to allocate time for in-office duties as well as serve the community so that a police presence is felt by the community to deter abuse of the law'.

This is supported by the idea that community safety is intrinsically linked to perception, and as stated by Borovec et al (2019), police efforts to reduce fear of crime or perception of crime will not be effective if they are not present in a community. As presence, or visibility, can have a positive impact on crime perception (Abraham & Ceccato, 2022), police in SOPS must increase presence in all areas to increase informal contacts with the community. Community members concerned over the lack of safety can only be reassured by an active and visible police presence (Schorer, 2007). This is highlighted by the response from participant 84: 'Having the visual presence of a law officer in the area curtails most of the more radical elements of the community'.

5.3 Discussion regarding performance indicators

Police participants were not surveyed regarding the performance indicators as they relate to the perceptions or opinions of the community within SOPS and TOPS.

Community members from SOPS were surveyed regarding their perceptions, based upon the six QPS performance indicators which rely on perceptions or opinions, and three QPS strategic objectives, being maintaining strong relationships with the community, making the community

safer and stopping crime. These results were compared with the research results from TOPS, QPS objectives data and the NSCSP survey results for Queensland.

5.3.1 Strategic objectives

The strategic objectives of the QPS are stopping crime, making the community safer, strengthening relationships with the community, and equipping the workforce for the future, 80.37% of community within Queensland have confidence in the police to achieve this. Within the SOPS community 65.7% have confidence the police are maintaining strong relationships with the community, are making the community safer and are stopping crime. 76.9% of the community within TOPS have confidence in their police to maintain strong relationships with the community, 71.8% have confidence that the police are making the community safer and 56.4% believe they are stopping crime. Therefore, community members in SOPS have a lesser belief that the police in their divisions are achieving the QPS objectives, compared to TOPS and the state of Queensland.

5.3.2 Perception of safety

Community members from SOPS feel safer at their home during the night compared to Queensland community members, and community from both groups feel safer outside in their neighbourhoods during both the day and night. Overall, SOPS perform greater than TOPS and the state for the performance indicator relating to the perception of safety. Statistically significant results were obtained for questions relating to the perception of safety, identifying that SOPS felt safer in general than TOPS. However, 65.7% of SOPS community members believe that the police in their town make the community safer, compared to 71.8% of TOPS community members.

5.3.3 Public order problems

In terms of satisfaction with police dealing with public order problems like louts, gangs, drunks and disorderly behaviour, 57.6% of community members from SOPS are satisfied or very satisfied, and 61.5% from TOPS. This compares to 60% of community members from Queensland being satisfied with how police respond to public order issues.

Therefore, SOPS do not perform as well as the state for the performance indicator relating to the perception of public order problems. SOPS also perform slightly worse than TOPS in for this performance indicator.

5.3.4 Emergencies and disasters

79.9% of community members within Queensland indicated that they were satisfied with how the police dealt with emergencies and disasters, in comparison 84.8% of SOPS community members, and 72.7% of TOPS members were very satisfied or satisfied with how police dealt with emergencies, and 82.1% of SOPS and 89.7 of TOPS with disasters,

Overall, SOPS and TOPS are similar for the performance indicator relating to the perception of emergencies and disasters, like the state.

5.3.5 Police professionalism and public confidence

85.6% of community members from within Queensland agree that police are professional, however only 60% of community members from SOPS believe the police are professional when dealing with them and others, with 81.6% of community members from TOPS believing police are professional in dealing with them, and 78.6% in dealing with others.

SOPS therefore perform considerably lower on this performance indicator than TOPS, which is comparable to the states results. As previously indicated, trust and police legitimacy are correlated to police contact, this is explored by community SOP participant 98: 'Have had very limited involvement with the local police as the station hours are limited to 1 day a week and have had to either travel or do go online to conduct my business. When trying to contact the local station number leaving messages and not receiving calls back makes it difficult to deal with the local police officer. Some locals now have limited trust in the local police officer'.

5.3.6 Police honesty and fairness

69.9% of community members from Queensland believe the police are fair and honest. Within community members from SOPS, 64.7% believe the police are fair, and 73.5% believe they are honest. Within TOPS, 76.9% believe they are fair and honest.

In general, SOPS perform lower than the state regarding the performance indicator of honesty and fairness, with TOPS also performing better than SOPS.

5.3.7 Satisfied in general with police

77.9% of community members from the state are satisfied with police after their most recent contact, compared to 60% of community members from SOPS and 72.2% from TOPS. SOPS perform considerably lower than the state regarding this performance indicator, TOPS also perform lower than the state but considerably higher than SOPS. This is supported by TOP community participant 14: 'Always showing their presence and as far as I can see they are delivering the service over and above that which is required or expected'.

In general, community members in SOPS have a lower perception of police performance, legitimacy, ability, and service delivery. The ANOVA results relating to the performance indicator regarding satisfaction with police during recent contact was statistically significant ($p = 0.05$) indicating a significant difference between the SOPS and TOPS community groups. This result indicates TOPS are more satisfied in general with the police, based upon recent contact.

Strong statistically significant positive correlation patterns were identified between all three categories of questions regarding community perceptions as they relate to performance indicators, being feelings of safety, satisfaction with police service delivery, and police legitimacy (professionalism, honesty and fairness).

This result indicates that a community's perception of safety, can be influenced by their perception of police professionalism and satisfaction with service delivery, and vice versa. Overall, SOPS do not achieve the QPS performance indicators that rely on perception and opinion as well as TOPS, and the State of Queensland. These performance indicators can have a major influence on each other, with a positive increase in one, affecting the others.

An understanding of this is integral for police in SOPS to tailor their service delivery to positively influence the community's perception of one or more of these performance indicators, considering the impact it may have on all associated performance indicators. As previously identified by Borovoc (2019), this perception of crime has a major influence on a person's feeling of safety and their subsequent confidence in police.

5.4 Discussion regarding SOPS impact on service delivery and officers

5.4.1 Autonomy

All SOPS participants identified that they required external assistance to attend to a call for service and manage events considerably more than TOPS. Relying on external assistance reduces the strength of policing a rural community with known and trusted officers, the importance is stated by community participant 75, 'In such a small community, it is ideal if the police officer is well known and respected by all'.

This indicates that SOPS require considerably more support from external divisions to perform the core duties of their role, being responding to calls for service or managing events. This operating structure decreases the opportunity for the police permanently stationed within those divisions to have meaningful contact with the community as external police are regularly sourced. Therefore, there is reduced autonomy in SOPS, compared to TOPS, to police their division.

SOPS clearly have less autonomy to police their division by themselves, relying on external assistance to attend a disproportionate number of calls for service and to manage events. This reduces the community's ability to have direct and informal contact with the permanent police allocated to that division, which is integral for improving public perception of police and crime.

5.4.2 Contact

A large portion of officers from both SOPS and TOPS believe it is necessary to ensure the community can immediately contact police within that town 24 hours a day, however only 37.5% of SOPS suggest this is achieved in their divisions, substantially less than TOPS at 88.3%. This indicates a large service delivery gap between the perception of SOPS regarding the importance of the community to be able to personally contact their local police and being able to achieve it. Officers from TOPS however believe they are far more contactable by their community.

The difficulty of 24/7 contact is evidenced by SOP police participant 5: 'Single-Officer station working normal shifts throughout the week, available for call outs outside hours but these are generally screened by Townsville Communications prior to authorising a call out. It is not desirable or practicable to provide a direct line to the officer outside of hours as this will likely be used for trivial or non-urgent matters, interfering with rest and relaxation on rest days etc.

There is a message bank on the station phone however it may be several days before this is checked and calls returned due to rest days etc. Due to working operational shifts, weekends and afternoons the station is often unattended during business hours’.

Fourteen percent of community members from SOPS had no contact at all with police in the previous 12 months, compared to only 7% from TOPS. Sixty-eight percent of community from SOPS had between 1 to 10 contacts with police, compared to 79.5% from TOPS. This indicates substantially reduced contacts between the community and police in SOPS, compared to TOPS. This can have a major impact on the perception of police and crime by community members within SOPS, as identified by Schorer (2007) who emphasises that presence, visibility and contact are, among other things, important to create a feeling of safety, to create safety in an objective and measurable way, as well as to encourage a relationship between the police and citizens built on trust. Regular citizens concerned over the lack of safety can only be reassured by an active and visible police presence. Community participant 102 discussed police contact and accessibility: ‘I have had community members discuss dissatisfaction in the current officer as access to the station is an issue. Services need to be reinstated back to the office as people need to be able to do basic services within the town’.

Most contacts with police for SOPS were from community meetings and assisting police with inquiries, accounting for 58.6%. TOPS also had a high number of contacts from community meetings, being 25.8%, and from traffic related interactions, accounting for 35.5%. These interactions are all informal and proactive related interactions, and almost no interactions are reactive criminal transactions as either a witness, offender or victim. This form of contact is essential in improving public perception, as supported by Maxson et al (2003) who identified that increased police presence, visibility, and informal contact with members of the public can improve public opinion. The increased traffic related interactions by TOPS is noted, which is another opportunity to increase visibility and informal public contact.

Forty-two percent of community members in SOPS indicated that they can get in contact with the police in their town immediately and 24 hours a day, and 48.7% of community in TOPS indicating the same. 55% of SOPS and 82% of TOPS identify the importance of this, and believe it is necessary to ensure they can immediately contact police within that their 24 hours a day. Community participant 97 identified the lack of police availability and contact in a SOP division, ‘Very hard to contact when the station is closed more times than open... Officer on holidays/leave or being pulled to work in other town/station’.

ANOVA was completed for all four groups, being police and community members within SOPS and TOPS, with consideration as to being able to always get in contact with the police in their town. There were no statistically significant differences between group means as determined by one-way ANOVA ($F = 0.94, p = .45$).

A statically significant difference was identified between SOPS community and TOPS community when identifying the importance of being able to contact police 24 hours a day to ensure they are more accessible ($p < .001$) and to improve service delivery ($p = 0.01$), with TOPS believing these factors are more important.

The overall contact that SOP community and police have is also reduced, compared to TOPS, however all parties understand the importance of increasing this contact. TOPS also have an increased number of informal contacts through various proactive tasking, including event management, traffic duties and proactive patrols, which increases community contact.

A strong negative correlation was identified between the number of contacts community members had with police in the last 12 months, and the satisfaction with police service delivery ($r = -.57$) indicating that the more contacts individuals had with police in their communities, the better their perception of service delivery would be. This is supported by literature, with Brown and Benedict (2002) confirming that a community members amount of contact with police has a strong impact on their satisfaction with the police and service delivery, rather than a person's age, race or socioeconomic status.

A pattern of positive correlations was identified for community members that identified the ability of being able to contact the police in their town 24 hours a day, and the categories of police legitimacy, service delivery satisfaction and feelings of safety, for example 'rate the professionalism of police when dealing with you ($r = .58$), satisfied in general with service delivery ($r = .76$) and feel safe in your home at night ($r = .31$). This highlights a correlation that improved contact with local police, could improve perceptions as they relate to QPS performance indicators.

Negative correlations exist for the variables relating to requiring 24-hour contact with police, and community members in SOPS or TOPS, indicating that SOPS place less importance on being able to contact their police 24 hours a day, and TOPS more importance. TOPS community, as opposed to SOPS, also indicated that they require 24-hour contact to keep them safe ($r = -.34$), to ensure police are more accessible ($r = -.43$), and to improve service delivery ($r = -.36$).

There is also a strong positive correlation pattern between the variables that require more police to feel safe, improve police accessibility and improve service delivery, with the variables that require 24-hour contact with police to feel safe, improve police accessibility and improve service delivery. For example, the variables of ‘to improve service delivery I need more police’, and ‘to keep safe I need to contact my police 24-hours a day’, resulted in a strong positive correlation ($r = .43$). This indicates that community members associate more police with improved contact ability, and vice-versa.

Strong positive correlation pattern between the variables that require more police contact to feel safe, improve police accessibility and improve service delivery, with the variables requesting various police patrols to keep safe. For example, the variables of ‘to keep safe I need to contact my police 24-hours a day’ and patrol requirements within the town area, events and rural areas all resulted in a strong positive correlation ($r = .39$). This indicates that community members associate safety through increased patrols with improved contact ability, and voice-versa.

A clear positive correlation was identified between the number of police requested by a community, and the need to have 24-hour contact with local police, indicating that a need for improved contact may result in a request for more police within a division. A positive correlation also exists between the number of contacts a community has with police, and their satisfaction of service delivery, indicating that if SOPS could increase informal community contact, satisfaction of service delivery could increase.

5.4.3 Welfare

All surveyed officers in SOPS identified that they work alone, or perform Single-Officer patrols, over 76% of the time, with all officers from TOPS indicating that this only occurs less than 50% of the time in their divisions. Officers indicated that they feel unsafe and isolated when performing work alone. 100% of SOPS feel like they carry the entire responsibility for policing within their divisions. 50% of SOPS indicated that external assistance was between 1 – 3 hours away, and all TOPS stating assistance was under 1 hour away.

These results identify a major impact on officer wellbeing or welfare within SOPS due to the increased time spent working alone, and their feelings of being unsafe or isolated whilst doing this. This feeling is supported by the fact that officer support is considerably further away for officers within SOPS. Another perception impacting on officer welfare is the feeling that the policing responsibility cannot be shared within a SOP, as opposed to a TOP. The isolation is

recognised by police participant 6, 'There are no other police for more than 100km in any direction', and police participant 2, 'Back up is a long way away and would not be available quickly'.

As identified by Fenwick (2015), another important aspect that impacts on police workload and welfare in rural areas is the unique nature of the roles and responsibilities placed upon officers. This is highlighted by the unique community expectations, as outlined by community participant 20, 'Being involved in community activities and get to know the locals' and community participant 39, needs a police person who has a family of their own who can fit in with the community and work with it, instead of against it' and also community participant 17, 'Employ a family to boost numbers in local schools and community events, police officer involved in community events e.g. working at the local cake stall or canteen at the camp draft'.

5.4.4 Number of police

One hundred percent of police in SOPS believe they should have extra police permanently allocated to their division, believing it should be a TOP. Police SOP participant 2 identified the benefit of extra staffing numbers: 'One extra officer would offer me support for CFS, and we can manage events if necessary. When we leave town, there will still be a presence'.

Police still associate a correlation for staffing numbers with calls for service and other limited demand drivers, without due consideration for social drivers and the unique responsibilities placed on rural officers, as identified by police SOP participant 3, 'There are not enough calls for service to justify more than one other officer, however, a second officer would ensure better coverage, and better officer safety'. Community participant 22 stated, 'To comply with officer safety, support to the community and human rights I believe all single manned station should be upgraded to a permanent police allocation of 2 officers'.

Forty-one percent of community in SOPS believe they should have an extra police officer permanently allocated to their division, and 40% of TOPS also believe they should have extra police allocated. Community participant 93 stated, 'I believe that due to the workload of not only policing, but all the additional duties a one-person station has to deal with, that there should be two police officers. Overlapping in duties. I believe that this is where the police force loses officers after a stint in the one-person station as they are everything to their community and are therefore virtually working 24/7 when on shift'.

Community participant 97 also stated, 'I get that our local officers patrol area is quite large, I feel that they also need to be available to all in the local area. It is extremely hard to get in contact with the station, you leave messages with a contract number and calls don't get returned, makes it difficult. Local officer was on holidays yet again and in that time, I seen 1 police car and that was the day before the officer was due to return to work after over a month. Station was closed the entire time. By having a second officer would free time for the current one whilst have a police presence in the township and being able to connect with the police would be great. There are some people (locals and non-locals) that know when the officer is out of town/not working who have a tendency to speed, drink drive etc. By having a second officer here during these times would hopefully stop that'.

There was a statistically significant difference between SOPS community and SOPS police when identifying the need for more police to ensure police are more accessible ($p = <0.001$) and to improve service delivery ($p = 0.003$). This identifies a difference in opinion, with police believing more police are required, however the community not agreeing.

A pattern of negative correlations exists for the variables relating to the number of extra police required in a community, and community members requiring 24-hour contact with police, indicating that community members who requested more police also wanted more immediate contact with police. Community that requires 24-hour contact to keep them safe ($r = .44$), to ensure police are more accessible ($r = .49$), and to improve service delivery ($r = .37$).

5.4.5 Service delivery

Eighty seven percent of SOPS indicated that if they had an extra officer available in their division in the past, they would have attended a call for service with them or taken an offender into custody, which they previously didn't due to being a Single-Officer patrol. Only 40% of TOPS indicated this is the case for them. This is explained by police participant 3, 'If a critical incident was to occur, closest resources are over one hour away. This impacts decision making as to which offences persons need to be taken into custody, for example intoxicated male in group of four males, commits offences and continues to yell at police. Unsafe to engage a group of males as Single-Officer, public perception drops as appears nil actions was taken despite action taken the next day'.

75% of SOPS identified that their divisions remain completely unstaffed between 20 – 50 days a year, with 85% of participants indicating that they are rostered within their division between

20 – 40 hours per week. All TOPS indicated that their divisions are never unstaffed, and they all have a rostered officer within their division for 50 or more hours a week.

These results identify a major lack of service delivery within a SOP, compared to a TOP, with a considerably reduced staffing presence obvious through the length of time police are available within a SOP to attend to the needs of the community. This is also recognised by the officers, with only 87.5% of SOPS believing they provide good service delivery to the community members in their divisions, but 100% of TOPS believing this.

Eighty four percent of the community from the Townsville Policing District were satisfied with service delivery in general, 60.6% were satisfied for SOPS and 86.8% from TOPS. SOPS community members are clearly less satisfied with the service delivery provided to them in Single-Officer divisions.

There was a statistically significant difference between groups when rating the service delivery provided by the police, as determined by one-way ANOVA ($F = 3.27, p = .05$). A post-hoc analysis identified the only groups that had a significant difference was SOPS community and TOPS police ($r = .03$) which is not a relevant comparison point for this research. All other groups displayed no significant difference.

Strong patterns of positive correlations exist for satisfaction in service delivery, and all variables in the categories of police legitimacy and feelings of safety. For example, the variable of feeling safe in the home at night ($r = .51$) and the professionalism of police ($r = .75$). A negative correlation was observed ($r = .36$) for service delivery and the amount of contact people have had with police in the previous 12 months, indicating more contact may positively affect the community's satisfaction with service delivery.

The service delivery provided within SOPS divisions is substantially worse than in TOPS, with their divisions remaining unstaffed for a greater period than in TOPS, removing the ability for the community to have regular contact. Working alone for a considerable period of time also affects the way SOPS police enforce the law, with a high number of officers indicating they did not take an offender into custody due to operating alone.

A positive correlation was identified between satisfaction with service delivery, policing legitimacy and the feeling of community safety, with the interconnected nature of these important factors, SOPS have a reduced capacity to achieve important performance indicators due to the limited ability for informal community contacts. This was evidenced with community in SOPS indicating they are less satisfied with service delivery that community in TOPS.

Only 40% of community members identified a need for more police in their community, however with the positive correlation identified between service delivery and contacts, contacts and the need for 24-hour access, and 24-hour access and the number of police required, it is still an important aspect to be considered by SOPS to improve service delivery.

The structure adopted by the QPS that utilises SOPS has a clear and negative impact on officers who working SOPS, with a significant impact on their feeling of safety, isolation, and lack of shared policing responsibility, due to working alone for a large period.

5.5 Conclusion

It was determined that the most important policing aspect within SOPS and TOPS was community safety, and policing tasks that should be considered to achieve this include tasking that maximise informal contacts with community members, including attendance at events and patrols of town areas. It was also determined that community safety is intrinsically linked to public perception of safety, police legitimacy and satisfaction of service delivery.

It was also identified that SOPS do not adequately achieve QPS performance indicators that are based upon public perception, and therefore do not provide the effective delivery of services to the public, when compared to TOPS and the Townsville Policing District. Knowledge and experience of the researcher identifies that this is by no means a reflection of the work ethic or ability of officers allocated to these roles, with these officers being dedicated, motivated and completely embrace the varied expectations placed upon them by the QPS and the community in which they serve. It should be noted therefore, and was supported by this research, that failure to meet performance indicators is impacted by the structure and staffing implications created using SOPS.

Effective service delivery requires maximising positive and informal contacts with the community, increasing visibility and presence, which in-turn improves public perception. SOPS are severely hindered in their ability to achieve this when compared to TOPS, not due to a reflection of individual work ability or ethic, but due to limited discretionary rostered duty caused by only having a single permanent officer within the division. This results in minimal proactive patrols, minimal opening hours for the police station counter, a division that remains unstaffed for extended periods, offenders that are not taken into custody and police who are not known by the community being routinely brought in to assist with operational actions and events.

It also negatively affects the welfare of the officers within the division, with reduced feelings of safety, increased feelings of isolation, and a feeling of having the sole responsibility for a policing division. It is important to remember the unique community expectations, and role conflicts experienced by police officers in the social dynamics of rural neighbourhoods (Fenwick, 2015), this increases workload and stress on officers, but is rarely measured or considered in staffing allocations.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSIONS

6.1 Introduction

This study concentrated on the effectiveness of Single-Officer Police Stations in regional Queensland, specifically in the Townsville Western Patrol Group of the Queensland Police Service. Achieving the QPS performance indicators effectively is essential for all police stations and sections within Queensland, however information gaps exist as several performance indicators are focused on the perception or opinion of the community and no detailed data is in existence.

This study examined these performance indicators, and the subsequent effectiveness of service delivery within SOPS, with consideration into the unique policing role in rural environments, police tasking, police legitimacy, satisfaction with police service delivery, feelings of community safety, staffing numbers, contact with police, policing autonomy, and officer welfare. This aimed to identify if operational actions and organisational structures within the Queensland Police Service that utilise Single-Officer Police Stations are the most effective way to deliver policing services.

6.2 Conclusions about research sub-questions

Research sub-questions were identified that would assist in identifying a conclusion regarding the research problem. Five research sub-questions were addressed, and all findings assist in determining an overall conclusion for the research question.

6.2.1 Sub-question 1: Policing aspect

The most important policing aspect or focus of all Single-Officer Police Station divisions within the Townsville Western Patrol Group was identified to be ensuring the safety of the public. This aligns with the QPS strategic objective of making the community safe and was identified as the most important aspect for community members in SOPS and TOPS, as well police in both groupings.

This finding should inform the operational functions of officers in SOPS to ensure relevant strategies are adopted, actions are focused on achieving this aspect, and relevant performance

indicators are prioritised, including an increase in the public perception of safety for community members within that division.

All groups, community and police in SOPS and TOPS, indicate that police should not be restrained within a police station by ensuring a counter is accessible to members of the public. This would be a successful operational tasking to increase contact, and in-turn positive perceptions. If SOPS were afforded the ability to employ an unsworn QPS Administration Officer to staff the counter up to three days per week, contact will be increased without restraining police to these counter duties.

Increased and specific tasking requested by the community in SOPS did not correlate to actual feelings of safety, but did indicate a requirement for increased police contact, staffing numbers and visibility. This finding indicates that police from SOPS should maximise time spent on tasks that will increase informal contact with community to improve public perceptions. SOPS achieve this through an increased ability to complete traffic-related patrols, tasking at community events, and less non-contact tasking. It is recognised however that availability for police in SOPS to achieve this, as opposed to TOPS, is limited due to staffing numbers and time in which the division remains unstaffed.

6.2.2 Sub-question 2: performance indicators

QPS performance indicators that rely on perception are; 1) an increase in public perception of safety; 2) an increase in public satisfaction with police dealing with public order problems; 3) an increase in public satisfaction with police dealing with emergencies and disasters; 4) maintain high levels of public perception of police professionalism, and confidence in police; 5) increase public perception of police honesty, and fair and equitable behaviour; and 6) an increase in satisfaction of people who have had contact with police in the last 12 months.

Single-Officer Police Stations fail to effectively achieve these performance indicators, when compared to TOPS within the Townsville Western Patrol Group and the Townsville Policing District as a whole. Some comparable results were achieved for some performance indicators, namely perception of safety and satisfaction in dealing with emergencies and disasters, however in general performance indicators were not achieved.

These performance indicators can have a predictable influence on each other, with a positive increase in one adversely, affecting the next; such is the relevance of these correlation findings. A sound understanding of these correlations is integral for the QPS to tailor their service

delivery to positively influence the community's perception of one or more of these performance indicators. Service delivery tasks should aim to increase informal contact with community, thereby increasing perceptions of safety, police legitimacy and service delivery, however this is difficult for SOPS due to limited staffing and discretionary time.

6.2.3 Sub-question 3: SOP impact on service delivery and officers

Utilising the structure of Single-Officer Police Stations can have a negative impact on QPS service delivery and the police officers who are permanently stationed within these divisions when, compared to TOPS.

Service delivery is impacted as SOPS have reduced autonomy to police their division by themselves, relying on external assistance to attend a disproportionate number of calls for service and to manage events. This reduces the community's ability to have contact with the permanent police allocated to that division, which is integral for improving public perception of police and crime. Contact between the SOP community and police is considerably less than TOPS, as TOPS have an increased number of informal contacts through various proactive tasking, including event management, traffic duties and proactive patrols, which increases community contact. A positive correlation also exists between the number of contacts a community has with police, and their satisfaction of service delivery, indicating that if SOPS could increase informal community contact, satisfaction of service delivery could increase

The service delivery provided within SOPS divisions is substantially worse than in TOPS, with their divisions remaining unstaffed for a greater period than in TOPS, removing the ability for the community to have regular contact. Working alone for a considerable period also affects the way SOPS police enforce the law, with a high number of officers indicating they did not take an offender into custody due to operating alone. It should be acknowledged that these impacts are not a reflection on the officers themselves, but on the staffing structure and available officer hours.

Positive correlations were identified between satisfaction with service delivery, policing legitimacy, and the feeling of community safety. With the interconnected nature of these important factors, SOPS have a reduced capacity to achieve important performance indicators due to the limited ability for informal community contacts. The structure adopted by the QPS that utilises SOPS has a clear and negative impact on officer welfare, with a significant impact

on their feelings of safety, isolation, and lack of shared policing responsibility, due to working alone for a large period.

6.2.4 Sub-question 4: Community perceptions

There is a relationship between community perceptions about the feeling of safety, police legitimacy and service delivery, as these all have a statistically significant positive correlation. All these aspects are directly related to many QPS performance indicators which have an impact on the success of the QPS to achieve the strategic objectives of stopping crime, making the community safer and strengthening relationships with the community.

This research identified that there is a positive correlation between the feeling of safety, perception of police legitimacy and trust, and satisfaction with service delivery. This research also identified that perception of service delivery and police legitimacy is positively impacted by the amount of contact police have with the community, literature supports this by identifying those perceptions are improved through maximising positive informal contact between members of the public and police.

With a comprehensive understanding of this relationship, officers at SOPS can ensure actions and operational duties aim to maximise positive and informal contacts with community members through proactive foot and vehicular patrols, attending community events and meetings, traffic related patrols and improving accessibility.

6.3 Alternate options to improve service delivery

As previously identified, to improve public perceptions and therefore service delivery, officers at SOPS need to increase the amount of positive and informal contacts they have with all community members within the division. The ability of SOPS to achieve this is limited due to only having one permanent police officer allocated to the division, with a finite amount of operational time available to attend to proactive patrols, staffing the counter and community meetings or events.

Alternate options to improve service delivery, therefore, must involve increasing the amount of time police spend interacting with the community, increasing contact and accessibility. This could be achieved by redefining the role police in rural communities are expected to perform and limiting tasks that do not assist with attaining the performance indicators, or reprioritising

tasks. This option would be problematic for officers considering the literature that identifies the important and unique role police play in rural communities, and the limited proactive time officers have available to complete different duties.

Another option is to consider the employment of an unsworn QPS administration officer so the counter can be staffed up to three days a week, which would create a standard within the rural community whereby community members knew they could contact QPS staff on set days. This is not currently an option for SOPS, with Single-Officer stations not being allocated an administration officer within the current staffing model.

An option for rotating temporary police from external divisions, or on a fly/drive in / fly/drive out options could be considered as a formal system of increasing the available hours for police within a SOP. This would successfully allow more time to be spent on contact tasks however it is well understood that officers who police rural areas, in particular SOPS, play a dual role as police officer and community member, fulfilling a role that relies on familiarity with community members, this would be severely affected if temporary rotating officers were completing the policing duties in a rural town.

The QPS could consider formal education of officers stationed in SOPS to highlight the importance of public perception, and the correlation with other important policing functions. Details including what tasks could be completed to maximise positive and informal contacts with the community could be outlined. This is important to educate officers, however, will not change the fact that there are only limited operational hours available to SOPS.

The final option is to increase staffing levels within SOPS, with an extra permanent officer and administration officer, duplicating the staffing structure within TOPS. This may not be viable, or a sound business decision, for the QPS, but will be spoken about in further detail in the next section. This has been identified by community participant 102, 'Station is never manned and there are people within the community who do not/cannot use online services. There needs to be consideration of either a 2-man station to allow rostering of staff or have a clerical position to allow people to be able to make some contact. The community would feel they are getting a better service even if they can officially report or complete basic tasks'.

This option was successfully implemented in the Townsville Western Patrol Group in late 2022, with Prairie Policing division being decommissioned after careful consideration and environmental scanning, focused on QPS capabilities. Prairie was formally and successfully amalgamated with Hughenden Police Station.

6.4 Conclusions about the research problem

Operational actions, being tasks that do not maximise positive informal contact with the community, and organisational structures, being stations that utilise a single permanent officer and no administrative support, within the Queensland Police Service is not the most effective option for the delivery of services. Ensuring the safety of the community is the most important aspect that should be prioritised by police in SOPS, and community safety is intrinsically linked to public perception of safety, police legitimacy and satisfaction of service delivery.

It has been identified within this research that SOPS within TWPG do not achieve QPS performance indicators that are based upon public perception, and therefore do not provide the effective delivery of services to the public, when compared to TOPS and the Townsville Policing District. Knowledge and experience of the researcher identifies that this is by no means a reflection of the work ethic or ability of officers allocated to these roles, the researchers' observations support Carson's findings (2014) that identifies rural police as professional, dedicated officers who work an assigned shift and then respond to calls when off duty as though they were working a 24/7 shift.

The researcher has held personal supervisor responsibility for assessing the performance and ability of the Officers in Charge of SOPS within the TWPG for approximately five years, personal observations and formal assessment has identified these officers are generally dedicated, motivated and completely embrace the varied expectations placed upon them by the QPS and the community in which they serve. It should be noted therefore, and is supported by this research, that failure to meet performance indicators is impacted by the structure and staffing implications created using SOPS.

It has been identified that the perception of crime has a major influence on a person's feeling of safety and their subsequent confidence in police (Borovec et al, 2019), and that a person's perception of crime that can have a greater impact on their quality of life than actual crime frequency, and perception of crime and its trends often do not correspond to the actual situation (Fielding & Innes, 2006).

It has further been identified that presence, or visibility, can have a positive impact on crime perception. Poor safety perceptions are linked to poor police presence. (Abraham & Ceccato, 2022), and it is recognised that visibility and informal contact with members of the public can improve public opinion (Maxson et al, 2003). Schorer (2007) also emphasises that presence, visibility, and contact are, among other things, important to create a feeling of safety, to create

safety in an objective and measurable way, as well as to encourage a relationship between the police and citizens built on trust. Regular community members concerned over the lack of safety can only be reassured by an active and visible police presence. Therefore, a major focus of SOPS should be to maximise informal contact tasks and other proactive activities.

Effective service delivery requires maximising positive and informal contacts with the community, increasing visibility and presence, which in-turn improves public perception. SOPS are severely hindered in their ability to achieve this when compared to TOPS, not due to a reflection of individual work ability or ethic, but due to limited discretionary rostered duty caused by only having a single permanent officer within the division. This results in minimal proactive patrols, minimal opening hours for the police station counter, a division that remains unstaffed for extended periods, offenders that are not taken into custody and police who are not known by the community being routinely brought in to assist with operational actions and events.

It also negatively affects the welfare of the officers within the division, with reduced feelings of safety, increased feelings of isolation, and a feeling of having the sole responsibility for a policing division. It is important to remember the unique community expectations, and role conflicts experienced by police officers in the social dynamics of rural neighbourhoods (Fenwick, 2015), this increases workload and stress on officers, but is rarely measured or considered in staffing allocations.

Staffing of SOPS is predominantly based upon the Regional Allocation Model which historically is based on statistics of population, crime, traffic incidents and other calls for service, together with indicators of urbanisation and isolation (QPS, 1999). This model fails to consider numerous factors including the unique policing role that exists in rural environments, and communities' expectation for varied service delivery. It fails to apply suitable weight to the importance of public perception, police visibility and informal community contacts, that are difficult to achieve with a single permanent officer.

The QPS assesses divisions based upon performance indicators, however the indicators that require public perception have not previously been measured for SOPS, and therefore not considered in staffing allocation. Long term management of the rural areas within the TWPG must be addressed strategically, as supported by Hunt (1995) the strength of strategic management is that it takes both quantitative and qualitative information and uses it to allow effective decisions to be made about future directions, with this considered it should be

imperative that staffing decisions in SOPS are not solely based upon statistical crime and population data.

TOPS, despite each individual division having unique features and community personalities, are similar operating environments to SOPS within the TWPG. The main tangible difference between TOPS and SOPS is the permanent allocation of an extra sworn police officer, and an extra part-time unsworn staff member. TOPS were identified as achieving all performance indicators at or above the standard of the Townsville Policing District, having increased informal contact with community members, and having a better level of service delivery satisfaction. An increase in policing numbers can have a significant and positive effect above just visibility (Sindall & Sturgis, 2013).

Therefore, the preferred option to improve effectiveness of service delivery within SOPS, is to duplicate the staffing structure within TOPS. This option would substantially improve the officer's ability to increase positive informal community contacts, which will improve public perception, resulting in the attainment of performance indicators and service delivery. It will also significantly improve officer welfare and create a shared responsibility.

It should be highlighted though that the researcher is not recommending this as a blanket structural amendment for all SOPS within the State of Queensland without considerable analysis. Supported by the theories outlined by Weiss (2014), a more comprehensive model should be adopted in the TWPG to determine appropriate workforce levels in existing SOPS that considers actual police workload based on demand for service indicators, maximising informal community contact, improving accessibility to police by the community and the unique requirements a community places on police in rural areas. Informed decisions regarding policing staffing, structure and operations can only be strategically achieved with careful scanning of the environment in which officers' work, police are inherently interwoven into every aspect of a community which therefore affects all inputs and outputs.

This will allow careful case by case consideration, focused on QPS capabilities, into the unique and specific elements within each division including the distance from the closest police station, political impacts, future influences, events and traditional measures. After these factors are carefully considered, it could be determined that some SOPS should be amalgamated with neighbouring divisions or increased to become Two-Officer Police Stations.

6.5 Limitations

Release of data

Government data relied upon for this research are subject to release limitations pursuant to The Right to Information Act 2009 and Information Privacy Act 2009. Real time crime statistics and protected internal QPS information may be subject to these legislative requirements. This limitation will be lessened as all released data were approved through formal QPS release applications and utilising publicly available data.

Prairie

The SOP division of Prairie is 44km East of Hughenden, via a sparsely populated 100km/h highway. Upon commencement of this research, it was determined that Prairie would not be included as it had not been staffed for an extended period, and policing responsibility had been managed by Hughenden Station, which is a four-person police division. As indicated in section 6.3, Prairie has since been formally amalgamated with Hughenden after careful consideration and environmental scanning, focused on QPS capabilities.

Analysis of all performance indicators

This research predominantly focused on the six performance indicators that relied on perception or opinion. For a deeper and thorough analysis on the effectiveness and efficacy of SOPS, all demand drivers and performance indicators should be analysed. However, as previously indicated, this is being considered as part of a larger work-based project.

Participant numbers

Reliability and validity of statistical analysis is improved through increased sample numbers, with a preference of at least 100 – 120 survey participants. Police Officer statistical data is presented tentatively in this research due to low participant numbers, however it should be highlighted that low numbers are due to the low number of eligible officers.

6.6 Further research

For a thorough analysis on the effectiveness and efficacy of SOPS, all SOPS throughout Queensland should be examined, with a focus on police tasking, police legitimacy, satisfaction with police service delivery, feelings of safety, staffing numbers, contact with police, operating environment, and other unique aspects.

This data should also be incorporated into all-encompassing research that considers all QPS objectives and performance indicators. This will assist in determining guiding principles and considerations for staffing SOPS and informing preferred operational tasking.

6.7 Learning objectives

The aim of the USQ Master of Professional Studies (Research) program was to provide experienced professionals with the opportunities to demonstrate, autonomously and creatively the application of knowledge and skills in research, their professional practice and further learning. Creativity and initiative are encouraged in engaging issues that are relevant and meaningful to their professional practice and workplace challenges, helping to build the capacity and resilience of the student's organisations/communities and contribute to their self-directed learning and career development. To achieve this, personal learning gaps were required to be identified and rectified during this program.

Driven to identify, and rectify, professional learning area gaps, the USQs Curriculum Vitae Tool (Van der Laan, 2013) was utilised to enhance reflective practice regarding prior learning. Categories of prior learning utilised included Qualifications, Training, Organisational Community Service and Community Service.

All learning occurrences were then critically considered to determine the main learning experiences gained; these learning outcomes were then categorised into different broad areas as identified in a taxonomy of professional capabilities. Although it was evident that significant and varied learning outcomes may develop from a single learning experience, focus was placed on the learning outcome that was determined to be the most significant. This is not so much a reflection on the anticipated formal learning objectives of the experiences, as much as an indication of personal subconscious processes and personality traits that determine what one feels is important.

Significant learnings were identified in the areas of emotional intelligence, cultural intelligence, and collaboration/teamwork. This identifies extensive personal importance in, and subsequent learnings, the professional capability of 'Personal and Social'. Moderate learnings were identified in all other learning areas except for four, which had minimal associated learnings. The four areas included systemised information gathering (Communication-Related Capability), analytical skills (Methodological Capability), critical judgement and problem solving (Intellectual Capabilities).

Completion of the USQ Master of Professional Studies (Research) program has successfully allowed the researcher to fulfil these learning gaps. Systemised information gathering (Communication-Related Capability) was satisfied to a postgraduate level through the formulation and implementation of community surveys, it was enhanced through the completion of a structured and detailed literature review. Analytical skills (Methodological Capability) were satisfied to a postgraduate level through the systematic analysis and examination of the data sourced through the surveys, including the interpretation and application of ANOVA and correlation data. Critical judgement and problem solving (Intellectual Capabilities) was satisfied to a postgraduate level by applying all data and results into a detailed and articulate thesis which included practice relevant outcomes and recommendations.

Overall, the USQ Master of Professional Studies (Research) program has provided the researcher the opportunity to identify and rectify formal learning gaps but has also increased research in the field of law enforcement, satisfying literature gaps in Single-Officer Police Stations, and enhancing an understanding of effective service delivery within the Queensland Police Service.

The 'Triple Dividend Triangle of Professional Studies' has been achieved in all three areas. The Queensland Police Service-based project can be supported by academic literature and research in various theoretical disciplines. This level of research will ensure any recommendations, outcome or finding will be appropriately reinforced to ensure decisions by the organisation will be supported. Single officer stations have long been informally scrutinised by decision makers within the Queensland Police Service, but insufficient research has been conducted regarding their efficiency to support a decision of alternative service delivery. Research into this topic will therefore fill considerable gaps in both practical and theoretical senses, providing QPS planners' substantial and specific information to promote alternative service delivery arrangements throughout Regional Queensland.

Policing, as a field of investigation, will be advanced as this research will create published literature in a specific field of practice, literature that currently does not exist. This will create a benefit to academia and the practice of law enforcement. The researcher will also be supported as this formalised research opportunity will allow the learner to develop through a higher level of self-reflection and academic scrutiny. The learning objectives are based upon gaps in the learner's prior learning and will allow these gaps to be filled to a high enough level that will ensure a well-rounded scholarly professional. This research has the potential to support and guide all policing jurisdictions worldwide to offer improved policing service delivery and structures, whilst improving efficiency and officer safety.

REFERENCES

- Abraham, J., & Ceccato, V. (2022). Crime and safety in rural areas: A systematic review of the English-language literature 1980–2020. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 94, 250-273.
- Ambrey, C. L., Fleming, C. M., & Manning, M. (2014). Perception or reality, what matters most when it comes to crime in your neighbourhood? *Social Indicators Research*, 119(2), 877-896.
- Anderson, J., & Dossetor, K. (2012). *First-response police officers working in single person patrols: A literature review*. Australian Institute of Criminology.
- Ask Media Group, (2022, January). 'What is service delivery'.
<https://www.reference.com/business-finance/service-delivery-b40d5bbd6275c5da>
- Bannigan, K., & Watson, R. (2009). Reliability and validity in a nutshell. *Journal of Clinical Nursing*, 18(23), 3237-3243.
- Borovec, K., Balgač, I., & Mraović, I. C. (2019). Police visibility as an influencing factor on citizens' perception of safety. *Journal of Criminal Justice and Security*, (2), 135-160.
- Bradford, B., Jackson, J., & Stanko, E. A. (2009). Contact and confidence: Revisiting the impact of public encounters with the police. *Policing & Society*, 19(1), 20-46.
- Brown, B., & Benedict, W. R. (2002). Perceptions of the police: Past findings, methodological issues, conceptual issues and policy implications. *Policing: An International Journal of Police Strategies & Management*, 25(3), 543-580.

- Bujang, M. A., Omar, E. D., & Baharum, N. A. (2018). A review on sample size determination for Cronbach's alpha test: a simple guide for researchers. *The Malaysian Journal of Medical Sciences: MJMS*, 25(6), 85.
- Buttle, J., Fowler, C., & Williams, M. W. (2010). The impact of rural policing on the private lives of New Zealand police officers. *International Journal of Police Science & Management*, 12(4), 596-606.
- Carson, K. (2014). A Qualitative Study of Rural Police Culture. *Journal of Law Enforcement*, 3(6), 1-2.
- Ceccato, V. A. (2016). *Rural crime and community safety*. Ney York: Routledge.
- Cops, D. (2013). The role of autonomous mobility in public space on fear of crime among adolescents. *Journal of Youth Studies*, 16(8), 1105-1122.
- Creswell, J. W. (2009). Qualitative procedures Research design. *Qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods approaches*, 3, 203-225.
- Danna, K., & Griffin, R. W. (1999). Health and well-being in the workplace: A review and synthesis of the literature. *Journal of Management*, 25(3), 357-384.
- Ercan, I., Yazici, B., Sigirli, D., Ediz, B., & Kan, I. (2007). Examining Cronbach alpha, theta, omega reliability coefficients according to sample size. *Journal of Modern Applied Statistical Methods*, 6(1), 27.
- Fenwick, T. 2015. Learning policing in rural spaces: 'Covering 12-foot rooms with 8-foot carpets'. *Policing: A Journal of Policy & Practice*, 9(3), 234-241.
doi:10.1093/police/pav015

- Fergusson, L., Allred, T., & Dux, T. (2018). Work-based learning and research for mid-career professionals: Professional studies in Australia. *Interdisciplinary Journal of e-skills and Lifelong Learning*, 14, 1-17.
- Fergusson, L. (2019). The nature of work-related problems: Messy, co-produced and wicked. *Journal of Work-Applied Management*, 11(2), 106-122.
- Fergusson, L., Harmes, M., Hayes, F., & Rahmann, C. (2019). Lines-of-inquiry and sources of evidence in work-based research. *Work-Based Learning eJournal International*, 8(2), 85-104.
- Fergusson, L. C., Brömdal, A., Gough, M., & Mears, S. (2020). Competency, Capability and Professional Identity: The Case for Advanced Practice. *Work Based Learning e-Journal International*, 9(1), 95-131.
- Fielding, N., & Innes, M. (2006). Reassurance policing, community policing and measuring police performance. *Policing & society*, 16(02), 127-145.
- Fleissner, D., & Heinzelmann, F. (1996). *Crime prevention through environmental design and community policing*. US Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, National Institute of Justice.
- Glasgow, R. E. (2013). What does it mean to be pragmatic: Opportunities and challenges for pragmatic approaches. *Health Education Behaviour*, 40(3), 257-65.
- Grabosky, P. N. (1988). *Efficiency and effectiveness in Australian policing* (Vol. 16). Canberra: Australian Institute of Criminology.

- Hortz, O., Feather, M., & Scott, A. (1998). Environmental scans for police. *Australian Police Journal*, 52(3), 123-128.
- Hunt, D. (1995). Strategic management in policing including the future role of police. *Police Leadership in Australasia*, 38, 40-74.
- Johnson, G., Scholes, K., & Whittington, R. (2008). *Exploring corporate strategy: Text and cases*. Pearson education.
- Joppe, M. (2006). The research process. <http://www.ryerson.ca/~mjoppe/rp.htm>.
- Lowry, D. T., Nio, T. C. J., & Leitner, D. W. (2003). Setting the public fear agenda: A longitudinal analysis of network TV crime reporting, public perceptions of crime, and FBI crime statistics. *Journal of Communication*, 53(1), 61-73.
- Mackenzie, N., & Knipe, S. (2006). Research dilemmas: Paradigms, methods and methodology. *Issues in Educational Research*, 16(2), 193-205.
- Manning, M., & Fleming, C. (2017). The economics of private security expenditure: The influence of perceptions of crime. *Security Journal*, 30, 401-416.
- Maxson, C. L., Hennigan, K., & Sloane, D. C. (2003). *Factors that influence public opinion of the police*. (No. 3). US Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice.
- Merriam, S. B. (2002). Introduction to qualitative research. *Qualitative Research in Practice: Examples for Discussion and Analysis*, 1(1), 1-17.
- Nofziger, S., & Williams, L. S. (2005). Perceptions of police and safety in a small town. *Police Quarterly*, 8(2), 248-270.

Overman, A. (2014). Maximizing the Impact of Local Police Agencies through Optimum Staffing Levels. *University of New Orleans Theses and Dissertations*, 8(14).

Queensland Government Statistician's Office, Queensland Treasury, (2021, November). *'POLSIS Profiles, Queensland Regional Profiles'*.
<https://statistics.qgso.qld.gov.au/qld-regional-profiles>

QPS Queensland Police Service, (1999). *'Regional Allocation Model'*.
[Qldpolice.sharepoint.com/qpsintranet](https://qldpolice.sharepoint.com/qpsintranet).

QPS Queensland Police Service, (2011). *'Queensland Police Service Guide to Planning 2011'*. [Qldpolice.sharepoint.com/qpsintranet](https://qldpolice.sharepoint.com/qpsintranet).

QPS Queensland Police Service, (2017). *'Environmental Scan 2017'*.
[Qldpolice.sharepoint.com/qpsintranet](https://qldpolice.sharepoint.com/qpsintranet).

QPS Queensland Police Service, (2017). *'Queensland Police Service Strategic Plan 2017 – 2021'*. [Qldpolice.sharepoint.com/qpsintranet](https://qldpolice.sharepoint.com/qpsintranet).

QPS Queensland Police Service, (2018). *'Queensland Police Service Operational Plan 2018'*.
[Qldpolice.sharepoint.com/qpsintranet](https://qldpolice.sharepoint.com/qpsintranet).

QPS Queensland Police Service, (2019). *'Queensland Police Service Strategic Review 2019 – Final report'*. <https://www.police.qld.gov.au/sites/default/files/2021-02/QPS-Strategic-Review.pdf>

QPS Queensland Police Service, (2020). *'Queensland Police Service 2020/09 Organisational Structure Policy'*. [Qldpolice.sharepoint.com/qpsintranet](https://qldpolice.sharepoint.com/qpsintranet).

QPS Queensland Police Service, (2020). *'Queensland Police Service organisational-structure 2019'*. Qldpolice.sharepoint.com/qpsintranet.

QPS Queensland Police Service, (2021). *'Queensland Police Service Organisational Structure'*. Qldpolice.sharepoint.com/qpsintranet.

QPS Queensland Police Service, (2021). *'Queensland Police Service ELVIS mapping'*. Qldpolice.sharepoint.com/qpsintranet.

Schorer, P., (2007). *Police transformation through community policing*. Bern: Swiss Agency for Development.

Scott, J., & Jobes, P. C. (2007). *Crime in rural Australia: Policing in rural Australia*. New South Wales: The Federation Express.

Sindall, K., & Sturgis, P. (2013). Austerity policing: Is visibility more important than absolute numbers in determining public confidence in the police? *European journal of criminology*, 10(2), 137-153.

Social Research Centre, (2020, May). *"National Survey of Community Satisfaction with Policing NSCSP"*. <https://www.srcentre.com.au/our-research/national-survey-of-community-satisfaction-with-policing-current-project>

Tynan, M. (1995). Including the real world in the corporate plan: The use of environmental analysis by police in Australia. *Journal of the Australian Institute of Professional Intelligence Officers*, 4(2), 13-24.

Van der Laan, L. 2017, Fundamentals of Professional Studies: Module 4. Retrieved from <https://usqstudydesk.usq.edu.au/m2/mod/equilla/popup.php?cmid=988520>. [accessed July 2018].

Watson, R. (2015). Quantitative research. *Nursing Standard*, 29(31), 44.

Warr, M. (2000). Fear of crime in the United States: Avenues for research and policy. *Criminal Justice*, 4(4), 451-489.

Weston, L. A. (2021). *Making the 'Visible' Visible: An Interactional Understanding of Police Visibility in Community Engagement*. United Kingdom: The University of Liverpool.

Yesberg, J., Brunton-Smith, I., & Bradford, B. (2021). Police visibility, trust in police fairness, and collective efficacy: A multilevel Structural Equation Model. *European journal of criminology*, 0(0).

Yüksel, I. (2012). Developing a multi-criteria decision-making model for PESTEL analysis. *International Journal of Business and Management*, 7(24), 52.

APPENDIX A

Division specific information and demographics

Sourced from Queensland Government Statistician's Office, Queensland Treasury, (2021, November). *'POLSiS Profiles, Queensland Regional Profiles'*.

Ravenswood Policing Division:

Main town	Ravenswood
Permanent Police	1
Closest town with 4+ permanent police officer	Charters Towers
Land area km ²	6,671.9 km ²
Estimated resident population	333
Average annual growth rate	0.04%
Population by age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 19.6% aged 0–14 years • 60.7% aged 15–64 years • 19.8% aged 65+ years
Median age	43 years
Migration	72 persons (or 24.1%) usually resided in a different address
Country of birth	14 persons (or 4.3%) were born overseas
Family composition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 81 families • 44.1% of total families were couple families with children
Dwellings by tenure type	48 occupied private dwellings (or 43.3%) were fully owned
Median total family income	\$72,840 per year
Unemployment rate	2.2%
Top 5 employment subdivisions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Agriculture (27.9%) 2. Preschool and School Education (7.7%) 3. Metal Ore Mining (7.4%)

	4. Public Administration (3.4%) 5. Construction Services (3.4%)
Building approvals (1yr)	1

Greenvale Policing Division:

Main town	Greenvale
Permanent Police	1
Closest town with 4+ permanent police officer	Charters Towers
Land area km2	16,332.0 km2
Estimated resident population	317
Average annual growth rate	0.04%
Population by age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 19.6% aged 0–14 years as at 30 June 2020 • 60.6% aged 15–64 years • 19.8% aged 65+ years
Median age	43 years
Migration	69 persons (or 24.2%) usually resided in a different address five years ago
Country of birth	13 persons (or 4.3%) were born overseas
Family composition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 77 families • 44.2% of total families were couple families with children
Dwellings by tenure type	45 occupied private dwellings (or 43.3%) were fully owned
Median total family income	\$72,725 per year
Unemployment rate	2.2%
Top 5 employment subdivisions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Agriculture (28.1%) 2. Preschool and School Education (7.7%) 3. Metal Ore Mining (7.4%) 4. Public Administration (3.6%)

	5. Construction Services (3.4%)
Building approvals (1yr)	0

Pentland Policing Division:

Main town	Pentland
Permanent Police	1
Closest town with 4+ permanent police officer	Charters Towers
Land area km2	22,119.3 km2
Estimated resident population	444
Average annual growth rate	0.04%
Population by age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 19.6% aged 0–14 years as at 30 June 2020 • 60.7% aged 15–64 years • 19.7% aged 65+ years
Median age	42.9 years
Migration	96 persons (or 24.1%) usually resided in a different address
Country of birth	18 persons (or 4.3%) were born overseas
Family composition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 108 families • 44.2% of total families were couple families with children
Dwellings by tenure type	63 occupied private dwellings (or 43.2%) were fully owned
Median total family income	\$72,535 per year
Unemployment rate	2.1%
Top 5 employment subdivisions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Agriculture (27.9%) 2. Preschool and School Education (7.7%) 3. Metal Ore Mining (7.5%) 4. Public Administration (3.5%) 5. Construction Services (3.4%)

Building approvals (1yr)	1
--------------------------	---

Clare Policing Division:

Main town	Clare
Permanent Police	1
Closest town with 4+ permanent police officer	Ayr
Land area km ²	1,755.5 km ²
Estimated resident population	516
Average annual growth rate	-0.05%
Population by age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 16.6% aged 0–14 years as at 30 June 2020 • 60.5% aged 15–64 years • 22.9% aged 65+ years
Median age	47.3 years
Migration	128 persons (or 26.1%) usually resided in a different address five years ago
Country of birth	40 persons (or 7.6%) were born overseas
Family composition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 142 families • 41.1% of total families were couple families with children
Dwellings by tenure type	85 occupied private dwellings (or 43.4%) were fully owned
Median total family income	\$78,331 per year
Unemployment rate	3.6%
Top 5 employment subdivisions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Agriculture (24.7%) 2. Food Product Manufacturing (9.7%) 3. Preschool and School Education (5.9%) 4. Other Store-Based Retailing (3.3%) 5. Food Retailing (3.2%)
Building approvals (1yr)	1

Richmond Policing Division:

Main town	Richmond
Permanent Police	2
Closest town with 4+ permanent police officer	Hughenden
Land area km ²	28,165.8 km ²
Estimated resident population	835
Average annual growth rate	-1.2%
Population by age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 21.2% aged 0–14 years as at 30 June 2020 • 61.0% aged 15–64 years • 17.8% aged 65+ years
Median age	39.7 years
Migration	285 persons (or 37.1%) usually resided in a different address five years ago
Country of birth	48 persons (or 5.8%) were born overseas
Family composition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 207 families • 37.5% of total families were couple families with children
Dwellings by tenure type	122 occupied private dwellings (or 39.9%) were fully owned
Median total family income	\$72,739 per year
Unemployment rate	3.7%
Top 5 employment subdivisions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Agriculture (35.1%) 2. Public Administration (13.2%) 3. Preschool and School Education (4.4%) 4. Metal Ore Mining (2.9%) 5. Food and Beverage Services (2.9%)
Building approvals (1yr)	1

Rollingstone Policing Division:

Main town	Rollingstone
Permanent Police	2
Closest town with 4+ permanent police officer	Deeragun
Land area km ²	3,488.0 km ²
Estimated resident population	1722
Average annual growth rate	0.05%
Population by age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 18.1% aged 0–14 years as at 30 June 2020 • 61.3% aged 15–64 years • 20.5% aged 65+ years
Median age	45.3 years
Migration	503 persons (or 32.1%) usually resided in a different address five years ago
Country of birth	169 persons (or 10.2%) were born overseas
Family composition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 460 families • 38.3% of total families were couple families with children
Dwellings by tenure type	220 occupied private dwellings (or 36.5%) were fully owned
Median total family income	\$75,963 per year
Unemployment rate	4.5%
Top 5 employment subdivisions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Construction Services (6.8%) 2. Preschool and School Education (5.8%) 3. Agriculture (5.8%) 4. Public Administration (3.9%) 5. Food and Beverage Services (3.9%)
Building approvals (1yr)	9

Halifax Policing Division:

Main town	Halifax
Permanent Police	2
Closest town with 4+ permanent police officer	Ingham
Land area km ²	165.5 km ²
Estimated resident population	1627
Average annual growth rate	-0.05%
Population by age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 13.0% aged 0–14 years as at 30 June 2020 • 57.8% aged 15–64 years • 29.3% aged 65+ years
Median age	53.1 years
Migration	369 persons (or 23.5%) usually resided in a different address five years ago
Country of birth	138 persons (or 8.5%) were born overseas
Family composition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 463 families • 36.6% of total families were couple families with children
Dwellings by tenure type	322 occupied private dwellings (or 50.9%) were fully owned
Median total family income	\$71,622 per year
Unemployment rate	3.2%
Top 5 employment subdivisions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Agriculture (17.3%) 2. Food Product Manufacturing (9.9%) 3. Preschool and School Education (8.8%) 4. Public Administration (4.4%) 5. Construction Services (3.7%)
Building approvals (1yr)	6

Giru Policing Division:

Main town	Giru
Permanent Police	2
Closest town with 4+ permanent police officer	Ayr
Land area km ²	1,241.4 km ²
Estimated resident population	2079
Average annual growth rate	0.02%
Population by age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 17.1% aged 0–14 years as at 30 June 2020 • 62.0% aged 15–64 years • 20.8% aged 65+ years
Median age	46.2 years
Migration	532 persons (or 27.8%) usually resided in a different address five years ago
Country of birth	184 persons (or 9.1%) were born overseas
Family composition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 570 families • 40.6% of total families were couple families with children
Dwellings by tenure type	3 10 occupied private dwellings (or 41.6%) were fully owned
Median total family income	\$85,376 per year
Unemployment rate	3.2%
Top 5 employment subdivisions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Agriculture (13.1%) 2. Food Product Manufacturing (6.0%) 3. Preschool and School Education (5.8%) 4. Construction Services (4.2%) 5. Public Administration (4.0%)
Building approvals (1yr)	28

APPENDIX B

Expanded correlation tables

Expanded table 4.4.1: Correlation results for police tasking

VARIABLES (Questions)	POLICE TASKING				
	To keep me safe, police in my town should spend more of their discretionary time at the police station counter	To keep me safe, police in my town should spend more of their discretionary time patrolling the highways.	To keep me safe, police in my town should spend more of their discretionary time patrolling rural areas.	To keep me safe, police in my town should spend more of their discretionary time engaging in community events.	To keep me safe, police in my town should spend more of their discretionary time in the town area
LEGITIMACY Professionalism of Police in your town when dealing with you	-0.13	-0.05	0.03	0.16	-0.05
SERVICE DELIVERY Satisfied service delivery by Police	-0.14	-0.01	0.02	0.16	-0.21
SAFETY Safe at home at night	-0.14	-0.14	-0.14	-0.22	-0.37
STAFFING Number of Police that should be allocated	-0.12	-0.14	-0.33	-0.06	-0.33
CONTACT Can contact police at all times	-0.10	0.16	0.10	0.14	-0.11
CONTACT To keep safe 24hr contact with my Police	0.32	0.30	0.39	0.33	0.39
CONTACT	0.27	0.29	0.3	0.31	0.43

To be more accessible 24hr contact with my Police					
CONTACT To improve service delivery 24hr contact with my Police	0.26	0.25	0.25	0.3	0.5
TASKING To keep safe more time patrolling Highways	0.29	1	0.61	0.13	0.39

Expanded table 4.4.2: Correlation results for police legitimacy

VARIABLES (Questions)	POLICE LEGITIMACY (VS LEGITIMACY / SERVICE DELIVERY / SAFETY)						
	Professionalism of Police in your town when dealing with YOU	Professionalism of Police in your town when dealing with OTHERS	Police in your town create and maintain strong relationships	Police in your town make the community safer	Police in your town stop crime	Honesty of Police in your town	Fairness of Police in your town
LEGITIMACY Professionalism of Police in your town when dealing with you		0.76	0.79	0.73	0.84	0.77	0.76
LEGITIMACY Professionalism of Police in your town when dealing with others			0.78	0.83	0.73	0.77	0.75
LEGITIMACY Police in your town create and maintain strong relationships				0.85	0.80	0.71	0.82
LEGITIMACY Police in your town make the community safer					0.86	0.73	0.81

LEGITIMACY Police in your town stop crime						0.74	0.75
LEGITIMACY Honesty of Police in your town							0.80
SERVICE DELIVERY Satisfied service delivery by Police	0.75	0.68	0.76	0.83	0.70	0.68	0.74
SERVICE DELIVERY Satisfied with most recent service	0.44	0.46	0.40	0.40	0.25	0.37	0.37
SERVICE DELIVERY Satisfied in general with the Police dealing with public order	0.59	0.63	0.69	0.69	0.69	0.64	0.68
SERVICE DELIVERY Satisfied in general with responding to emergencies	0.51	0.52	0.65	0.64	0.64	0.53	0.56
SERVICE DELIVERY Satisfied with Police responding to disasters	0.55	0.55	0.66	0.64	0.60	0.56	0.59
SAFETY Safe at home day	0.47	0.48	0.50	0.57	0.54	0.57	0.58
SAFETY Safe at home night	0.38	0.43	0.48	0.53	0.50	0.52	0.54
SAFETY Safe walking in your town day	0.41	0.49	0.45	0.54	0.53	0.56	0.48
SAFETY Safe walking in your town night	0.32	0.46	0.36	0.48	0.42	0.46	0.40
SAFETY Safe driving on roads in town	0.51	0.48	0.44	0.52	0.49	0.54	0.52

SAFETY							
Safe during major events	0.52	0.57	0.53	0.61	0.51	0.59	0.56

Expanded table 4.4.3: Correlation results for service delivery

		SERVICE DELIVERY (VS SERVICE DELIVERY / SAFETY)				
VARIABLES (Questions)	Satisfied service delivery by Police	Satisfied with most recent service	Satisfied in general with the Police dealing with public order	Satisfied in general with responding to emergencies	Satisfied with Police responding to disasters	
SERVICE DELIVERY Satisfied service delivery by Police		0.46	0.68	0.57	0.65	
SERVICE DELIVERY Satisfied with most recent service			0.43	0.40	0.47	
SERVICE DELIVERY Satisfied in general with the Police dealing with public order				0.68	0.70	
SERVICE DELIVERY Satisfied in general with responding to emergencies					0.75	
SAFETY Safe at home day	0.53	0.20	0.56	0.54	0.49	
SAFETY safe at home night	0.51	0.23	0.58	0.56	0.43	
SAFETY Safe walking in your town during day	0.50	0.14	0.53	0.51	0.42	
SAFETY Safe walking in your town during night	0.41	0.21	0.52	0.36	0.28	

SAFETY Safe driving on roads in town	0.46	0.26	0.55	0.43	0.37
SAFETY Safe during major events	0.71	0.28	0.57	0.51	0.54

Expanded table 4.4.4: Correlation results for safety

	SAFETY (VS SAFETY)					
VARIABLES (Questions)	Safe at home day	Safe at home night	Safe walking in your town day	Safe walking in your town night	Safe driving on roads in town	Safe during major events
SAFETY Safe at home day		0.87	0.83	0.63	0.67	0.66
SAFETY Safe at home night			0.72	0.70	0.64	0.67
SAFETY Safe walking in your town day				0.66	0.59	0.67
SAFETY Safe walking in your town night					0.55	0.56
SAFETY Safe driving on roads in town						0.51

Expanded table 4.4.5: Correlation results for contact with police

	CONTACT WITH POLICE (VS LEGITIMACY / SERVICE DELIVERY / SAFETY)				
VARIABLES (Questions)	Number of contacts with police in 12 months	Can contact Police at all times	To keep safe, need 24hr contact with my Police	To be more accessible, need 24hr contact with my Police	To improve service delivery 24hr contact with my Police

SOPS or TOPS	0.01	-0.14	-0.34	-0.43	-0.36
LEGITIMACY Professionalism of Police in your town when dealing with you	-0.22	0.58	0.01	0.06	-0.07
LEGITIMACY Professionalism of Police in your town when dealing with others	-0.27	0.53	-0.18	-0.10	-0.18
LEGITIMACY Police in your town create and maintain strong relationships	-0.24	0.64	-0.13	-0.02	-0.13
LEGITIMACY Police in your town make the community safer	-0.28	0.65	-0.13	-0.04	-0.17
LEGITIMACY Police in your town stop crime	-0.18	0.53	-0.02	0.01	-0.12
LEGITIMACY Honesty of Police in your town	-0.18	0.47	-0.05	0.00	-0.18
LEGITIMACY Fairness of Police in your town	-0.20	0.59	-0.06	0.00	-0.15
SERVICE DELIVERY Satisfied service delivery by Police	-0.36	0.76	-0.08	0.01	-0.18
SERVICE DELIVERY Satisfied with most recent service	-0.57	0.40	0.04	0.06	0.01
SERVICE DELIVERY	-0.37	0.57	-0.14	-0.08	-0.24

Satisfied in general with the Police dealing with public order					
SERVICE DELIVERY Satisfied in general with responding to emergencies	-0.33	0.49	-0.11	-0.14	-0.20
SERVICE DELIVERY Satisfied with Police responding to disasters	-0.30	0.55	0.01	-0.05	-0.10
SAFETY Safe at home day	-0.04	0.30	-0.13	-0.09	-0.26
SAFETY Safe at home night	-0.07	0.31	-0.24	-0.22	-0.38
SAFETY Safe walking in your town day	-0.05	0.29	-0.13	-0.08	-0.21
SAFETY Safe walking in your town night	-0.16	0.16	-0.26	-0.21	-0.30
SAFETY Safe driving on roads in town	-0.12	0.33	-0.10	-0.08	-0.18
SAFETY Safe during major events	-0.26	0.40	-0.21	-0.17	-0.27
STAFFING Number of Police that should be allocated	-0.01	-0.10	-0.44	-0.49	-0.37
STAFFING To keep safe, more Police	-0.02	0.07	0.33	0.26	0.34
STAFFING To be more accessible, more police	-0.07	0.03	0.43	0.37	0.38

STAFFING improve service delivery, more police	0.05	-0.08	0.43	0.35	0.43
--	------	-------	------	------	------

Expanded table 4.4.6: Correlation results for police staffing numbers

		POLICE STAFFING (VS LEGITIMACY / SERVICE DELIVERY / SAFETY/TASKING)			
VARIABLES (Questions)	Number of Police that should be allocated	keep safe: more Police	be more accessible: more police	improve service delivery: more police	
SOPS OR TOPS	0.63	-0.15	-0.17	-0.22	
CONTACT Contact with police in 12 months	-0.01	-0.02	-0.07	0.05	
LEGITIMACY Professionalism of Police in your town when dealing with you	-0.18	0.09	0.13	0.06	
SERVICE DELIVERY Satisfied service delivery by Police	-0.16	-0.13	-0.11	-0.16	
SAFETY Safe at home night	0.14	-0.19	-0.24	-0.19	
SAFETY Safe during major events	0.15	-0.30	-0.30	-0.26	
TASKING keep safe spend time at Counter	-0.12	0.15	0.15	0.20	
TASKING	-0.14	0.22	0.23	0.23	

keep safe more time patrolling highways				
TASKING keep safe time patrolling rural	-0.33	0.42	0.41	0.38
TASKING keep safe spend time community events	-0.06	0.01	0.01	-0.05
TASKING keep safe more time in town	-0.33	0.37	0.41	0.38