SUMMARY
Victoria Police exists to keep the Victorian community safe.

Like so many aspects of life today, the Victorian community is vastly different from the way it was when Victoria Police was formed 161 years ago.

Even in the last ten years a lot has changed. The trends we see today will have a big impact on Victoria Police over the next ten years, and the organisation must respond to them to keep Victorians as safe as possible.

The demand for Victoria Police’s services is growing rapidly. Calls to Triple Zero (000) are increasing at more than double the rate of population growth. Serious and organised crime is growing and in many cases, becoming global in its operation. Specific types of crime are increasing rapidly, such as alcohol-fuelled assaults, trafficking in ‘ice’ and other new kinds of illicit drugs, family violence, child abuse and online sex offences. Police are spending a lot more time responding to incidents caused by mental illness. The increasing frequency and severity of extreme weather events is creating additional demands on police involvement in emergency management.

The Victorian community continues to grow. It is becoming more concentrated on the fringes of Melbourne and in regional centres, and more ethnically diverse. There are signs of increasing disadvantage and job insecurity. Community values are changing and diverging in ways that make policing more difficult.

New technology is producing more sophisticated criminals and new types of crime. But at the same time it offers enormous potential to make the community safer.

Strong economic conditions and associated revenue growth over the last ten years are unlikely to be sustained over the coming decade. Victoria Police must learn to enhance public safety with relatively fewer resources.

Yet, despite these changes in the public safety challenges that face Victorians, some aspects of our model of policing owe more to nineteenth century history than to what the Victorian community needs in the twenty first century.

To keep Victorians safe, it is clear that Victoria Police needs to change the way it operates - substantially, and in some cases, radically. Without a real transformation, Victoria Police will not be able to meet community expectations.

Sir Robert Peel, the founder of modern policing, said that ‘the police are the public and the public are the police’. That principle remains of great importance today. Victoria Police and the whole of the Victorian community need to work more closely together to make Victoria a safer place.

The Blue Paper will guide the development of a new Victoria Police strategic plan for the next ten years, to 2025.
What is the Vision for Victoria Police in 2025?

Over the decade to 2025, Victoria Police will need to become a more connected, intelligence-led and evidence-based organisation. It will need to work more closely with the whole Victorian community to prevent, and reduce the harm from crime, disorder and other public safety hazards.

A Vision for Victoria Police in 2025 sets out three proposed strategic directions to enhance public safety, and increase value for money for the Victorian community through its investment in Victoria Police:

- better matching of resources to demand by rethinking the traditional operating model
- improving capability through workforce reform and technology
- collaborating more closely through partnerships.

Better matching of resources to demand

A new approach is needed to determining priorities. Victoria Police should identify the highest priorities for the State as a whole, and allocate resources between central and local (‘regional’) operations. Local communities should influence how local operational resources are used to meet local priorities.

The balance of Victoria Police’s activities must be tilted further towards prevention, as compared to enforcement, or ‘catching crooks’, by responding to complex social issues and tackling crime before it happens.

Victoria Police must also pay more attention to victimisation (better care for victims and reducing repeat victimisation), to the greatest harms (not necessarily the greatest volume of offences). In combination, these factors should help to determine specific priorities.
To meet these priorities, Victoria Police needs greater flexibility in deploying resources, to anticipate and respond to crime and other public safety hazards.

Different models of policing need to be integrated to provide the most visible, accessible and responsive service to the public. Victoria Police should develop a service charter to describe what Victorians can expect from their police, and how Victorians can help police to meet, maintain and exceed those standards.

More agile and flexible staffing arrangements are needed to respond to changing and complex demands. An automated rostering system, based on computer-modelling of demand, should allocate officers where and when they are needed, instead of following outdated traditional patterns.

Fully sworn officers, the bedrock of Victoria Police, should focus on those activities that need all their education and training, or their legal powers. Where functions can be better or more efficiently carried out by others – especially back office and other support functions – they should be undertaken by public servants or another organisation. A more sophisticated mix of staff is required, with greater use of partially-sworn staff (with limited yet significant legal powers, such as the existing Protective Services Officers) and public servants to assist fully sworn police officers.

A different budget model – one based on outcomes, not inputs - is needed to support the gradual implementation of this new approach.

The traditional police service delivery model needs to shift from one based on an historical geographic footprint, to one that is mobile, technologically-advanced, and more responsive to changing demand. The type and location of police operations should be determined by what is required to provide the best possible service to the community.

For example, larger, consolidated ‘supersites’ should replace many of the smaller and less operationally-effective traditional police stations. The supersite – or sites - in each Division should be the central ‘hub’ that supports a variety of other Victoria Police service points for local communities, such as ‘shopfronts’, mobile police stations, and self-service kiosks for non-urgent issues. In rural Victoria, multiple hubs might be required. Supersites should be multi-disciplinary centres where Victoria Police is co-located with other public services.

**Improving capability: people and technology**

All Victoria Police officers need to see themselves as practitioners of a profession who are required to cope with complexity and uncertainty. They should uphold the highest ethical and professional standards: the physical, psychological and intellectual expectations of police officers should be increased. Regular, structured professional development in leadership, at all levels, should be introduced to complement the twice yearly training in operational tactics and safety.

The composition of Victoria Police should reflect better the diversity of Victoria’s community, so that police continue to maintain its trust and support. A greater proportion of sworn officers should be female, second-language speakers or Indigenous.

To meet the challenges of a complex and evolving policing environment, there need to be many more entry points into Victoria Police. This will mean expanded lateral entry from other police forces, and a new direct entry program to encourage experienced people from other fields to join Victoria Police. Fast-track programs for high achievers also warrant consideration.
At the other end of a police officer’s career, a reinvigorated police reserve program would provide a mechanism for Victoria Police to retain access to the skill, knowledge and experience of former Victoria Police members.

Victoria Police officers need to be far better supported by modern technology. They need to have the information and systems to do their work in a more ‘virtual’ environment, and to be freed from time-consuming paperwork. Technology should also support a strong culture of information security.

Police officers on the front line should be equipped with a mobile device that receives information and tasks in real-time, so that they can focus on preventative activities, such as patrolling crime ‘hotspots’, and respond to incidents as and when they occur. The same device should enable recording of evidence (such as audio/video recordings, photos, fingerprints), access to integrated databases, issue of infringement notices, and completion of other forms. A voice to text application should replace written notes.

Frontline officers should not need to return to their supersite during their shift: the proportion of an officer’s time spent in the community (not in a police complex) should increase from 54 per cent to around 80 per cent.

Each supersite should be designed to accommodate an IT system which allocates tasks and coordinates police operations. The system would integrate audio and video feeds from mobile and fixed sensor platforms, advanced analytics, and advice from partner agencies. It would also have capacity for a custody suite, operated by a private provider.

Victorians should be able to report crime and suspicious activity through online self-service portals, and provide pictures and video to assist in offender identification. There should also be a dedicated non-emergency telephone line, where the public can talk directly to a staff member who can take their report and provide access to crime prevention information. Individuals should be able to track the progress of their reports via a secure online system. The system would, via social media, provide the community with real time alerts and requests for assistance to solve a crime or problem.
Collaborating more closely through partnerships

More effective policing depends in part on increased community involvement, supported by education and training of citizens. Effective partnerships – with citizens, businesses, other Victorian government and not for profit agencies, plus other Australian and international law enforcement agencies - are essential to meet almost every service delivery challenge facing Victoria Police. Time spent on building and sustaining partnerships needs to be recognised as part of the essence of modern policing.

Some partnerships should be led by Victoria Police; in others it should act as a ‘broker’. Victoria Police should not undertake activities that another organisation can perform better or more efficiently and appropriately.

Different types of partnerships with the community are necessary:

- An effective model of local policing in collaboration with residents and business owners will remain of vital importance, for maintaining and building community trust and confidence in Victoria Police. Local policing partnerships should use practical and wide-reaching methods for public participation to shape local priorities (such as community forums and social media platforms). A more personal approach, through greater face-to-face interaction with identified individual police officers – recognisable ‘faces’ – is vital.

- Victoria Police must increase the trust that communities of identity (relating to gender, ethnicity, religion, sexuality, age, capacity or otherwise) have in its ability to serve them as well and treat them as fairly as anybody else.

- Victoria Police needs to engage with businesses in a different way for mutual benefit, based on enduring structures and processes.

- Police and private security firms need to work together to deter crime and maintain public order most effectively, but police should retain an involvement in the regulation of the industry, and could become involved in the training of its members.

Serious consideration should be given to establishing a formal volunteer program for Victoria Police, to supplement and support the activities of staff. The involvement of senior external people in the strategic management of Victoria Police through the Corporate Advisory Group should be continued, and extended through new advisory groups for specific geographic areas and functions.

Victoria Police should also intensify its work with other Victorian departments and agencies at a strategic level to tackle the range of complex problems that confront, and drive demand for responses by police. An integrated approach between Victoria Police and other government and non-government agencies across the State is essential to prevent these problems as far as possible, and to respond to them in a way that meets all the needs of an individual. This will require much greater data sharing.

The increasingly national and international nature of serious and organised crime necessitates broader and deeper collaboration between Victoria Police and other Australian law enforcement agencies in a number of areas, especially intelligence, information technology, forensic technology and qualifications and standards. Beyond the realm of law enforcement, Victoria Police should seek broader and deeper collaboration with the Australian Defence Force through a strategic alliance.