

**Sponsor:** Newhaven College  
**Refuter:** Ivanhoe Girls' Grammar School

A Bill for an Act relating to Compulsory Training for Victorian Police Surrounding Sensitive Issues.

To be enacted by the YMCA Victoria Youth Parliament;

## **Compulsory Training for Victorian Police Surrounding Sensitive Issues Bill 2021**

A Bill for an Act to establish the Sensitive Issues Training of Police (SITOP) Board. The Board will oversee and implement the training of Victoria Police officers on handling sensitive issues. These sensitive issues include domestic and family violence, prejudice motivated crimes, sexual assault, acts of discrimination and mental health crises.

The Bill aims to address the current concerns surrounding Victoria Police's handling of sensitive issues. Often, improper handling can be attributed to inadequate knowledge of sensitive issues, leading to inappropriate responses by Victoria police officers including but not limited to the arrest and detainment of victims, sympathy, and inadequate consequences for perpetrators. These responses can lead to adverse outcomes, such as worsening mental health of victims, directly countering the aim of law enforcement agencies. The Bill was written under the notion of addressing this problem through education, aiming to elicit empathy, and understanding from police officers, leading to appropriate management of sensitive issues they encounter.

## **PART I—Preliminary**

### **Clause 1 Purpose**

The main purposes of this Act are—

- (a) to increase awareness surrounding sensitive issues involving Victoria Police;
- (b) to decrease the mental and emotional distress on parties involved in sensitive issues;
- (c) to provide more training for Victoria Police officers on sensitive issues.

### **Clause 2 Commencement**

This Bill shall commence upon receiving assent from the Youth Governor of Victoria.

### **Clause 3 Definitions**

In this Bill, we define the following to mean—

- (a) **sensitive issues** means issues which are likely to cause emotional or mental distress to individuals involved in the incident requiring police intervention. This includes sexual assault, domestic and family violence, prejudice motivated crimes and discrimination;
- (b) **support services** means services which are aimed to help those suffering mental health consequences as a result of the issues discussed during training (e.g. psychologists or counselors);
- (c) **individual** means an individual officer of Victoria Police;
- (d) **domestic and family violence** means any threatening, coercive, dominating, or abusive behaviour that occurs between people in a family, domestic or intimate relationship, or former intimate relationship, that causes the person experiencing the behaviour to feel fear;
- (e) **prejudice motivated crime (PMC)** means any crime motivated by prejudice or hatred towards a person or a group because of a particular characteristic.

## **Part II—Establishment**

### **Clause 4 Establishment of the Sensitive Issues Training of Police (SITOP) Board**

- 4.1 The SITOP Board shall be created to oversee—
  - (a) the training of Victoria Police regarding sensitive issues;
  - (b) the provision of training of Victoria Police;
  - (c) penalties regarding failure to implement training.
- 4.2 The SITOP Board shall consist of—
  - (a) trained psychologists;
  - (b) domestic and family violence specialists;
  - (c) advocates of sensitive issues;
  - (d) survivors of sensitive issues;
  - (e) government members;
  - (f) trained facilitators;
  - (g) chiefs of specialised departments relating to sensitive matters;
  - (i) members of the specialised departments shall also participate in the training.
- 4.3 The SITOP Board shall have support services for—
  - (a) those on the Board of the committee;
  - (b) those participating in the training.

### **Clause 5 Training**

- 5.1 Training shall be included as part of standard academy training in the form of a one-week course—
  - (a) which shall be made up of daily training sessions;
  - (b) which individuals shall be required to attend in-person;
  - (c) which shall conclude with a mandatory quiz covering the content of the training.
    - (i) A passing score shall be 85% or higher;
    - (ii) An individual who scores below the passing score shall be made to retake the test;
    - (iii) This individual shall be on suspension until they successfully attain a passing score.
- 5.2 Each sensitive issue covered in the training shall be discussed individually.
- 5.3 Owing to the severity of the subject matter—
  - (a) individuals will be provided with mental and emotional support;
  - (b) individuals shall be able to be excused for small periods of time during the training.
- 5.4 Training shall cover the following content—
  - (a) why and how the sensitive issues arise;

- (b) how to safely and sensitively handle sensitive issues, including strategies for—
  - (i) the apprehension of those involved;
  - (ii) the impact of the sensitive issue on those involved;
  - (iii) etiquette and language use when taking a statement and communicating with those involved.

**Clause 6      Renewal of Training**

- 6.1 Training shall be renewed every two years after the initial course date.
- 6.2 The SITOP Board shall keep a record of training renewal ensure compliance is maintained across Victoria police.

**Clause 7      Penalties**

- 7.1 An individual refusing to partake in training shall be awarded a Level 6 offence;
- 7.2 A police station refusing to provide satisfactory training shall be awarded a Level 4 offence;
- 7.3 The Victoria Police Academy refusing to provide satisfactory training shall be awarded a Level 2 offence.
- 7.4 The SITOP Board shall be responsible for the distribution of penalties at their discretion.

**Clause 8      State of emergency or disaster**

- 8.1 During a state of emergency or disaster, penalties for non-compliance shall not be imposed.
- 8.2 After a state of emergency or disaster expires—
  - (a) individuals shall be required to become compliant within three weeks before being penalised;
  - (b) Police Stations shall be required to ensure their staff are compliant within three weeks.
    - (i) If it is not feasible for individuals to undertake training at their own police station, they shall have the opportunity to undertake training at another facility.
  - (c) The Victoria Police Academy shall be required to provide training to recruits before they graduate.
    - (i) If the Academy does not comply it shall be penalised.