

Participant Information Sheet

Kristen Hilton and Co (KH&Co) is conducting an *Independent Cultural Review into New South Wales Police Force* (the Review).

You have been invited to participate in the Review if you are a current employee of NSW Police Force, or a former employee that has left NSWPF in the last five years from 2020 to 2025.

This Participant Information Sheet and Consent Form tells you about the Review. It explains the purpose of the Review, and the risks involved. It also describes the information about you that the Review will collect with your consent, how that information will be used and how it may be shared. Knowing what is involved will help you decide if you want to take part in the Review.

Please read this information carefully. Ask questions about anything that you don't understand or want to know more about. Before deciding whether or not to take part, you might want to talk about it with a relative or friend. Participation in the Review is voluntary. If you don't wish to take part, you don't have to.

About the Review

The purpose of the independent review of NSW Police Force (NSWPF) is to objectively assess the organisation's workplace culture based on a range of qualitative and quantitative data. Where relevant, the Review will identify areas needing improvement as well as make recommendations to support a more equitable, capable and culturally safe workplace.

The scope of the Review will focus on:

- Developing a baseline understanding of the culture of NSWPF with a focus on identifying leading practice and areas of concern relating to diverse representation, equitable recruitment, progression and promotion practices and the provision of a safe and respectful workplace.
- The effectiveness of NSWPF systems and processes designed to prevent and respond to behavioural, cultural and integrity challenges.
- Leadership commitment and capability to create and maintain safe and respectful workplaces.
- Options to drive sustained cultural change and promote ethical behaviour that is consistent with an equitable and culturally safe police force.

The Review will focus on systemic issues and will not conduct investigations into allegations pertaining to specific individuals. Accordingly, contributing to the Review should not be seen as an avenue for pursuing an individual complaint of misconduct.

Why are we inviting you to participate in the Review?

You have been invited to participate in the Review if you are a current employee of NSW Police Force, or a former employee that has left NSWPF in the last five years from 2020 to 2025.

During the Review, we want to talk to as many people as possible.

By participating, you will have an opportunity to share your experiences with the Review team. This information will then help the Review team understand the experiences and challenges of former and current police and administrative officers, within the scope of the Review, and report de-identified experiences, trends and issues shaping recommendations.

What kind of behaviours and experiences is the Review looking at?

The Review is looking at a wide range of behaviours and experiences that shape workplace culture at NSWPF, and the impacts it has on employees. This will include what you most value about working for NSWPF and what you find challenging. The Review will look at whether people experience or see inappropriate or harmful behaviours, such as bullying, sexual harassment and discrimination. Please see definitions at the end of this document for more information. We will explore experiences that may relate to the fairness of recruitment, retention and promotion practices as well as access to flexible work. The Review is seeking to understand how leaders support and model NSWPF values and drive a culture of safety, inclusion and respect.

What does participation involve?

You can participate in the Review through a survey, written submission, confidential interview, focus group, informal listening session or interview.

Survey

You will also have the opportunity to complete a voluntary online survey (around 30 minutes to complete) that will be open to all current NSWPF employees, and former NSWPF employees who exited the organisation within the last five years from 2020-2025. The survey contains questions to allow us to collect de-identified demographic data, as well as to gain an understanding of your experience of culture at NSWPF. The Review has engaged the Social Research Centre (www.srcentre.com.au) – a specialist social research and evaluation organisation – to conduct the survey.

Written submissions

You can make a written submission to the Review by using an online webform managed by the Social Research Centre (www.srcentre.com.au) – a specialist social research and evaluation organisation. The written submission is accessed via a link on the Review website at:

www.nswpoliceview.com.au

All submissions must be received by close of business on 30 September 2025.

Confidential interviews

Interviews will take place between June and September 2025. Individuals should register their interest to participate in an interview as soon as possible. You can register your interest for an interview through the Review's dedicated website:

www.nswpoliceview.com.au

Subject to the number of registrations, you will then be invited to participate in a confidential telephone or online interview with a Review team member. Interviews will take between 60 to 90 minutes and will take place over the telephone, online or face-to-face. The Review team will take written notes of your interview, or, with your consent, record the interview so it can be professionally transcribed with strict confidentiality arrangements in place.

The interviews will be semi-structured and conducted in a way that is informal and conversational. The interview is designed to allow you to tell your story in your own words in whatever way you feel comfortable. The interviewer will also ask questions about:

- the nature of your experiences (if any) of bullying, racism, discrimination, sexual harassment and/or assault you might have experienced or witnessed within the NSWPF workplace
- your experiences (if relevant) of reporting the conduct and accessing support
- the impact the conduct has had on you and others
- fairness in recruitment and promotion practices and access to flexible work
- leaders' capability and modelling to drive a culture of safety, inclusion and respect.

You do not have to answer all or any of the questions. They are designed to allow the Review team to identify key themes and systemic issues, and to inform the development of recommendations.

Not all expressions of interest will be selected for an interview. If the number of registrations exceed the capacity of the Review team, we will prioritise interviews to meet the purpose and scope of the Review. This includes filling gaps in evidence and having a cross section of participants such as from different locations – urban, regional and rural.

Focus Groups

Focus groups will be conducted from June to September 2025. Each focus group will take 90-120 minutes and will take place online or in an agreed location.

The focus groups will be likely to be with 10-15 people on average. They will be semi-structured and conducted by members of the Review team in a way that is informal and conversational. The Review team will take written notes of the discussion.

You do not have to answer all or any of the questions. They are designed to allow the Review team to identify key themes and systemic issues, and to inform the development of recommendations.

Informal listening sessions and interviews

Informal listening sessions with more than one person and informal 1:1 interviews (5-15 mins) will be conducted in person during site visits to selected NSWPF sites from June to September 2025. The Review team will take written notes of any informal discussions. Participation in any informal discussions is voluntary and no personal identifying information (ie. names or email addresses) will be collected. The informal discussions recognise the operational nature of police work and aim to provide as accessible as possible pathways for NSWPF employees to engage with the Review during site visits.

You do not have to participate or answer any or all of the questions. The informal listening sessions and interviews are designed to provide you with the space to share your thoughts and experiences with the Review.

How will my information be used?

Information provided will be considered by the Review team in order to make recommendations and inform the findings of the Review.

All participant contributions will be kept confidential, and only de-identified information will be used in the report. The report will not identify anyone who participates in an interview, web submission, focus group or the survey.

We may include de-identified stories or quotes in the Review report. By consenting to participating, you are consenting to the use of de-identified stories or quotes that are presented in the final report.

If you are concerned about this, please talk to a member of the Review team.

Do I have to take part?

No. Participation is entirely voluntary. You do not have to share any information you do not wish to.

If you decide to participate in an interview, written submission or focus group and then change your mind, you can withdraw as a participant at any time before November 2025 (i.e. just prior to publication) by contacting the Review at info@nswpolice.com.au.

If you withdraw your interview or written submission or your consent to participate in a focus group, the information will be deleted including individual contributions to focus groups and not included in the report.

Those who participate in the survey and informal listening sessions or informal interviews will not be able to withdraw their participation as the Review will not have collected identifying information to be able to identify the contribution and delete it.

What are the benefits of participating?

The key benefit to you, is that you can share your experiences in a safe and confidential manner and know that your story is contributing to a process aimed at making a difference to NSW Police Force culture.

The Review is independent of NSW Police Force and brings significant expertise to complex cultural issues. The Review's report and recommendations aim to improve the everyday experience for those working in NSW Police Force and in turn, the broader community that it serves.

What are the risks of participating?

There are risks of participating. Sharing your experiences may feel uncomfortable or distressing. Please be assured that the Review team are trained in and take a trauma-informed approach to interactions with participants to minimise harm, Aboriginal cultural safety and responding to disclosures of sexual assault. We will also refer you to appropriate support services (see further information below).

There is a risk that you may be victimised as a result of speaking with the Review. For this reason, the Review provides a range of options to participate to maintain your privacy and confidentiality.

You may also be disappointed if sharing your story does not result in an outcome for you. The Review will not be investigating individual cases of bullying, sexual harassment or other misconduct matters. If you wish to pursue your matter, you can make a report to NSW Police Force or other reporting bodies (see further information below).

In focus groups, there is a risk that another participant in the group will not maintain your confidentiality. The Review will ask participants to maintain the confidentiality of the session.

There is a potential risk of breach of privacy associated with any unauthorised release of personal information.

How will my privacy be managed?

Your privacy is one of our key concerns. The Review team has strong experience in the sensitive, careful management of issues around workplace culture, and unlawful workplace behaviour.

'Any information provided as part of the review will be kept safe and confidential. We will keep all written notes, interview recordings and your personal details in a secure electronic file in compliance with the privacy principles contained in the *Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998* (NSW) (PPIP Act).

If you disclose information relating to another person, including a victim/survivor or alleged perpetrator, that information will be de-identified and will not be disclosed to a third party unless determined necessary due to a serious risk of harm to you or others.

Written notes and interview recordings will be kept for the duration of the Review. The interview transcripts, names and contact details, will be destroyed as soon as practicable following the completion of the Review. Professional transcription services used to transcribe interviews are also bound by strict privacy obligations.

The Review will collect, store and destroy all personal information in accordance with the information privacy principles contained in the PPIP Act.

For further information about how the Social Research Centre manages data and privacy please see <https://srcentre.com.au/privacy-policy/>. The Social Research Centre uses the ISO 27001 Information Security Management framework to apply global best practices in data security. Every year it is audited by ISO-Experts to retain our accreditation (current certification number: ISOEX-110045-2). This International Standard provides guidance and specifies requirements for establishing, implementing, maintaining and continually improving an Information Security Management System.

The Review will not inform any person that an individual has participated in the Review. You can be interviewed face-to-face in a private workspace, online or by phone and outside of usual business hours if needed.

Can I access my interview transcript?

Yes, if there is a transcript of your confidential interview you can request a copy by contacting the Review at info@nswpoliceview.com.au. We will not be transcribing focus groups, informal listening sessions or interviews.

What support will be provided to me?

We know that sharing experiences of workplace culture and inappropriate behaviour can be distressing. All individuals who contact us will be offered information and referrals to counselling and support services. Support services for current and former employees of NSW Police Force include:

Employee Assistance Program through Converge International

Services include free confidential short-term counselling across a range of areas for NSWPF employees and their immediate families. For former employees EAP support is available for up to five years post-employment.
Phone: 1300 667 197
Online: hs-wellbeing@police.nsw.gov.au

Crisis and mental health support available to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people:

13YARN

24-hour, confidential and culturally safe support service for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
Phone: 13 92 76
Online: 13yarn.org.au

Crisis and mental health support services available to anyone include:

Beyond Blue

24-hour free information and support for mental health issues.
Phone: 1300 224 636
Online: beyondblue.org.au

Lifeline

24-hour crisis support for mental health and emotional assistance.
Phone: 13 11 14
Online: lifeline.org.au

Sexual assault and domestic violence support services available to anyone include:

1800 RESPECT

24-hour sexual assault and domestic violence counselling and support service.

Phone: 1800RESPECT (1800 737 7327)

Online: 1800respect.org.au

Our full support service directory is available at www.nswpoliceview.com.au.

Who can I contact if I have further questions about participating?

You can contact us if you have any questions before your interview or would like to discuss your options to participate:

Email: info@nswpoliceview.com.au.

How will I find out about the results of the Review?

The Review will deliver its final report to the NSWPF Commissioner detailing the key findings and recommendations arising from the Review. The NSWPF have undertaken to make a form of the report public on their website. We will notify website subscribers to the Review when the publicly available report is available and will promote its release through social media.

I want to participate, so what do I do next?

If you haven't already, please register your interest for an interview via the Review website at www.nswpoliceview.com.au. When you register, please sign and return the attached Consent form and return it to us by email. We will then confirm your interview details.

You may also submit a written submission or answer the survey with a link to the Social Research Centre available via the Review website at www.nswpoliceview.com.au.

You may be invited to attend a focus group.

You may be invited to participate in informal listening sessions and discussions at site visits.

I want to make a report about something that happened to me or that I witnessed

This Review will not investigate individual cases of bullying, harassment or other misconduct. If you wish to find out more information about making a report internally to the New South Wales Police Force, the Safe Reporting Unit provides a confidential service, and you can speak with an advisor for assistance. To contact Safe Reporting, phone 26399 (Eaglenet) or 02 8835 6399.

You can also report to bodies outside of NSW Police Force including:

Fair Work Commission

Deals with workplace relations matters, including anti-bullying claims.
Phone: 1300 799 675
Online: fwc.gov.au

Law Enforcement Conduct Commission

Investigates allegations of serious misconduct and reviews the way misconduct allegations about the NSW Police and NSW Crime Commission are handled.
Phone: (02) 9321 6700
Online: lecc.nsw.gov.au

Australian Human Rights Commission

Investigates complaints about discrimination and human rights breaches

in all parts of Australia.
Phone: 1300 656 419
Online: humanrights.gov.au

Definitions

Bullying

Workplace bullying is repeated, unreasonable behaviour directed at someone that creates a risk to health and safety - such as verbal, physical and written abuse (including on social media). It is defined under Australian law in the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011*.

Reasonable management action is not bullying - such as genuine and reasonable instructions or setting reasonable performance goals, standards and deadlines.

Aboriginal Cultural Safety

The National Agreement on Closing the Gap describes cultural safety as overcoming the power imbalances of places, people and policies that occur between the majority non-Indigenous position and the minority Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander person so that there is no assault, challenge or denial of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander person's identity, of who they are and what they need.

The Review recognises that "cultural safety is met through actions from the majority position which recognise, respect, and nurture the unique cultural identity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Only the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander person who is recipient of a service or interaction can determine whether it is culturally safe."

Culture

This Review is a cultural review. The ABS describes culture as "the collective behaviour patterns of a group of people" (ABS Measuring Wellbeing: Frameworks for Australian Social Statistics (cat. no. 4160.0)). We have interpreted our task as examining the relevant systems, processes, attitudes and behaviours that shape the way in which things get done in the NSW Police Force and impact on the experiences of staff.

Culture is shaped by people but also by the written and unwritten rules of the organisation. Culture can contribute to a positive, fair and purposeful experience or it can perpetuate work practices and behaviours that do not meet explicit standards and values. Poor culture can result in individual and organisational harm and erode trust.

Climate

Climate can be thought of the external 'weather patterns' or circumstances that can influence the organisation. These may include resourcing demands, the changing nature of crime, budgetary pressures and public sentiment. Culture and climate are often interconnected.

Discrimination

Discrimination is when someone is treated less favourably based on protected attributes such as race, age, sex, disability, gender identity and sexual orientation. Australian anti-discrimination legislation includes the *Age Discrimination Act 2004*, *Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986*, *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*, *Racial Discrimination Act 1975* and *Sex Discrimination Act 1984*. The relevant State legislation in NSW is the *Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 (AD Act)* which prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, sex, transgender, disability, carer responsibilities, religion, marital and domestic status, homosexuality and age.

Diversity

Diversity is defined by the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet in its Inclusion and Diversity Strategy 2023-2026 as the range of human differences, personal and social characteristics that make us unique and shape our view of the world, including but not limited to our backgrounds,

life experiences, thoughts and beliefs. Diversity is also about recognising, respecting and valuing differences based on (but not limited to) race, colour, ethnicity, gender and gender identity, age, disability, sexual orientation, relationship/family status and caring responsibilities.

Inclusion

In contrast, diversity alone does not change culture, wellbeing, productivity or performance. Inclusion is defined in the Inclusion and Diversity Strategy 2023-2026 as getting the right mix of diverse people in an organisation to work together to improve performance and wellbeing. It is achieved when a diversity of people feel they are respected, connected, contributing and progressing at work.

Psychological Safety

Psychological safety is a concept that goes a step further than minimising risk of psychosocial hazards and psychosocial harm. Psychological safety, defined as, "the belief that one will not be punished or humiliated for speaking up with ideas, questions, concerns, or mistakes, and the team is safe for interpersonal risk taking."¹ The idea of psychological safety goes beyond minimising risk of harm to actively cultivating safety so that team members feel safe to make mistakes and speak up. Teams with psychological safety are reported to be higher performing². The safety to speak up can also support ethical leadership, decision making and integrity measures.

Safety

Australia's Work Health and Safety laws aim to minimise or eliminate risks of harm (death, injury or illness) to workers in the workplace. Historically, Work Health and Safety laws focused on physical harm but were expanded in 2023 to include psychological harm. Psychological harms or injuries include conditions such as anxiety, depression and PTSD. Common psychosocial hazards that can cause both physical and psychological harm include bullying, harassment, job demands and violence and aggression.

Sexual Harassment

Under the *Sex Discrimination Act 1984*, sexual harassment is defined as unwanted conduct of a sexual nature, which could reasonably be expected to make the other person feel offended, humiliated or intimidated. It can be physical, verbal or written (including electronic communication).

Victimisation

Victimisation is unlawful under discrimination laws.

Victimisation is when you are disadvantaged in some way, or threatened with a disadvantage, because you have:

- made a complaint of discrimination or sexual harassment
- provided information or documents about a complaint of discrimination or sexual harassment
- asserted your rights, or supported someone else's rights, under anti-discrimination laws
- alleged that a person has acted unlawfully under anti-discrimination law

The Bellberry Human Research Ethics Committee has reviewed and approved this study in accordance with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2023) – incorporating all updates. This Statement has been developed to protect the interests of people who agree to participate in human research studies. Should you wish to discuss the study or view a copy of the Complaint procedure with someone not directly involved, particularly in relation to matters concerning policies, information or complaints about the conduct of the study or your rights as a participant, you may contact the Operations Manager, Bellberry Limited on 08 8361 3222.

**Independent
Cultural Review Into
New South Wales
Police Force**