

**Question on Notice  
No. 844  
Asked on 22 April 2004**

Dr Clarke asked the Minister for Police and Corrective Services (MS SPENCE) -

QUESTION:

Will she outline the role of the Cultural Advisory Unit and give further details on the Cultural Appreciation Project which is involving a State wide review of existing cultural awareness training?

ANSWER:

In its Client Service Charter, the Queensland Police Service has a specific commitment to be sensitive to cultural diversity when dealing with members of the Queensland community and visitors to this State.

The Cultural Advisory Unit provides an important component of the Service's approach to working in partnership with the people in Queensland to enhance the safety and security of our communities.

The importance that the Queensland Police Service accords to Indigenous and multicultural issues is reflected in the fact that the Service's Cultural Advisory Unit is located in the Office of the Commissioner. It is the only such Unit in Australia which is attached directly to the office of a Commissioner of Police.

There is 12 staff in the Cultural Advisory Unit, including an Inspector, Senior Cultural Advisor to the Commissioner and an Indigenous Policy Advisor. Two officers from the Unit are based in Cairns.

The Unit's mission is to promote and maintain effective relationships between members of the Queensland Police Service, multicultural and Indigenous communities based on open communication, mutual understanding, respect, tolerance and trust.

The role of the Unit is to:

- Develop and maintain effective relationships between members of the Queensland Police Service, ethnic and indigenous communities.
- Promote understanding within the Queensland Police Service of cultural diversity in contemporary Australian society, through input into recruitment, education, training, policy development and procedures.
- Develop policy and programs that achieve the above objectives.
- Provide advice and consultation to QPS personnel in relation to a wide range of issues including cultural appreciation, recruitment, conflicts and other concerns relating to multicultural and indigenous issues.

The Cultural Advisory Unit hosts monthly meetings of the Service's Indigenous Reference Group which provides a regular forum for discussing any issues that participants wish to raise. The Unit is also assisting QPS Regions to develop similar consultative groups. There are currently approximately 15 Police / Indigenous consultative groups across the State. The Unit hosts bi-monthly meetings of the Police Ethnic Advisory Group which fulfils a similar role with the multicultural community.

The Cultural Advisory Unit coordinates 135 Police Liaison Officers across the State, and also 16 Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Police stationed at Yarrabah, Badu Island and Woorabinda.

The Cultural Advisory Unit is also represented on the Justice Entry Program steering committee. The Justice Entry Program enables young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to gain the necessary educational qualifications to become police recruits. Participants complete a six-month bridging program before qualifying for admission into the recruit program.

Since 2003, when it was established, 23 people have completed the program. Of these, eight were sworn in as police constables in March 2004. A further 12 will enter the recruit training program in September 2004.

In addition, through the work of Cross Cultural Liaison Officers from across the State, members of the Cultural Advisory Unit maintain close contact with the multicultural and Indigenous communities and are regularly consulted for assistance in resolving cross-cultural issues.

The Queensland Police Service, Cultural Advisory Unit, is now developing a new Cultural Training and Awareness Training Package.

The initial focus is on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural issues. This part of the project is aimed towards developing Indigenous cultural competence training for all Queensland Police Service personnel. This will be achieved by providing cultural awareness training on a number of levels:

- initial training at the Oxley and Townsville police academies;
- training specific to local QPS Region, District and Division needs;
- training which is specific to a particular Indigenous community, designed for officers being transferred to the community in question; and
- ongoing education for all police.

The project is being developed with the guidance and support of Indigenous communities throughout the State and is being designed to complement, and build upon, the initial cultural awareness training that is already a part of the QPS recruit program.

The project includes a review of current distance learning units dealing with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Race Relations, Law, and Contemporary Social Issues.

Regional, District and Divisional (or Community) profiles are also being developed that relate directly to local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander issues. The profiles will be designed in consultation with representatives of the local Indigenous community and members of the Service, and will be provided to all personnel currently serving in, or applying for transfer to, specific Indigenous communities.

It is imperative that the Queensland Police Service is continually improving its work in this area to ensure officers have the training, knowledge and skills to service and support people from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

