

## Sam Telfer MP

Shadow Minister for Police, Corrections and Community Safety

Friday 2 August 2024

### Cops missing out on crucial psychological reviews amid SAPOL's resourcing crisis

SAPOL officers who work in the most dangerous and traumatic fields across the force are missing out on crucial annual psychological reviews because there is no centralised system to record and track mental health assessments, it can be revealed.

New data released to the Opposition, via questions in Parliament, shows as of June 7 there are 37 officers overdue for their annual psychological reviews.

- **Eight** are overdue by more than a year.
- **Twelve** are overdue by three months.
- A further **17** are overdue but within three months.

How the data was obtained remains a mystery after Police Commissioner Grant Stevens testified – at the Select Committee on Support and Mental Health Services for Police – that *“we do not have a comprehensive system for managing matters of employment for our staff”*.

More than a year ago, the Malinauskas Labor Government confirmed: *“SAPOL does not have a centralised system to monitor compliance and cannot report the rate of compliance in the past 10 years”*.

Since then, and despite SAPOL raising the need for funding through the Premier's Taskforce, Peter Malinauskas has refused to boost mental health support for police officers.

The Police Association of South Australia (PASA) submitted evidence to the Committee on behalf of an officer who wished to remain anonymous, saying: *“The member is a Crime Scene Examiner and asserts that in over two decades of performing such duties has undergone no more than five psychological assessments”*.

The officers required to have annual psychological reviews include:

STAR Operations Section as a part of STAR Group; Dog Operations Unit; State Response Section; Negotiator Coordinator Section; Major Crash Investigation Unit; Special Crimes Investigation Branch as a part of Public Protection Branch; Family and Domestic Violence Section, which is also a part of Public Protection Branch; the Offender Management Unit within Public Protection Branch; the Intelligence Section within Public Protection Branch; Major Crime Investigation Branch; Major Crash Investigation Branch; Crime Scene Investigation Section; Forensic Response Section; Photographic and Crime Drafting Unit; Digital Evidence Section; Financial and Cybercrime Investigation Branch; APY lands staff; one and two-person country local service area stations; and Covert Investigations Section.

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The Opposition has previously been told approximately 300 officers perform high-risk duties that require annual psychological reviews.

Shadow Minister for Police, Corrections and Community Safety, Sam Telfer, said Labor's lack of mental health support for police officers is shocking.

"We know our police officers face dangerous and traumatic situations every day and they need crucial support to maintain strong mental health and wellbeing," Mr Telfer said.

"It is unacceptable that we have almost 40 officers who are overdue for their annual psychological assessment – especially when so many experienced cops are leaving the force because of the challenges they are facing.

"Peter Malinauskas and Labor have known about this serious issue for more than a year and done nothing.

"Peter Malinauskas has just accepted that officers aren't having mental health assessments because SAPOL is not equipped with a centralised system to record psychological reviews.

"Why has Peter Malinauskas failed to act and support the mental health of SAPOL officers?"

"What was the result SAPOL's budget pitch to the Premier's Taskforce about new IT systems to keep on top of this?"