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## SA Government pledge to add hundreds more police to frontline services blows out to 2020

A PLEDGE to add hundreds of extra police officers to frontline services by 2018 has blown out to 2020 and will cost an extra \$16 million — as the Government abandons the recruitment of British cops.

Erin Jones

July 11, 2016 - 12:04PM The Advertiser

0 comments

Police Minister Peter Malinauskas addressing media with Commissioner Grant Stevens at the Angas Street Police Headquarters. Photo: Nick Clayton

POLICE have cast grave doubt on the State Government's ability to ever deliver a promised increase of 313 extra officers, after it again delayed the plans in the Budget.

The Government now plans to add the full complement of 313 extra officers by 2020, to be delivered with an additional \$16 million revealed in last week's Budget.

The blowout was attributed to longer training programs being needed for SA recruits, after the Government abolished overseas recruitments for the jobs.

Police Association president Mark Carroll said Premier Jay Weatherill must explain why his Government has reneged on its promise multiple times to deliver the additional police.

"The Government originally promised it would deliver the extra officers, not by 2018, but four years earlier in 2014, and then again by 2016," Mr Carroll said.

"The association believes that Premier Weatherill's track record on this issue proves he can't be trusted to deliver this commitment to the SA community."

The Government in 2010 pledged to strengthen the police workforce by 2014.

Mr Weatherill restated the promise in the 2014 election, extending the time frame to mid-2018 and contributed \$34 million towards the Recruit 313 strategy.

Mr Weatherill told the *Advertiser* the commitment would be maintained, "this is despite the fact we already have the highest number of police per capita of any state".

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There are currently 127 jobs still outstanding of the 313 quota.

Police Minister Peter Malinauskas yesterday said the new time frame of 2020 would be reached.

"The State Government commitment to recruit 313 staff will be honoured and the reason why we've extended it is to ensure we give South Australians every opportunity to work in workforce," Mr Malinauskas said.

"The police commissioner advised me we were on track to achieve the recruitment target of 2018, but in order to achieve the political timeline we would have had to recruit overseas and interstate people."

Police Commissioner Grant Stevens said additional time was needed for a more extensive training process for South Australians.

"To recruit locally means we're recruiting people who don't have any experience in policing, which means they'll have to do a full 12 months (training program)," Mr Stevens said.

"We found overseas recruiting very successful and our attrition rate of those officers from the UK is relatively low, but it's not something we would chose to do if we don't have to.

"The reason we recruited overseas was for Government commitment in relation to increasing size of service in terms of frontline officers, to meet targets and time frames that were set."

Opposition police spokesman Dan van Holst Pellekaan questioned community safety given police stations were also now being closed or downgraded across the state.

"Coupled with station closures and downgrades, pushing back the recruitment of 313 police officers until 2020 is putting the South Australian community at risk," Mr van Holst Pellekaan said.

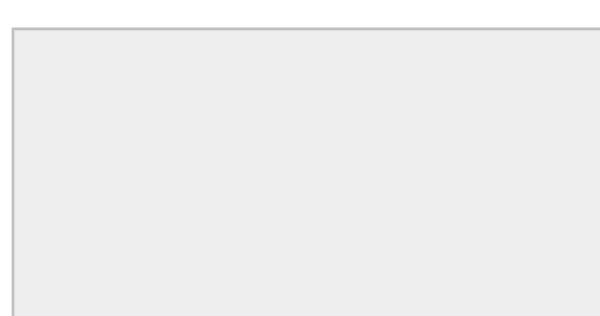
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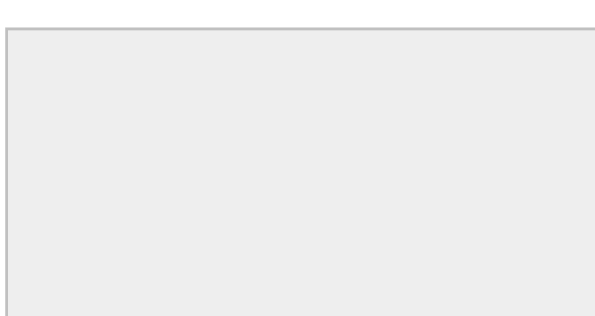


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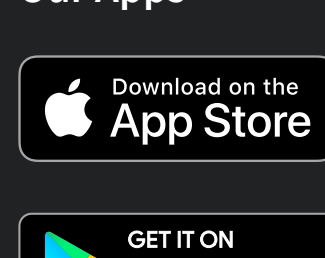
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