

# Anyone can teach cops



Boys in blue: Victoria Police recruits.

NEW police recruits are being taught by instructors with no practical on-the-job experience, it has been revealed.

Victoria Police has employed 13 unsworn educators — who have never been officers — to help train the additional 1700 cops promised by the State Government by November 2014. A further 11 are ex-police staff, including a ballet dancer with no legal qualifications, who is teaching law.

It is the first time non-sworn officers are being used to teach the next generation of cops.

JON KAILA

A maths and biology teacher, who has never been an officer, has also been employed. At least five recruits have complained about an unsworn educator not being fit to teach and sworn staff members have also made official objections, it was confirmed.

And now the unprecedented decision has been labelled “backward” and “wrong on every level” by the police union.

It has complained to Chief Commissioner Simon Overland, saying

the move is “offensive”, “diminishes the profession” and will “inevitably lower standards”.

“Academy instructors with no practical policing experience cannot possibly prepare our police recruits to be effective police professionals. The mere suggestion is offensive to police officers,” Police Association assistant secretary Bruce McKenzie said.

“The legal, medical and other professions involve experienced practitioners teaching their new and inexperienced members.

“Policing is no different and to do

otherwise will inevitably see a lowering of the standards of future police practitioners. It also seriously diminishes our profession.”

Recruits spend 33 weeks training at the Glen Waverley academy.

Victoria Police has denied it is a cost-cutting measure but conceded “unsworn members are paid less than sworn members”.

It also refuted allegations that unsworn educators had been unable to answer questions from recruits, but admitted sworn teachers are sitting in on classes led by unsworn instructors.

## Squad to hit street thugs

A NEW police unit charged with stamping out antisocial behaviour, breaking up public protests and curbing city violence is to be launched in Victoria this week.

Two crack squads, each with 21 officers specially trained to deal with riots, public pests and drunk and drug-affected thugs, will be unleashed on the CBD in an effort to restore public order.

The public order response team will patrol pubs, clubs, parties, protests and demonstrations.

It will respond to emergencies and be sent to trouble areas

PETER ROLFE

statewide identified by police command.

The unit, to have its own uniform and vehicles, will also be sent to shut down wild parties started through social media websites such as Facebook and MySpace.

The 42-member unit will start work on Thursday.

Its members have all spent time with the police dog squad, mounted branch and search-and-rescue teams. They will have the power to arrest troublemakers, ban people from the CBD and issue fines.

## Victims fight back

THE mean streets of Melbourne have seen a rise in lawsuits against venues, according to a lawyer.

Nightclubs, restaurants and hotels had a duty of care to protect patrons or face legal action, Lee Flanagan, of Arnold Thomas & Becker, said. He said customers who were assaulted outside as well as inside venues could have a case.

One case involved personal trainer Simon Smith, who spent five

SUE HEWITT

days in hospital after he was punched outside a Moonee Ponds venue on March 27 about 1.30am.

Mr Flanagan said his client was close to death lying on the footpath metres from the Mt Alexander Rd venue. He said the venue bouncers on the door outside or management should have known Mr Smith was injured and assisted.

Bar owner Blair McFarlane said the venue was co-operating with police.

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