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The force be with him

POLICE work is, by its very nature, difficult and inherently dangerous. Many of Victoria's 11,100 police men and women put their lives on the line every day in their efforts to "uphold the right" — their official motto.

Many work long shifts that include nights, weekends and public holidays. They work excessive hours to cover acute staff shortages. They leave their families alone at Christmas and Easter to protect us from drunks, criminals and sometimes from ourselves.

Policing is stressful because of the dangerous and unsavoury tasks that are part of everyday police work. Dealing with road trauma, violent offenders or distressed victims is part of the job.

We should all be grateful to those who face such stress in the public interest. But sometimes more than gratitude is required.

Igor Tomazic is one police hero — almost killed in the line of duty — who has not been treated with the respect and understanding he deserves.

The former detective has been unable to work since a burglar he was trying to apprehend five years ago grabbed his service revolver from his holster and shot at him.

Mr Tomazic claims Victoria Police was negligent by not providing him with a gun holster that could not be unclipped by the offender. He claims he suffers flashbacks, nightmares and depression and has taken his case to court to seek compensation.

Something is wrong with Victoria Police when it can't look after its own.

Why did this case ever wind up in court?

Surely there should be a workable system in place to ensure that officers either emotionally or physically scarred in the line of duty are adequately compensated and looked after.

There is no doubt Mr Tomazic is shattered by the trauma. He had expected that Victoria Police command would view his case with greater understanding. Instead, he says, he was treated "like a number" rather than a dedicated officer who risked his life to protect others.

It is incumbent on Victoria Police to introduce a new safety net that ensures that brave officers such as Mr Tomazic do not have to resort to the courts to get what they justly deserve — adequate compensation, understanding and respect.