

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S BRIEFING PAPER

**SUBJECT:** Current situation of SAPOL's Firearms Training Capability

### BACKGROUND:

The Weapons Training Building (WTB) at the SAPOL Academy is currently unusable. Cadet and police security officer (PSO) firearms training has all been transferred to the Echunga Training Reserve (ETR) resulting in ORQ being cancelled for the remainder of 2023.

A working group has been established including representatives from People, Culture and Wellbeing (PCW); Academy and Learning (A&L); and Physical Assets Services Branch (PSAB). The Working group is examining contingencies to ensure firearms training can continue in SAPOL, particularly critical to enable cadets and PSOs to pass their training courses and become operational as soon as possible.

A number of external consultants have examined both ETR and the Academy WTB to conduct inspections concerning the condition and viability of continuing to use these facilities.

### RELEVANT POINTS:

- On Tuesday 10 October 2023, firearms training in the WTB ceased due to significant damage. The range has been subject to assessment by BOUW Consultants. As a result of this assessment, the range cannot be used for training at this time.
- BOUW also undertook a further assessment of the outdoor pistol range at the Echunga Training Reserve (ETR) and determined that only static training could be safely undertaken from a standing position underneath the current baffling system. There could be no moving down the range as per normal training. This range would require a moderate level of remediation work to install additional baffling required to return to the full firearms training program.
- Chief Inspector Cunningham has reviewed the current modified cadet and PSO firearms training program. He is satisfied; that even though training is being conducted from a static position only, the participants are subject to the same qualification shoot as normal albeit not experiencing the full program as has been previously undertaken. E.g. the targets are moved back to the required distances but the participants are static.
- After exhaustive inquiries it has been deemed there are no private indoor or outdoor firearms ranges suitable for current cadet and PSO training. The working group operational members have met with a series of firearms range experts which has resulted in very limited options available for SAPOL to continue to provide firearms training for the short to mid-term.

- Recently a third consultant; Richard Nixon from Security Consultant Group (SCG), examined the Academy WTB. This group specialise in indoor firearms ranges and have successfully completed remediation works for six other law enforcement agencies across Australia. Most recently a similar project to that of the SAPOL Academy was undertaken by SCG for VICPOL.
- What came out of that inspection is the viability of obtaining a 'Gran Range' bullet trap second hand from VICPOL who are changing to a full metal bullet trap. The Gran bullet trap is still of high quality and usable which can be easily shipped to South Australia and refitted to the Academy WTB at a reasonable cost. Consultation is currently underway between SAPOL, VICPOL and the providers as to the viability and cost of this initiative.
- The Gran bullet trap is basically made of rubber which absorbs the bullets. It is a very safe bullet trap to use however requires some maintenance each week where rubber pellets need to be reapplied at the end of a week to the trap. This is one of the main reasons VICPOL are changing to a more permanent metal bullet trap.
- At this time it is believed this Gran bullet trap could be installed into the SAPOL Academy by the end of February 2024 as a very safe and viable temporary solution. Nixon has stated he has the ability and willingness to sign off on the temporary use of that Gran bullet trap for SAPOL.
- What this does is enables SAPOL a very genuine option to continue firearms training at the Academy whilst remediation works are undertaken at the ETR. However, planning for a full retrofit of the Academy WTB needs to start immediately as many parts for the retrofit need to come from overseas.
- Once those remediations works are completed at the ETR, firearms training returns there whilst a full retrofit is undertaken of the Academy WTB replacing the Gran bullet trap with a more permanent metal bullet trap similar to what VICPOL are getting installed.
- The remediation works at the ETR will take about six months commencing in January 2024. The use of the temporary Gran bullet trap enables this to happen without any delay in shooting for cadets and PSOs.
- Further to this is the intended expansion of the ETR firearms range as part of the remediation works. The ETR firearms range currently being used at this time has two shooting areas. One is covered with a large grey shed. There is an area immediately adjacent to the grey shed of similar size which is concreted but not sheltered. It has some overhead baffling to the firing end of the range. It is currently being used for shotgun training only and is exposed to the weather.
- Only eight members can safely use the current range under the grey roof. It is also restricted to day time shooting and is subject to inclement weather. There have been attempts to conduct concurrent training on the open range next to the grey shed; however this is unsafe due to the close proximity of the areas.

- There requires separate safety instructors on each range and audio instructions get confused between participants on each range. Therefore only one range can be used at one time.
- It is highly recommended that if the ballistic wall between the two ranges could be extended to the rear dirt bullet trap with some ballistic baffling between the two areas then this could act as mid-term second firearms range enabling ORQ to recommence once remediations were completed. Additional to this, lighting and fans could be added which would permit firing on both day and afternoon shifts; and during hotter weather.
- Irrespective, corporate ORQ training will be impacted no matter what action is taken. If there is a delay to ORQ for say six months whilst remediation work is being undertaken, it is impossible to roll out ORQ for all of SAPOL in the remaining six month time frame between June – December 2024. There are only two viable options. Cancel ORQ2-024 for all, or we could do ORQ for those members who were cancelled this year. This is probably the most realistic option at this time.
- As this project is still in its formative stages timeframes for remediation work is still speculative. It is a real possibility limited firearms training will not be interrupted for cadets and PSOs if these works can be approved and actioned immediately.
- It is requested ED PCW and ED Business Services provide support in principle to progress these works and establish a funding stream and code. This is a complex corporate project where intermediate works must occur concurrently even though some actions will require a procurement process as the project progresses.
- No budget has yet been established; however it is believed the entire project could cost between \$2M and \$3M. A business case is being prepared by PASB but full costings will not be known for some time.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

1. ED PCW note the contents of this paper and seek a budget allocation from ED BS to progress this project

Approved/Not approved

Supported:

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 Chief Superintendent Stephen Howard  
 Officer in Charge,  
 PCW Coordination Branch

Recommended:

.....  
 Kim-Sherie Summers  
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