

PLURAL POLICING IN AUSTRALIA: HOW “SPECIAL” ARE SPECIAL CONSTABLES IN NEW SOUTH WALES?

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ABSTRACT

Special constables are an example of plural policing. Historically, special constables were an unpaid and untrained “on call” reserve police force. In the contemporary Australian context, the appointment of special constables is now uncommon. The exception is the state of New South Wales, where special constables are employed, trained and remunerated. This paper overviews the development of special constables in New South Wales and compares and contrasts the current role of special constables with that of protective service officers in other Australian jurisdictions. By applying the powers, appearance, organisation, and mandate framework of O’Neill, de Maillard and van Steden (2023), the paper identifies what is unique about New South Wales special constables given the variability in powers, appearance, and mandate among protective service officers. The implications this might have for understanding plural policing in Australia are considered. Further examination of the history, creation, and deployment of protective service officers would widen our appreciation of the trajectory of plural policing in Australia.

Key words: *Plural policing, special constables, protective service officers, Australia.*

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1. INTRODUCTION

Plural policing can take many forms. This includes privatisation or non-government security services, or a range of government law enforcement agencies performing complementary (or competing) roles (Sarre and Prenzler 2018a, pp.5-6). Merritt (2009) notes some distinguishing features of plural policing, in that these non-police personnel undertake some functions that were previously considered “core” police activities. This feature can be blurred when applying labels or terms, such as the differences between “sworn” and “un-sworn” personnel, civilian and police staff, and “auxiliary” and paid staff. Rogers and Wintle (2021) highlight plural policing has the opportunity to allocate resources to non-core policing activities such as volunteers undertaking support roles. Callender, Britton and Knight (2022, p.700) note the concept of an unpaid, part-time, volunteer, and undertrained staff yet who have the same warranted powers as regular police, the England and Wales “Special Constabulary”, is at odds with an increasingly qualified, professionalised and technical police service.

According to O’Neill, de Maillard and van Steden (2023) pluralisation can involve mimicry of the characteristics of public police. Burgess, Fleming and Marks (2006, p. 402) highlighted this concern with regards to private (non-government) policing in the Australian context:

[The PFA] certainly has views about issues of security guards parading around as police and whether that’s good for the community, people putting on uniforms which are hard to differentiate from a police officer ... if you are going to have a security guard they should be seen as a security guard, not masquerading as police with a false expectation of what they can and can’t do.

This concern can also apply to the pluralisation of “policing by government” with the creation of policing-type services provided by state agencies. These hybrids or para policing services can have a community-oriented focus or a law enforcement focus, or aspects of both. To explore these issues and their implications for theory and practice, O’Neill, de Maillard and van Steden (2023) developed an analytical framework to assess the trajectory of plural policing by government. The framework has four features:

- Powers (right to use force, issue fines, arrest or detain);
- Appearance (uniform, firearms, protective equipment, cars);
- Organisation (internal organisational arrangements and units derived from the police model); and

- Mandate (law enforcement mandate and patterns of activity derived from crime control policing).

This paper applies the O’Neill, de Maillard and van Steden (2023) framework to special constables in Australia, and specifically the state of New South Wales (NSW). The discussion compares the current status of NSW special constables with similar government police-type services in other Australian jurisdictions (protective service officers), and asks what is “special” about special constables in NSW? The powers, appearance, and organisation of NSW special constables suggests mimicry of NSW police, yet this a result of the history of the role rather than an indication of the trajectory of plural policing in Australia. The first part traces the historical development of special constables in NSW. The second part compares NSW special constables with government employed protective service staff found in other Australian jurisdictions noting similarities and differences regarding powers, appearance, organisation, and mandate. The final part discusses the conceptual implications of the analysis and suggests possible directions for future research.

The paper explores aspects of plural policing in Australia with a focus on special constables in NSW and protective service officers in other Australian jurisdictions. In contrast with plural policing undertaken by private sector security providers, there has been minimal published analysis of pluralisation of policing by government sectors in Australia. This paper contributes to addressing this situation. All the material used to inform the discussion was obtained from publicly available sources. This material includes legislative instruments (police service Acts and Regulations), parliamentary debates, Australian police force or service annual reports, police force or service websites, audit office (auditor general) reports, media reports, and peer reviewed journals and other academic works focusing on policing and security studies research. These secondary research materials were analysed to investigate if the characteristics of NSW special constables are unique or to what extent are they shared with non-police auxiliary state entities in Australia.

2. SPECIAL CONSTABLES IN NEW SOUTH WALES

The “office” of special constable was created in England in the seventeenth century and the *Police Act 1855* (NSW, 19 Vic. No. 24) embodied the substance of the English law regarding special constables to operate in the colony of NSW. The provisions of the *Police Act 1855* were largely retained by the *Police Offences Act 1901* (NSW). The *Police Offences Act 1901* was amended in 1908 to allow persons “employed as a caretaker, night watchman, or in any similar

capacity” to be appointed as a special constable. Appointment of these “limited purposes constables” was nominated by an employer or local government (council of a municipality or shire). In 1941 magistrates’ appointment of special constables was further widened to include police officers not serving in the NSW Police Force; police officers on interchange duty in NSW (including international collaboration with foreign police services) (NSW LRC 1974).

The combination of enlarging the reasons for appointment and the inability to relinquish the office once appointed resulted in growth of special constable numbers in NSW. The 1974 NSW Law Reform Commission (LRC) report stated there were 3,500 special constables by December 1973. Of the 3,500 special constables, only 245 were employed (i.e. remunerated) by the NSW Police Department. Most of these, 203, were “parking police”, readily distinguishable from police officers by their brown uniforms. The remainder, 42, were described by the LRC report as blue uniform “security attendants or inquiry officers at such places as Police Headquarters, Parliament House, and Government House [the residence of the state governor]” (NSW LRC 1974, paragraph 31). The powers of special constables in NSW were partly clarified by the *Police and Superannuation Legislation (Amendment) Act 1990* (NSW). Together with other amendments to the legislation, the title of the *Police Offences Act 1901* was changed in 1999 to the *Police (Special Provisions) Act 1901*. No other regulatory changes to the role or powers of special constables in NSW was made until 2013.

2.1 The 2013 Legislative Changes

The 1974 LRC report recommended comprehensive new legislation be enacted and much of the (then) *Police Offences Act* be repealed. The proposed law covered the appointment, control, and discipline of special constables and identified four types of special constable (NSW LRC 1974, Appendix D). The first type would be those conducting “selected duties”, be employed and paid on a full-time basis and have all the powers of a constable of police. These regular constables would be limited to blue uniform security and brown uniform parking ministerial employees. The second type would be auxiliary constables on call, who would be utilised infrequently and for short durations. They would have no police powers unless called upon to serve. The third type would be external force constables, namely members of any police force from a jurisdiction other than NSW. The fourth type would be limited purposes constables and would only be appointed to meet special needs, such as animal welfare inspectors. There is no evidence that these recommendations were adopted.

Operational factors effected the use of special constable as parking infringement inspectors. By the late 1990s they were known as parking patrol officers (PPOs). There was debate over

which government agency should have responsibility for issuing parking infringement notices. An inquiry by the Audit Office of NSW (i.e. auditor general's department) proposed that local government councils assume the role of enforcement from the police service, and that PPOs become employees of various councils (Audit Office of NSW 1999, p. 111). By 2003, the NSW government had transferred to local councils primary responsibility for enforcement of laws that create parking offences and issuing of penalty notices (Audit Office of NSW 2003, pp. 2-9).

In 2010, there were three types of special constables in NSW: serving police officers from other jurisdictions; ministerial employees working for the NSW Police Force (NSWPF)¹ who mostly performed security or protective-type duties; and employees from other law enforcement or NSW government agencies, such as animal welfare and local council inspectors. About half of these, approximately 2,000, were police officers from other jurisdictions (Hufnagel 2011, p. 339). The *Police Legislation Amendment (Recognised Law Enforcement Officers) Act 2010* (NSW) removed the opportunity for appointment as special constables for external service police officers. Rather, they would be appointed as "recognised law enforcement officers" in NSW under the *Police Act 1990* (see sections 207B-207E). The police constable powers of arrest, search and seizure, and the power to request identification detailed by the *Law Enforcement (Powers and Responsibilities) Act 2002* (NSW) would apply to these interstate law enforcement officers. Consequently, by 2013, there were only two types of special constables in NSW: animal welfare and local council inspectors and those working directly for the NSWPF. Those working directly for the NSWPF included aviation support staff, police band members, and protective security staff. The majority of these were protective security staff working for the NSWPF Security Management Unit.

In June 2013, comprehensive new legislation was introduced to the NSW Parliament. Schedule 2 of the *Police Legislation Amendment (Special Constables) Act 2013* (NSW) repealed the *Police (Special Provisions) Act 1901*. While the appointment of all special constables ceased on the commencement of the 2013 Act, Schedule 1 contained transitional arrangements. The transitional arrangements for "existing security officers" were different to that of aviation staff and band members. While they also ceased to be ministerial employees and were designated as administrative employees under the *Police Act 1990* (NSW), they were taken to have been appointed by the Commissioner under section 82L (now section 81G) as special constables. Ministerial employees were "grace and favour" engagements by a NSW

¹ Between 1990 and 2006 the NSW police organisation was tilted "police service".

government minister under section 47 of the *Constitution Act 1902* (NSW). Employment under the *Police Act 1990* for special constables made them permanent or continuing employees and clarified the Commissioner was their “employer”. The 2013 Act made other significant changes to special constable security officers. It amended the *Police Act 1990* to clarify that the Commissioner may delegate to special constables any of the powers that a police officer of the rank of constable has, including those conferred under the *Law Enforcement (Powers and Responsibilities) Act 2002* (NSW). It amended the *Crimes Act 1900* (NSW) so that special constables are categorised as “law enforcement officers” (s. 60AA(p)). Under the 2002 Act (s. 99) a “police officer” has the power to arrest a person without a warrant. In some respects, these amendments clarified the powers that a NSWPF special constable security ostensibly already had and may use in the course of their duties.

The 1974 proposal of the LRC for comprehensive new legislation included the capacity of the NSW Commissioner to control and discipline special constables (NSW LRC 1974, paragraphs 92-93). This suggestion was contained in the 2013 Act. NSW special constables became subject to the same drug and alcohol testing, gunshot residue testing and integrity testing as “sworn” police officers. The minister’s second reading speech introducing the 2013 legislation explained this reform was “in recognition of the quasi police duties that special constables employed by police perform” and because “the majority of special constables carry firearms and interact with the public and in recognition of the safety risks involved in their work, it is important that they be subject to the same drug and alcohol testing requirements as their sworn colleagues” (Provest 2013). These quasi police duties of special constables are reflected by section 203 of the *Police Act*, as only a police officer or a special constable is permitted to lawfully wear or possess “a police uniform” (police band members are still able to wear the police uniform by authorisation of the Commissioner).

As non-executive administrative employees NSW special constables are remunerated and are members of the NSWPF (*Police Act 1990*, s.81G, s. 5), whose pay rates and other conditions of employment are set by an award of the NSW industrial tribunal, and classified as “Special Constable (Security)” in the award. In 2013 their role was described as providing “a protective security service to selected police and State government complexes to ensure a safe and secure working environment for personnel, property and information”. The NSW Police facilities include: Police Force headquarters; the Sydney Police Centre; the Mounted Police Unit stables; the Rescue and Bomb Disposal Unit complex; and the Police Dog Unit kennels. The NSW government sites (non-police premises) include: Government House (the Governor’s residence); Parliament House; the Sydney city ministerial office building; the Office of the

Director of Public Prosecutions; and the Independent Commission Against Corruption. Protective security was also provided to “other locations across the Sydney metropolitan area” (Issa 2013).

In 2013 NSW special constables were described as performing “quasi police duties” (Patterson 2013) and “protective security services” (Speakman 2013). Progressively since 2014, when they ceased to be designated ministerial employees, their role and work have undergone considerable changes. They are now law enforcement officers with the powers of arrest and detention of a police constable. Since 2014 the nature of their work, the duties performed, their skills, and responsibilities have expanded (and level of accountability). Furthermore, they are held to the same ethical standards as police officers. Since 2015 the NSW *Police Regulation* has allowed for special constables to be awarded the same valour decorations and merit commendations as police officers (NSWPF 2017, Appendix 12, p. 104). Special constables are issued with almost the same uniforms as police officers (the insignia, badges and epaulettes vary). Special constables are issued with the same arms and appointments as police officers and are expected to use them in the same manner as police officers. Excluding the paid reserve in Queensland, the other seven jurisdictions authorise special constables only for border duties; none are remunerated (see Appendix).

3. COMPARISONS WITH PROTECTIVE SERVICE OFFICERS

This section considers the consequences of the distinctiveness of NSW special constables for the understanding of plural policing in Australia. Put another way, notwithstanding their uniqueness as special constables, do they share characteristics with other government employed protective security personnel? While only NSW confers “special” attributes to special constables (excluding the Queensland police reserve), other Australian jurisdictions have paid employees who perform a role similar to that of NSW special constables. These staff are usually called “Protective Service Officers” (PSOs). The role of PSOs in Australia is largely unexamined by research studies (e.g. Rogers and Wintle 2021, p. 35; Sarre and Prenzler 2018b, p. 109 and p. 127). The Australian Federal Police (AFP) has PSOs in its Specialist Protective Command to undertake national protective security and provide a first response capability at sites of interest. These sites include Commonwealth government assets and critical infrastructure such as Parliament House and Department of Defence locations (Australian Federal Police 2026). The *Australian Federal Police Act 1979* (Cth) includes PSOs as “AFP

employees” but not as AFP “members”, confers to them powers of arrest, and authorises them to wear a uniform.

PSOs in the state of Victoria are part of the Victoria Police. The *Victoria Police Act 2013* (Vic) states the functions of PSOs is to “provide services for the protection” for persons holding particular official or public office, the general public in certain places, police premises and places of public importance, and functions conferred on officers under any other legislation (section 200O). The Act grants PSOs the duties and powers of a constable at common law (section 200P), which includes power of arrest without a warrant. PSOs in Victoria wear a uniform determined by the Chief Commissioner (section 62). The main role of PSOs in Victoria is that akin to transit or public transport police, as they are located at metropolitan train stations in Melbourne and four regional train stations across Victoria (Victoria Police 2026).²

The state of South Australia has PSOs, but their title is “police security officers”. The *Police Act 1998* (SA) describes their duties to be those “imposed by the Commissioner” (section 63M). While PSOs are not part of the South Australia Police (section 4), they can be allocated additional duties (section 63D). The *Police (Police Security Officers) Amendment Regulations 2022* granted PSOs the power to arrest without any warrant any person while in the course of performing additional duties. The PSO’s role in South Australia is to maintain the security of government facilities, public officials and the community through electronic surveillance, mobile security patrols of government facilities, and static guard services at government buildings (South Australia Police 2026).

The state of Queensland has PSOs titled “protective security officers”, who work within the Protective Services Group of the Queensland Police Service (QPS). The *Police Service Administration Act 1990* (Qld) regulates their appointment (section 5.19). They are appointed by the QPS Commissioner and are “staff members” of the QPS and protect important government infrastructure. Queensland PSOs do not have powers of arrest (*Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000* (Qld)). The Northern Territory, Tasmania and Western Australia do not have PSOs, for these jurisdictions maintain only generic auxiliaries.

3.1. Oath or Affirmation and Police Testing Regime

² The *Justice Legislation Amendment (Police and Other Matters) Act 2025* amended the *Victoria Police Act 2013* to add responsibilities to PSOs functions to include performing hospital, transporting, and crime scene guarding duties. Prior to the 2025 amendments PSO functions were described in section 37 and their powers were detailed in section 52 of the *Victoria Police Act 2013*.

Section 13 of the *Police Act 1990* (NSW) requires that before a person exercise any of the functions of a police officer, they must take the oath or make the affirmation of office in accordance with the regulations. The current form of the oath or affirmation required to be taken by special constables and police officers is found in regulation 7 of the *Police Regulation 2015* (NSW). This oath or affirmation requires causing the “peace to be kept and preserved” and preventing “offences against that peace”. Only PSOs in Victoria take a similar oath or affirmation (*Victoria Police Act 2013*, Schedule 2). In contrast, the oath or affirmation taken by police officers in the AFP, Queensland and South Australia includes an obligation to keep the peace and prevent offences (AFP officers only while performing duty in the Australian Capital Territory). The NSW police officer “integrity testing program” also applies to special constables. PSOs in the AFP, Queensland, South Australia, and Victoria are also subject to the same alcohol and drug testing regime as their counterpart police officers.

3.2 Powers, Appearance, Organisation, and Mandate Framework

Special constables in NSW can be distinguished from PSOs in other Australian jurisdictions, but they also have some similar features. Applying the O’Neill, de Maillard and van Steden (2023) framework (powers, appearance, organisation, and mandate) illustrates these similarities and differences.

The powers of NSW special constables are somewhat similar to the PSOs in the AFP, South Australia and Victoria but dissimilar to Queensland PSOs. Only Queensland PSOs do not have the power of arrest, although this is limited for South Australian PSOs to while performing additional duties.

The appearance of NSW special constables has a close resemblance to NSW police officers, as their uniform is similar with the main difference being the badge and shoulder patch or epaulette. The uniform of the PSOs in the AFP is likewise similar to AFP police officers. The PSO uniforms in South Australia and Victoria are notably different to that of police officers. In 2023 new uniforms were issued to Queensland PSOs to be visually aligned with the uniforms of QPS officers. Yet as with PSOs in South Australia and Victoria, the Queensland PSO uniforms still have a distinct difference from police uniforms.

The firearms and appointments (personal equipment) issued to NSW special constables are largely the same as NSW police. PSOs in the AFP, South Australia and Victoria are also issued with the same (or similar) firearms and appointments as their police counterparts. NSW special constables (Australian Broadcasting Corporation 2015) and Victorian PSOs (Australian

Broadcasting Corporation 2024) have discharged firearms in the course of their duties. Queensland PSOs are not issued with firearms.

Turning to the internal organisational arrangements, both NSW special constables and the PSOs are formally integrated with their respective police force or service. NSW special constables are situated in the Security Management Group of the Counter Terrorism and Special Tactics Command. PSOs in the AFP are situated in the Specialist Protective Command. South Australian PSOs are attached to Police Security Services Branch. Victorian PSOs are situated in either the Protective Services Unit or Transit Safety Division of the Transit and Public Safety Command. And Queensland PSOs are situated in the Protective Services Group under the Security, Counter-Terrorism, and Forensic Services Command.

Of the four features of the O'Neill, de Maillard and van Steden (2023) framework, mandate is the more opaque. In one sense the mandate of NSW special constables and the PSOs are alike; namely, to provide a protective security service for the respective government. This can be inferred by their titles: special constable (security), protective service officer, protective security officer, and police security officer. This is their primary mandate. However, as all expect Queensland PSOs have the power to make arrests, their mandate also includes maintaining public order. There is also a limited community-oriented mandate, most prominently for Victorian PSOs who perform a role comparable to transit officers in Western Australia (*Public Transport Authority Act 2023 (WA)*). Alternately, the mandate could be ascertained from their oath or affirmation. As only NSW special constables and Victorian PSOs have an obligation to keep the peace and prevent offences, their mandate includes law enforcement. Nevertheless, it is clear the mandate of NSW special constables and the PSOs is not the same as police officers for they do not perform crime control policing or investigative functions.

In summary, the powers, appearance, organisation, and mandate of NSW special constables are not the same as other jurisdiction PSOs. The comparison of NSW special constables with PSOs, and the variability in powers, appearance, and mandate among PSOs, illustrates how dissimilar NSW special constables are.

4. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Loader and Walker (2007, p.20) contended policing and security studies are often atheoretical with a focus on policy or practice. Applying the powers, appearance, organisation,

and mandate framework of O'Neill, de Maillard and van Steden (2023) to the roles of NSW special constables and PSOs in other Australian jurisdictions helps overcome the concern of Loader and Walker (2007). Firstly, the end of widespread appointment of special constables in NSW, culminating with the 2013 legislation, could be interpreted as a contraction of plural policing by government. Furthermore, the reasons why the states and territories other than NSW have largely ended the appointment of non-police personnel as special constables could likewise suggest a contraction of plural policing by government. However, these outcomes could merely reflect the jurisdiction's unique circumstances (e.g. Law Reform Commission of Western Australia 1975).

Secondly, apart from common drug and alcohol testing regimes, no clear trend or pattern in plural policing by government could be identified. The advent of PSOs in Queensland, South Australia and Victoria could suggest an expansion of plural policing by government. Yet the lack of PSOs in the three other jurisdictions (Northern Territory, Tasmania and Western Australia) could imply the opposite. Moreover, the "drivers" for the creation of plural policing (O'Neill, de Maillard and van Steden 2023, p. 1695) in Queensland, South Australia and Victoria are unconnected. Perhaps this is why NSW has retained the special constable designation and not developed a wider PSO function.

Thirdly, Puck and White (2024) examined the appearance of private security personnel. They argue the degree of trust in the public police held by the general community influences the extent the appearance – particularly uniforms – will resemble regular public police. Mimicking the appearance of public police can help "secure legitimacy by association" (Puck and White 2024, p. 36). From one perspective, this concept of borrowing the cultural and symbolic capital of regular police may partly explain the appearance of PSOs in Australia. From other perspectives, the explanation is likely to be more nuanced. For instance, it could be related to ergonomic issues such as the use of load bearing vests (Filtness, Mitsopoulos-Rubens and Rudin-Brown 2014). Moreover, there are also challenging political and employment relations factors involved, including a perception that similar uniforms might be a prelude to replacing police officers with PSOs as a "cost-cutting exercise" (Talyor 2016).

What are core and non-core activities of police officers is uncertain. Rogers and Wintle (2021, p. 21) list a range of non-core activities that can be performed by non-police personnel – mainly community engagement and basic administrative tasks – which allows police officers to focus on their core work of "tackling crime problems" (p.23). Clarifying the core functions and tasks of police is important to identifying the mandate of PSOs. For example, the Queensland Audit Office (2023, p. 14) recommended the QPS should optimise the deployment

of police officers and other QPS staff, including PSOs, by clarifying the activities that do not require police powers.

This exploration of the history and development of the role of special constables in NSW highlights some of the dimensions of plural policing in Australia. Progressively during the late twentieth century, special constables evolved from an unpaid “on call” police reserve, or paid enforcement inspectors of government departments and other public agencies (local councils, animal welfare, and transport authorities) to only employees of the NSW police force. Special constables in NSW are the sole remaining type of special constable who are employed (and not merely appointed) and paid by the same police force (excluding the recent advent of a police reserve in Queensland). All other special constables in Australia are existing sworn police officers of another state or territory police service or the AFP who are appointed only if performing border location or interchange duties (see Appendix). Their protective security mandate is a non-core police function which can be a cost-effective allocation of resources.

Unlike the England and Wales “Special Constabulary”, NSW special constables undergo training some of which is the same as police officers (for example, use of firearms). They make the same oath or affirmation as police, are subject to the same integrity testing program as police and have an appearance that resembles NSW police officers. Hence, there is some degree of mimicry of the characteristics of police in terms of the powers, appearance, and organisation, but importantly not with their mandate. However, exploring NSW special constables does not necessarily indicate the trajectory of plural policing by government in Australia, for the historical context of the role partly explains why they are “special”.

As this paper relies on analysis of publicly available material, the secondary research has limitations. The *post-hoc* nature of the study and the focus on the text of legislation (Acts and Regulations) maybe not be the most appropriate way to conduct a comparative investigation of non-police auxiliary state entities across jurisdictions in Australia.

To conclude, given that research into plural policing by government is rare, this paper has revealed opportunities for future research. For instance, why has the appointment of non-police personnel as special constables in Australia ceased? What were the circumstances that resulted in three states establishing PSOs and why do they have divergent characteristics? Further exploration of the history, creation, and deployment of PSOs (and transit officers) would widen our understanding of the trajectory of plural policing by government in Australia.

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Appendix

*Table 1: Australian jurisdictions special constable details**

| <i>State / Territory</i> | <i>Legislation</i> | <i>Paid</i> | <i>Role / duties</i> | <i>Comments</i> |
|------------------------------|---|---|---|---|
| Australian Capital Territory | Australian Federal Police Act 1979 (Cth) Sections 9, 10 and 40E | No – only if approved by AFP Commissioner | Appointment as “special member” of the AFP | AFP member can be a special constable of the police force of a State or Territory |
| Northern Territory | Police Administration Act 1978 (NT) Sections 29-34F | No – only if specified by instrument of appointment | As the Commissioner considers appropriate (s. 30) | Other jurisdiction police force member (s. 29) |
| Queensland | Police Service Administration Act 1990 (Qld) Section 5.16 2023 amendments to sections 5.16 (and new sections 5.16A, 5.16B, & 5.16C) | No – only if specified by instrument of appointment Yes – if “State officer” police reservist No – if “associate” | As the Commissioner considers appropriate Operational policing Other jurisdiction law enforcement officer | Not an employee of the Queensland government Must have recent QLD police experience Not a QPS or QLD government employee (s. 11.43) |
| South Australia | Police Act 1998 (SA) Sections 59-63 | No – only if approved by Commissioner | Appointment can be limited to a specific location and role | Different to “community constable” (s. 30) |
| Tasmania | Police Service Act 2003 (Tas) Section 13 | No – only if specified by instrument of appointment | As the Commissioner considers appropriate | Part of the Police Service (s. 4(h)) |
| Victoria | Victoria Police Act 2013 (Vic) Section 191 | No | A special constable must be a person who is an officer or member of the police force of another jurisdiction | Can be appointed by reference to a work location, operational unit, work group or other designation (s. 198) |
| Western Australia | Police Act 1892 (WA) Section 35 | No – unless approved by the Minister | Role, functions, location and term can be limited by instrument of appointment | A special constable is not a member of the Police Force (s. 37(1)) |

* not including NSW

End Matter

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Michael Lyons (PhD) works in the School of Business of Western Sydney University, Australia. His research interests include the employment relations of government sector workforces.

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