



TO: All Users

FROM: Matthew Payne

DATE: 04 February 2026

SUBJECT: Productivity Commission *2026 Report on Government Services* –
WA Police Force trends

Last night the Productivity Commission released Volume C of its *2026 Report on Government Services* (ROGS). Volume C provides annual data for police, courts, and corrective services across the states and territories.

<https://www.pc.gov.au/ongoing/report-on-government-services/justice/>

Some key findings about the WA Police Force (“WA Police”) include:

- Having the nation’s lowest proportion of female sworn officers.
- Some **2.7 per cent** of WA Police employees in 2024-25 identified themselves as Aboriginal and Torres Islander (ATSI).
- In 2024-25 the proportion of WA Police sworn officers in an operational role was the lowest in the nation.
- The percentage of WA Police sworn officers in an operational role remains below pre-COVID-19 pandemic levels.
- WA’s rate of operational sworn FTEs per 100,000 population has declined **7.3 per cent** since it last peaked in 2016-17.
- Lower rates of operational sworn FTEs also tend to result in WA Police sworn officers spending less time on frontline duties.
- Has the nation’s oldest police force with **32.9 per cent** of staff aged 50 years and older.
- Having an annual real expenditure increase over the last 5 years of just **0.5 per cent**.
- Recording some of the nation’s highest satisfaction results for police.
- While WA Police officers are generally perceived as professional, far fewer people consider them fair and honest.
- The rate of public complaints against WA Police officers has more than halved since 2020-21.



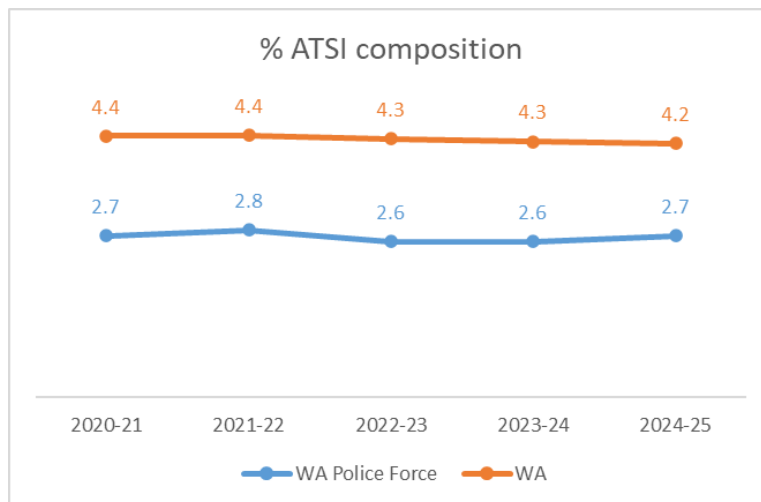
WA sworn officers the least gender diverse

ROGS measures police workforces by full-time equivalent (FTE) rather than headcount. In a first, ROGS provided data about the gender of operational (see page 3 for definition) sworn officers. The proportion of female sworn FTEs has increased across most jurisdictions since 2020-21. But WA Police easily had the lowest proportion of all jurisdictions over the period¹.

Operational Sworn FTE – % Female

Police	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
NSW	28.1	26.9	27.5	27.5	27.3
Victoria	28.0	28.3	28.5	28.7	28.8
Queensland	27.3	27.4	27.2	27.3	27.0
WA	22.2	22.3	22.5	22.9	23.2
SA	31.1	31.4	32.2	33.0	32.4
Tasmania	32.7	33.8	34.4	35.2	35.4
ACT	n.a.	28.7	30.6	30.6	31.2
NT	n.a.	24.3	24.5	25.0	25.7
Australia	26.7	27.3	27.7	27.9	27.8

In 2024-25, some **2.7 per cent** of the WA Police employees (sworn and unsworn) identified themselves as ATSI. This is steady from last year and is still below that of the general population².



¹ Productivity Commission. 2026 Report on Government Services: Police services – attachment 6A.2

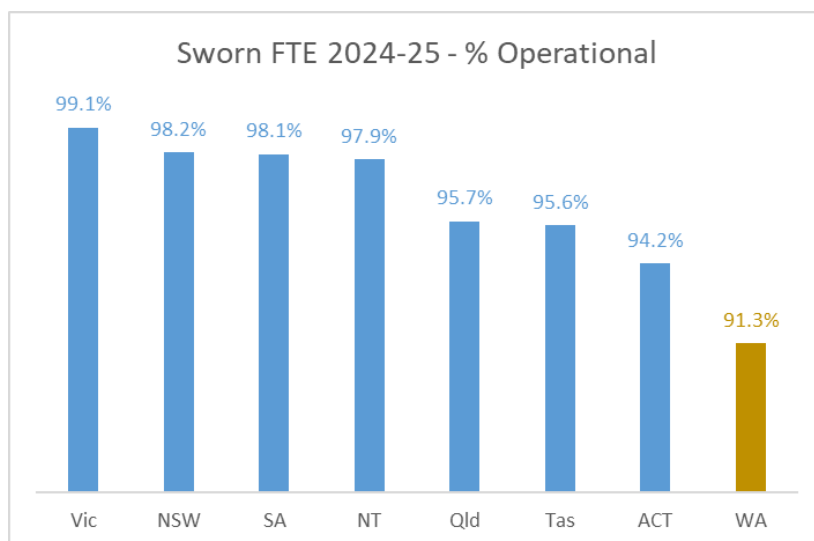
² Ibid



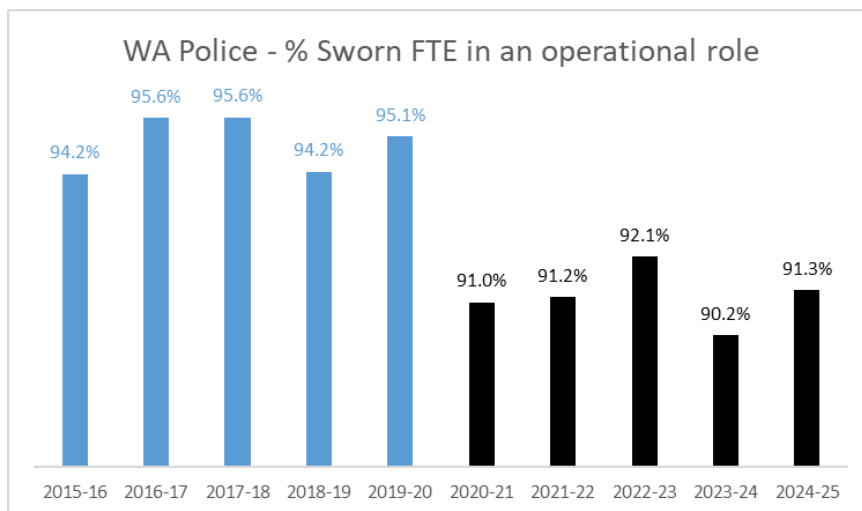
Lowest proportion of operational sworn of any jurisdiction

Sworn and unsworn FTE are classified as either 'Operational' or 'Non-operational'. ROG defines 'Operational' as any police officer whose primary duty is the delivery of police or police-related services to an external client (where an external client predominately refers to members of the public but may also include law enforcement outputs delivered to other government departments).

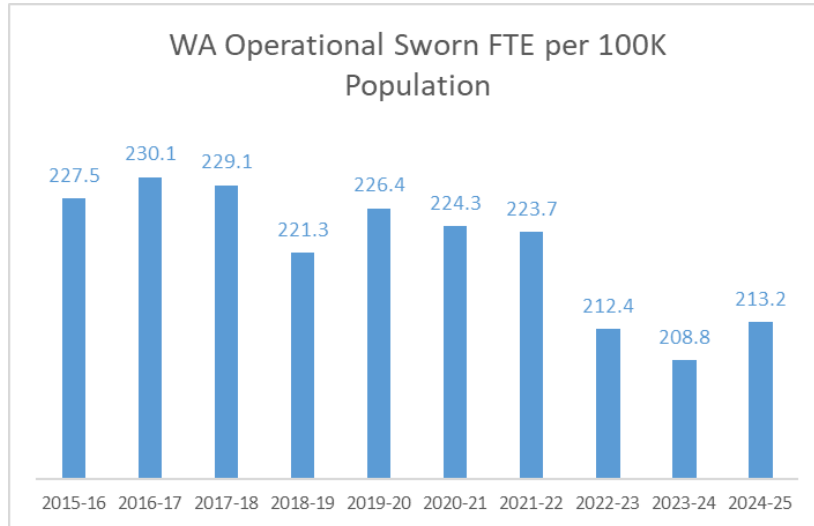
WA Police had a total of 7,105 sworn officer FTEs in 2024-25. Of these, **91.3 per cent** were in an operational role. This was the lowest proportion of all the states and territories by a significant margin.



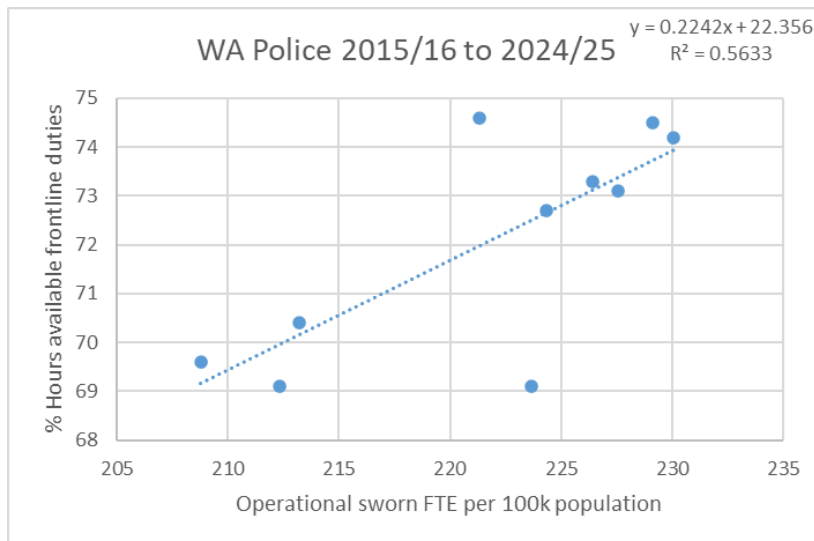
WA's percentage was slightly higher than 12 months ago. But its percentage of operational sworn has still not returned to the levels that existed prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.



What makes the above graph concerning is that WA’s rate of operational sworn FTEs to population has generally been declining since it last peaked in 2016-17.



Simple regression analysis further reveals a **56.3 per cent** positive correlation between the above rate and the level of hours available for frontline duties³.

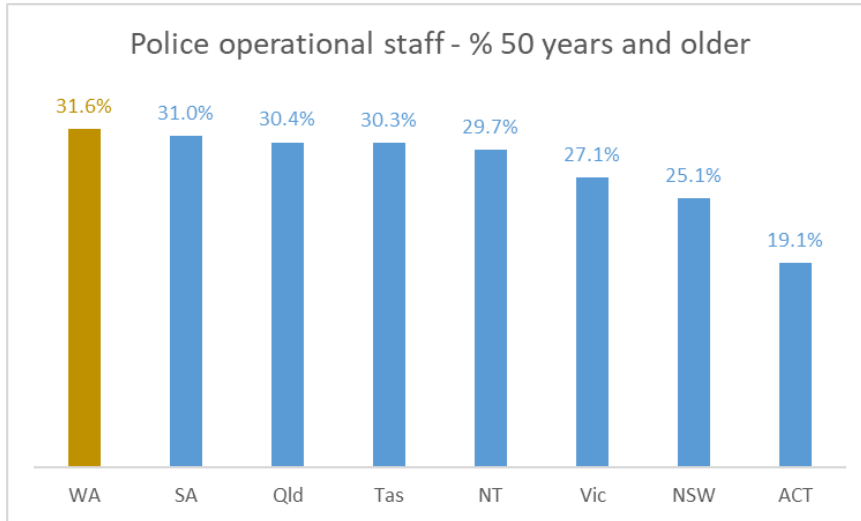


Lower rates of operational sworn FTEs do not just mean fewer officers working on the frontline. The above graph also suggests that lower rates tend to result in officers spending less time on frontline duties.

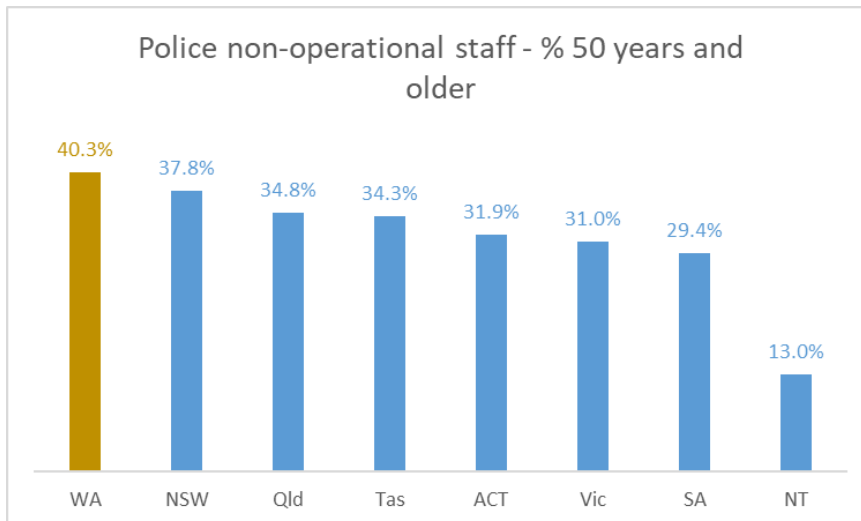
³ Taken from WA Police Annual Reports

Oldest police force in the nation

The Productivity Commission has commenced recording the age of police agency staff for each of the states and territories. Unfortunately, the data is not broken down by sworn and civilian status. But today’s figures reveal that **31.6 per cent** of WA Police operational staff in 2024-25⁴ were aged 50 years and older. This was the highest proportion of any jurisdiction.



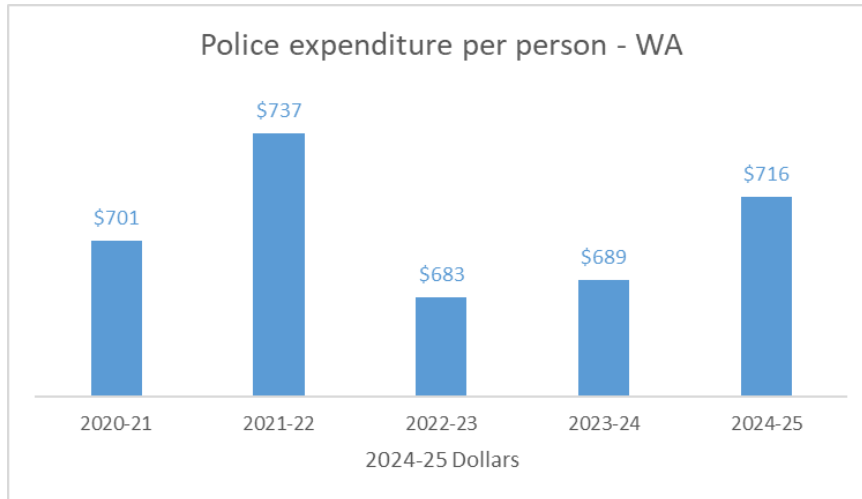
WA also had the highest proportion of non-operational staff aged 50 years and older.



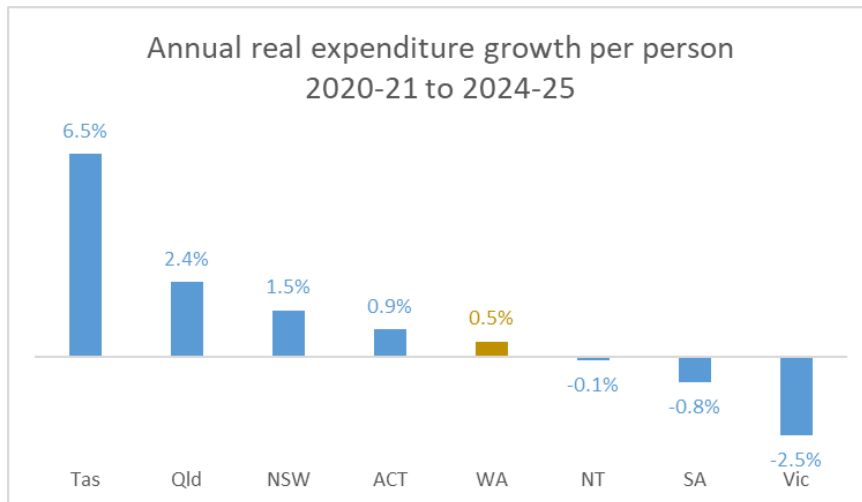
⁴ Sworn FTE accounted for 78 per cent of 8,361 WA Police operational staff FTE in 2024-25

Little growth in real expenditure on WA Police over last 5 years

ROGS measures government expenditure on police services in real terms. Real expenditure per person on police in WA increased **4 per cent** compared to 12 months ago⁵. The high amount recorded in 2021-22 was due to expenditure on COVID-19 related operations.



WA’s growth in annual expenditure per person on police since 2020-21 has also been only slightly higher than the national average of **0.4 per cent**.



⁵ PC 6A.1



WA satisfaction ratings among nation’s highest

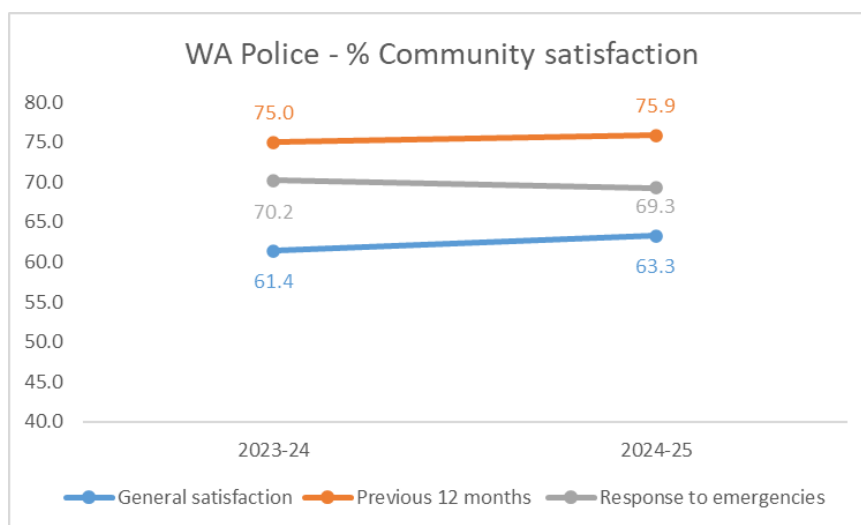
ROGS also surveys residents in each state and territory about the service provided by their respective police forces. This includes satisfaction with the police service and their opinions about levels of police integrity. The 2024-25 survey included responses from 2,023 WA residents.

In terms of satisfaction, participants are asked if they are generally satisfied with the police service as well as how police respond to emergencies and disasters. ROGS also breaks down general satisfaction results to include respondents who have sought police assistance over the previous 12 months⁶.

Satisfaction – % Total agree 2024-25

Statement	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT
General satisfaction	58.2	52.3	58.0	63.3	67.6	71.7	64.6	55.8
Previous 12 months	69.9	68.7	69.2	75.9	73.3	73.6	73.9	71.0
Response to emergencies	70.3	62.1	67.8	69.3	72.5	78.1	73.5	54.3

WA Police scored the highest satisfaction rating among respondents who had contact with police over the previous 12 months. It was also among the top half of jurisdictions for general satisfaction. WA’s ratings were generally stable compared to 12 months ago.



⁶ Ibid: 6A.7



WA Police perceived as professional – but not necessarily fair and honest

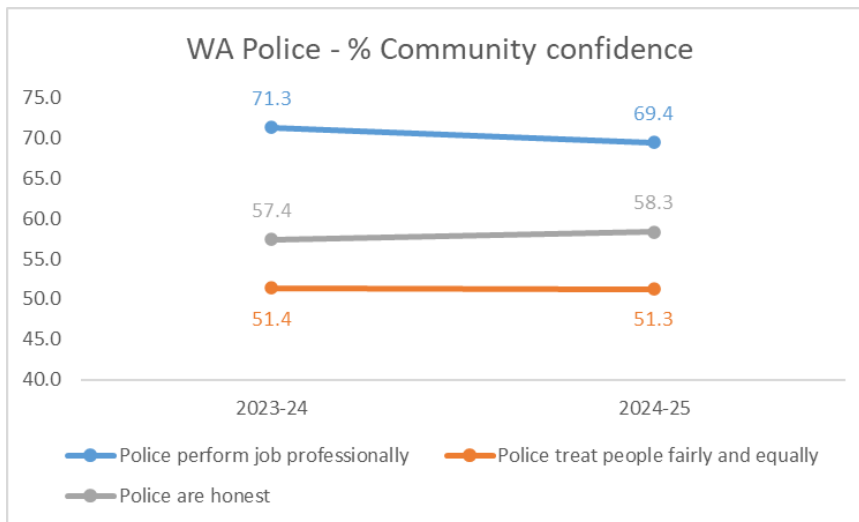
Participants are asked if they agree about three statements relating to the integrity of their police force⁷. Integrity is measured in terms of professionalism, fairness, and honesty.

Integrity – % Total agree 2024-25

Statement	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT
“Police perform their job professionally.”	64.7	64.4	68.3	69.4	75.9	76.6	77.5	70.3
“Police treat people fairly and equally.”	45.8	45.9	51.4	51.3	58.2	66.8	59.3	57.1
“Police are honest.”	50.5	52.1	56.1	58.3	62.4	64.3	66.4	62.7

WA was in the bottom half of jurisdictions for ratings about police professionalism, fairness, and honesty. It is notable that fairness and honesty ratings are also much lower than for professionalism across all jurisdictions.

WA Police’s professionalism rating was slightly lower compared to 12 months ago while its fairness and honesty ratings were relatively stable.

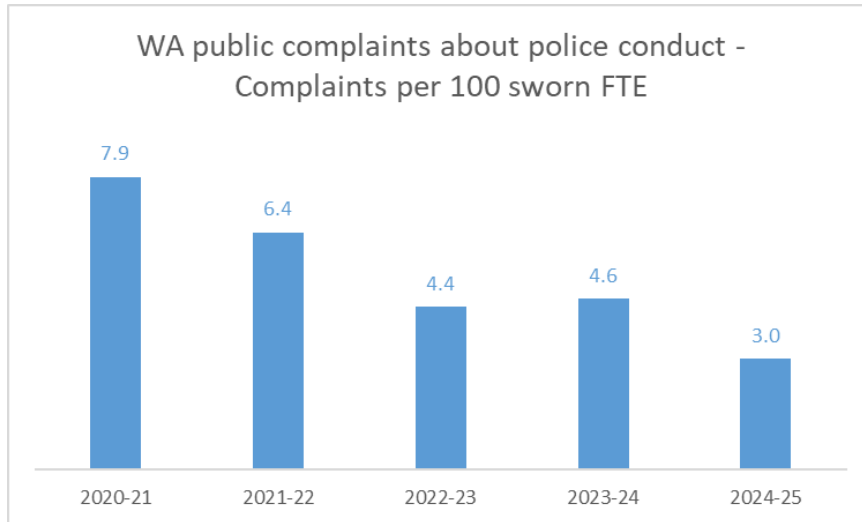


⁷ Ibid: 6A.9



Rate of public complaints 62 per lower than 5 years ago

In a positive development, the rate of public complaints against WA Police sworn officers is now less than half what it was in 2020-21. It should be noted that body worn cameras started being rolled out among WA Police officers in 2018-19.



Further information

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