

## BRIEFING NOTE

### Source Development Unit

#### Association advice

The Source Development Unit (SDU) will cease function and the members within it will be deployed via the Force Redeployment Group. This will take effect as of 31 August 2012.

The decision is based upon the findings of the Comrie Review into the SDU handling of high risk human sources. The Review indicates that the Force needs to reassess the handling of covert human intelligence sources, in particular “high risk” human sources.

The SDU was established to handle high risk human sources in 2006. The unit was developed after a pilot project commissioned in 2003. The SDU significantly contributed to the policy and procedures which the Comrie Review found it had failed to professionally adhere to. The SDU are responsible for training of Victoria Police members in the handling of high risk human sources. Training force wide will be reviewed and remodelled as result of the recommendations of the Comrie Review.

The actions of the SDU have placed themselves and the Force in jeopardy of criticism pertaining to the handling of high risk informers;

- Including inappropriate influence of court matters to the detriment of accused persons,
- utilising of confidential information not lawfully available to investigators,
- Selectively sharing information to the detriment of major criminal investigations in favour of other investigations,
- leaving the Force and themselves open to criticism and allegation of impropriety potentially including perverting the course of justice

#### Resultant effect upon SDU members

SDU employees will become *unattached and surplus* as per clause 16 of the Victoria Police Enterprise Agreement 2011. Initially it is proposed that the members will be temporarily deployed within work places of their choice where possible.

SDU personnel will continue to receive their salary and allowances including the disruption allowance as per clause 22.3(c) of the agreement.

Clause 22.3 (e) provides for salary and allowance maintenance for a maximum period of 12 months from the date of placement. Placement of such an employee will consider both organisational requirements and the employees’ preferences.

### **Effect upon the maintenance of high risk human sources in aid of investigators**

The high risk human sources that are currently being managed by the SDU can be managed by other experienced and trained personnel. There are currently only a small number of sources in this category. Appropriately qualified ICSD, Crime Department and Regional personnel will manage allocated human sources that are relevant to their current investigative objectives.

The process of human source management is dynamic and often for various reasons sources are deregistered at sudden notice due to matters such as non-compliance with direction, commission of criminal offences, operational safety or ethical concerns.

No investigation will suffer any detriment as result of the closure and no source relationship will be terminated because of the closure. Source management for investigations across the Force will continue as required.

### **Time frame**

A review into the human source management process force-wide will be commissioned to commence in September 2012. Assistant Commissioner Jeff Pope of ICSD will oversee an analysis into the existing policy and procedures including the management of high risk human sources.

### **Welfare**

Police Welfare and the Force Psychology unit will be notified on the day the members are advised. Force Psychology has an existing relationship with the SDU in the provision of ongoing health and wellbeing. SDU members will have access to their office for remainder of the week. Further consultation will be available with SDU management as to their ongoing welfare and temporary placements.

### **Media**

Any media publicity around the Force use of covert human intelligence sources is undesirable. The Force Media Director should be notified of the pending closure of the SDU on the day of closure. A short prepared statement acknowledging the closure of the unit and the pending review of human source management should be supplied to the Media Director with the understanding that it would only be released upon a specific inquiry. I have emailed you a draft of that statement. Any public exposure is counter productive to ongoing investigations and may impact upon current court proceedings. Other than Police Association criticism (*if at all*) there may be some disgruntled members or their family that speak to journalists. The covert nature of the business provides a genuine reason not to engage with the media.

Paul Sheridan.

Detective Superintendent – Covert Services Division. 21 August 2012