With a focus on aligning service delivery to a more contemporary and flexible framework, the WA Police has initiated the implementation of this Scientific Investigation Strategy. Based on the recommendations of a number of comprehensive reviews, this strategy provides a solid foundation for ongoing transition to a true model of scientific investigation, where quality is a focal point of service delivery.

This Scientific Investigation Strategy crystallises the changes that will occur as part of our new model, including the increased collaboration and operational/investigative integration between frontline police officers, District Forensic Investigation Officers, District Detectives, the Forensic Division and State Intelligence Division. Service delivery will occur on a two-tiered basis, with metropolitan and regional frontline officers and District Forensic Investigators having primary responsibility for volume crime matters, whilst Forensic Division focuses its response on serious crime and providing specialist discipline specific services.

The new model has the Forensic Division embracing a more intelligence-driven approach to the identification, recovery and analysis of forensic evidence, along with a more scientific and quality robust approach to the management of forensic investigations and crime scenes. This has resulted in the implementation of a number of initiatives that provide significant opportunities for the agency to solve and reduce the impact of crime, particularly in the area of volume crime.

The implementation of these initiatives, including the establishment of the Volume Crime Desk and expansion of the NAFIS Team network has resulted in demonstrated success, with the agency consistently apprehending offenders in reduced timeframes as a result of the swift recovery and analysis of forensic evidence. There are numerous contemporary examples of offenders being identified through fingerprints for volume crime offences in less than 24 hours of the commission of the offence and offenders being identified through the DNA A+ initiative within 3 days of the offence; which reduces the impact of accumulated offending by prolific offenders.

Keeping abreast of emerging forensic technologies and techniques, and equipping our forensic officers with the skills and knowledge to undertake their role in accordance with contemporary requirements, along with building forensic capacity and capability for the future, is extremely important. The WA Police currently enjoy the position of having the most advanced and comprehensive forensic education and training regime in Australasia. We will continue to invest in this area to ensure we maintain this position and our forensic people are equipped to undertake their role to the highest degree.

Quality forensic services provide enormous value to the investigation process and justice system outcomes. This document identifies how we will optimise our effort in the delivery of forensic services to the community of Western Australia.

Karl O’Callaghan APM
Commissioner of Police
The WA Police Scientific Investigation Strategy 2009-2010 is based on three streams of forensic activity and eight priority areas.

**EVIDENCE RECOVERY AND INVESTIGATION**
- Frontline Forensic Awareness
- First Response
- Frontline and Forensic Collaboration

**ANALYSIS**
- Forensic Division Internal Analytical Processes
- Innovation
- Science Coordination and Partnerships

**INTELLIGENCE**
- Integrating Forensic Evidence with Crime Intelligence
- Result Management

The following three principles will underpin the achievement of the above themes and priorities:

**Quality Assurance**
Quality service delivery is a key factor upon which future forensic activity should be based. To a large extent, alignment with National Association of Testing Authorities (NATA) accreditation standards will ensure a rigorous process of governance that enables scientific integrity and the provision of quality services and products.

**Standardisation**
A standard forensic response that includes processes, systems and competencies, that are in accordance with established agency and national standards and protocols.

**Training and Education**
Equipping officers with a greater degree of training and education is one of many important factors in delivering a professional and standardised forensic model. Alignment with formalised training requirements will result in higher levels of qualification along with the acquisition of the necessary competencies to undertake the functions of the forensic role within districts.

This Strategy has been formulated within the context of the WA Police Strategic Plan and seeks to provide direction for the implementation of recent internal and external reviews of forensic services.

This Strategy complements the WA Police Volume Crime Strategy and its successful implementation will be assessed through the development of a suite of key performance indicators that will be monitored on a regular basis. Nothing in this Strategy should inhibit or encumber the capacity of the metropolitan and regional police districts to provide timely response and quality service at volume crime incidents.
The role of the District Forensic Investigation Officer is to provide districts with an initial investigative response to crime scenes, in accordance with the Response, Examination, Collection, Analysis and Resolution (RECAR) model. In relation to Regional WA, the forensic response is inclusive of both volume and major crime, along with non-crime related incidents.

The Forensic Division will provide statewide coordination of officers that undertake frontline forensic activity including:

- Recruitment
- Training and development
- Skill-set management
- Deployment
- Standardisation
- Quality control
- Result management

Subject to a primary focus on the core responsibilities of District Forensic Investigation Officers, districts retain the ability to tactically deploy their frontline forensic officers in their day to day activities.

### Objectives

- Increase the detection and apprehension of offenders through improved coordination of WA Police forensic activities.
- Increase WA Police forensic capabilities and integrity of governance and practices.
- To support the criminal investigation and judicial process through the detection, collection and use of quality forensic evidence.
- Increase in the successful prosecution of offenders through the use of quality and robust forensic evidence.
Scientific Investigation Framework

Our Priorities

Evidence Recovery and Investigation

FRONLINE FORENSIC AWARENESS
Frontline forensic awareness is the understanding and capacity to correctly identify, preserve and collect forensic evidence and the ability to assess the level of involvement required by forensically trained specialists.

AIM: Provide a demonstrated level of forensic awareness that enables all members to undertake basic forensic tasks.

FIRST RESPONSE
First Response forms the basis for a coordinated and integrated approach to the identification, preservation and collection of the best quality evidence for investigation and analysis.

AIM: Implement a coordinated, competent response to crime scenes that results in effective crime investigation and recovery of evidence.

Analysis

FORENSIC DIVISION INTERNAL ANALYTICAL PROCESSES
Build the Forensic Division’s capacity to maximise results through the analysis of quality forensic evidence.

AIM: Provide quality and timely analysis of evidence that supports the criminal investigation process.

INNOVATION
Maintain a national position as a progressive and innovative law enforcement agency with a focus on delivering scientifically sound investigative practices and services.

AIM: Identify and utilise technology and practices to improve timeliness and quality in the provision of forensic services.
How to Achieve this Strategy

- Collect and analyse quality and robust forensic evidence, identifying links between crime scenes to maximise opportunities in reducing crime and increasing clearance rates.
- Integrate forensic evidence with crime information and intelligence to link offences and offenders and raise forensic practitioner awareness of the ways forensic evidence contributes to intelligence-driven policing.
- Establish protocols and clear delineation of lines of responsibility.
- Improve the capabilities of both frontline and specialists officers in the detection and use of quality evidence for the apprehension and prosecution of offenders.
- Develop forensic quality assurance that creates accountability and traceability for all forensic activities.
- Support Investigation and Prosecution through open and accountable analytical practices.
- Ensure a standard forensic response that includes processes, systems and competencies that are in accordance with established agency, discipline specific and national standards and protocols.
- Involvement of forensic practitioners in tasking and coordination processes to enable the deployment, prioritisation and focus of forensic resources in accordance with agency and regional operational priorities.
- Apply scientific coordination and oversight to all major forensic investigative work.
- Influence external forensic service providers understanding of the investigative and judicial process and help align their activities and procedures to best support those processes.
- Interact with DPP and Police Prosecutors and raise their awareness, contextual understanding and use of forensic evidence.
- Review and learn from the outcomes of the judicial process and judicial decisions relating to the application and reliability of forensic evidence.
- Instigate and facilitate research and development into new practices and technologies to ensure forensic services are in line with contemporary practices.
- Conduct quality assurance on analysis results received from external and internal sources to aid investigative processes, intelligence processes and governance.
- Involvement of forensic practitioners in tasking and coordination processes to enable the deployment, prioritisation and focus of forensic resources in accordance with agency and regional operational priorities.
- Apply scientific coordination and oversight to all major forensic investigative work.
- Influence external forensic service providers understanding of the investigative and judicial process and help align their activities and procedures to best support those processes.
- Interact with DPP and Police Prosecutors and raise their awareness, contextual understanding and use of forensic evidence.
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- Instigate and facilitate research and development into new practices and technologies to ensure forensic services are in line with contemporary practices.
- Conduct quality assurance on analysis results received from external and internal sources to aid investigative processes, intelligence processes and governance.

INTEGRATING FORENSIC EVIDENCE WITH CRIME INTELLIGENCE

Linking forensic evidence with intelligence-driven policing provides increased opportunities to improve the quality of investigations from first attendance to prosecution.

AIM: Utilise the forensic investigation process of evidence recovery and analysis to support intelligence-driven policing through the Tasking and Coordination Group and district intelligence cells.

RESULT MANAGEMENT

Managing performance data relating to forensic services through: case management; interrogating forensic intelligence; and value adding to the investigative process.

AIM: Initiate systems and procedures that support quality and result management as well as strengthen WA Police relationships and stakeholder liaison.

FRONTLINE AND FORENSIC COLLABORATION

Forensics plays a key role in the resolution of volume crime and major crime offences. A coordinated effort between frontline and forensic investigations is required to achieve the objectives of this Strategy.

AIM: Undertake a collaborative approach to evidence recovery from frontline and forensic specialists to achieve the best possible results from the forensic investigation process.

SCIENCE COORDINATION AND PARTNERSHIPS

Coordinating, partnering with and influencing key external analytical providers - such as investigative partners; forensic science providers and judicial bodies involved in investigative processes.

AIM: Enable production of timely and quality results that are aligned to WA Police investigative strategies.
Key Focus for Forensic Investigation

FRONTLINE OFFICERS
- First Response.
- Evaluating the situation and assess requirements
  - Volume crime offences: District Forensic Investigators
  - Major crime offences: Forensic Division.
- Detecting and preserving quality Forensic evidence
  - For example fingerprints, DNA or shoeprints
  - Avoid contaminating evidence.
- Advising victims on prevention strategies.
- Maintaining an awareness of forensic functionality (procedures, policy and activities).
- Working in collaboration with District Forensic Investigators to deal with volume crime offences.

DISTRICT FORENSIC INVESTIGATORS
- Attending to volume crime incidents.
- Conducting preliminary investigation at a local level.
- Advising victims on prevention strategies.
- Undertaking relevant forensic investigation in accordance with current standards.
- Maintaining a level of competency, proficiency and qualification in accordance with national and organisational standards.
- Supporting district and divisional operations identified through local and state Tasking and Coordination Groups, tactical meetings and District Status Reports.
- Collaborating with district detectives.

FORENSIC DIVISION
- Coordinating and deploying specialist resources statewide, including:
  - Taking the forensic lead on major crime
  - Establishing service level agreements in consultation with districts that outline specific key performance requirements.
- Implementing and maintaining a training regime in line with or above national standards.
- Overseeing quality assurance across all forensic activity, results management, research, training, education and district liaison.
- Developing initiatives to enhance recruitment and retention strategies.
- Providing internal/external analytical expertise.
- Aligning forensic activity with agency priorities.
- Developing Forensic Intelligence.

The Value Of Getting It Right At First Response

1. Crime Reported/Detected
2. Evidence at crime scene is identified and preserved by the first frontline officers on the scene
3. An uncontaminated crime scene can enable quality, appropriate evidence to be recovered and sent to the Forensic Division for analysis
4. Quality, appropriate evidence can be analysed with quick turn around times
5. Forensic Evidence can be linked with criminal intelligence and can play a key role in quickly identifying and apprehending the offender(s). Quick access to forensic evidence may lead to the capture of repeat offenders before they offend again.
6. Quality, robust forensic evidence may play a key role in the successful prosecution of the offender. E.g. shoe prints may be the only evidence that ties an offender to multiple separate offences.

A lack of forensic awareness at crime scenes can result in the loss of retrievable forensic evidence and the compromise of its evidentiary value. Consequently, the Scientific Investigation Strategy aims to build this awareness through:
- Enhanced awareness training to recruits and current members
- Exposure to forensic processes as a component of probationary officer training / rotations
- Basic forensic training for officers being deployed to Regional WA