

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – DECEMBER 10, 2018

## **New initiative to increase the number of African-Australians in Victoria Police**

Jesuit Social Services welcomes the Victorian Government's Jobs Victoria support for a new initiative to increase the number of African Australians in Victoria Police.

The **Victoria Police Diversity Recruitment Program** will actively promote the large number of job and career opportunities in Victoria Police to African Australian communities. It will provide guidance, support and training to assist potential applicants to successfully enter the Force. Victoria Police will recruit an additional 3000 police over the next four years.

"Like many other major employers, Victoria Police recognise the importance of their workforce reflecting the diverse and multicultural communities they serve," says Jesuit Social Services CEO Julie Edwards.

"Jesuit Social Services commends the Victoria Police for this initiative and its commitment to working in partnership with the African Australian community, and the other organisations which have worked together for the past year to bring this program to life."

"This initiative will change lives, create positive role models and impact entire communities. We look forward to supporting participants on their exciting new journeys."

The pilot program will provide training and support to assist at least 30 participants from African backgrounds into Victoria Police, to become Victoria Police Officers or Protective Service Officers.

It will pilot a new training course developed by Victoria University Polytechnic in partnership with Victoria Police and the African Australian community. The course will provide the basis for the ongoing preparation and training of future potential applicants to Victoria Police.

The **Victoria Police Diversity Recruitment Program** was developed by a partnership of Victoria Police, the African Australian Multicultural Employment and Youth Service, Victoria University Polytechnic, AMES Australia, Matchworks, Maurice Blackburn Lawyers, Jobs Victoria and Jesuit Social Services.

"Jesuit Social Services has a long history developing innovative employment programs to support people facing barriers to employment. Since 2009 we have delivered the African Australian Inclusion Program with NAB, and recently Cultural Diversity Partnership programs with the Australian Taxation Office and John Holland," says Julie Edwards.

"Through our work with newly arrived communities, we know the barriers faced by people seeking work in Australia. Many face significant challenges due to lack of local work experience or a lack of support to navigate the Australian job market.

"This program will provide participants with support at every step of their journey."

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