# Episode 3 - New Recruits - v3.mp3

**John Pratt:** [00:00:04] Hello and welcome to Tasmania Police's brand new podcast. This is Tas Police. I'm Inspector John Pratt and I'll be your host as we chat to a wide range of Tasmanian police officers about why they joined the job and why others should too. We're coming to you today from Lutruwita, Tasmania. And before we start our conversation, I'd like to respectfully acknowledge the Tasmanian Aboriginal people as the traditional owners of the land upon which we work and pay our respect to elders past and present. We recognise the Tasmanian Aboriginal people as the continuing custodians of the rich cultural heritage of Lutruwita, Tasmania. On today's episode I'm talking to Trainee Constable Richard Sochacki and Trainee Constable Olivia Palmer, who are both recruits at the Tasmania Police Academy. We'll be chatting about what motivated them to join the service, how the application process was for them and what their experiences at the academy has been like so far. It's great to have you both here today. Richard, let's start with you. What made you decide to join Tas Police?

**Richard Sochacki:** [00:01:12] Well, my interest in Tas Pol actually started in 2011, 2012 when I first moved over from the UK to Australia. I looked to apply. I sent in my EOI straight away. My job was straight after that when I knew I couldn't get into Tas Pol at that particular time was the prison service. So I spent the last ten years in the prison service. So moving into the police has always been a natural progression in my career choice. I think what I've seen through the prison, going backwards and going back into to the police, it allows me to serve the community and hopefully prevent people going through that prison system. So that was one of my main motivations.

**John Pratt:** [00:01:50] Thanks for that, Richard. And Olivia, what about you? How did you come to be a recruit?

**Olivia Palmer:** [00:01:54] So I actually applied for Tas Police when I was 18 years old. And I got through to the interview stage where I was told to get a bit more life experience. In hindsight, probably the best decision ever. I moved into an office job where I was for sort of five years and that got a bit mundane, sort of same thing every day. So coming to Tas Pol, wanting a challenge somewhere that you've got different career opportunities, you're not sort of stagnant in where you are and where you're headed. And the idea of sort of shift work for work life balance sort of thing.

**John Pratt:** [00:02:28] Yeah. Excellent. Can you tell us a bit about the recruitment process and how it went for you? Were there any parts of the process that were harder than others or what surprised you?

**Speaker3:** [00:02:37] The Tas police website is really good to sort of give you an idea on what the recruitment process is like. I think from my EOI up until my letter of offer, it was about seven-ish months. I think the longest process would have been the medical checks throughout and due to no fault of Tas Police, more so making sure that I'd crossed my T's and dotted my I's kind of thing to make sure everything was correct. The communication was really good going through the recruitment process. It was long and there's a lot of paperwork to do, but in hindsight it all makes sense, especially to make sure that you're physically fit and physically well enough and mentally okay.

**John Pratt:** [00:03:14] How about you, Richard, how did the recruitment process go for you.

**Richard Sochacki:** [00:03:17] Yes, similar to Olivia with most of the points you just made. My process was a little bit quicker, I think from my EOI through to letter of offer was probably somewhere in the region of around ten weeks. So it was all very, very quick paperwork, so on and so forth. The hardest part for me was the answering the questions whilst recording yourself on a video to provide them. Similar to this podcast it was a ver y foreign environment to be in listening to your own voice, and especially when you're trying to watch yourself on the computer screen being filmed similar to Liv, paperwork, getting all your medicals and all your ducks lined up. That takes a lot of organisation. But again, the website and the information you get from the recruiting team as you're going through the individual stages is fantastic. They give you as much help as you require, so it's really good.

**John Pratt:** [00:04:04] Richard I know you've actually trained with Northern Territory Police previously, but for family reasons you needed to stay in Tasmania. Has the Tas Police experience been different?

**Richard Sochacki:** [00:04:13] Yeah, there are some differences between the NT Police and Tasmania Police, in particular the way they train at the academy. Northern Territory don't have a university attachment so there isn't anything with regards to doing essays and so on and so forth. In the Territory it's very much more scenario based. You do get a qualification but a diploma level. With Tasmania, slightly different structure like say very university based with regard to the essays and the academic side of things, which I do think is quite useful. So for me it's been a challenge. So but I'm thoroughly enjoying it at this moment in time.

**John Pratt:** [00:04:48] You've both been at the Academy for about eight weeks now, so you're about a quarter of the way through your training course. How have you found the training program so far and what's been the highlight? Let's start with you, Olivia.

**Olivia Palmer:** [00:04:58] Yeah, it's been really good. I think coming into the academy with no expectations on what a day to day life in the recruits kind of worked in my favour. They're long days starting anywhere from 5:00 or 6:00 in the morning for PT. The team building things we do, social club and committee and that kind of thing takes up time. You need to be organised. You need to keep yourself accountable. You don't have people holding your hand telling you what needs to be done, what's due, and that kind of thing. The highlight, I think, so far at the academy is the team, the people that that we're working with. So not just I guess, our mentors and teachers and lecturers and things like that, but you know, when you knock off of an afternoon, you sort of hang around in the accommodation block and you talk smack. That's exactly what it is. It is. It's banter. It's it's fun and you build relationships and you're very quickly forced to to build those really strong friendships and connections straight away. Because without that you lean on each other. Everyone's got strengths and weaknesses. So being able to reach out, you know, I'm academically okay, but I'm not maybe not so much with other things. So I'd reach out to someone else that has that strength. And then I help the people that need help with the academics. So you help each other out. It's yeah, it's a really good team environment.

**Richard Sochacki:** [00:06:19] Yeah. You're making lifelong colleagues and probably more more, more importantly so, lifelong friends. Absolutely. Very important that you gel early on. Yeah.

**John Pratt:** [00:06:29] And what's been your highlight so far, Richard?

**Richard Sochacki:** [00:06:30] Well, again, Liv's pretty much covered everything that I was going to say myself, but I think probably the last week. So last week we all went out on observation shifts. So that's a period of time of the week where we go out to particular stations around Tasmania, we have mentor staff and we go around and we essentially observe what police officers do out in the field. It gives us a good hands on experience with a bit of an umbrella and a safety net of obviously having a mentor staff there to watch what we're doing. I went to Hobart and you went to.

**Olivia Palmer:** [00:07:03] I went to Glenorchy.

**Richard Sochacki:** [00:07:05] So our two quite busy stations and it's been quite a full on week. So yeah, I think observations definitely the highlight of the course so far.

**Olivia Palmer:** [00:07:12] Cemented everything that we've learnt in the last eight weeks. Ten weeks, yeah, you know we can put all the classroom work into real life and see it all.

**Speaker2:** [00:07:21] It's good to know that things are actually sticking in the brain.

**Olivia Palmer:** [00:07:23] Yeah.

**John Pratt:** [00:07:26] So Olivia, it sounds like things are going well for you. What are you looking forward to most in the coming weeks?

**Olivia Palmer:** [00:07:32] I'm excited about driver training and sort of getting more hands on. We've done a lot of classroom stuff and. And moving forward. I know we've got a lot more sort of scenario based activities. They're a good challenge because you don't know what to expect again. And like I said earlier, you need to have an open mind with everything that you do. You can't go in with any sort of expectation. I'm excited for the driver training and firearms training. Yeah, it's definitely out of my comfort zone. So.

**John Pratt:** [00:07:59] And what about you, Richard? What are you looking forward to?

**Richard Sochacki:** [00:08:01] It's the highlight. Driver training and firearms training, similar to when I was in the territory, Exactly the same sort of thing. It's yeah, I think it gets everyone excited. It's nice to be out of the classroom and doing something hands on more than anything.

**John Pratt:** [00:08:16] Olivia It's pretty well known that the physical training component of the course is important and can be quite intense. Can you talk a bit about what it's like so anyone considering joining is prepared?

**Olivia Palmer:** [00:08:25] Absolutely, yeah. There's early mornings you need to prepare yourself for. Early mornings means early nights. Make sure that you're getting enough sleep. The training is full on. It's Monday to Friday. It's five days a week. We're at the moment we're broken up into different sort of fitness levels or or categories, depending on where you're at in your fitness, which is really good. It's tailored to each person or each group, depending on where you sit kind of thing. You need to challenge yourself again, holding yourself accountable. Recently, where we've set goals for where we want to be fitness wise at the end of our course, and that should be above where you're at at the moment, or at least where you started to continue to push yourself.

**John Pratt:** [00:09:07] And Richard, you've got a bit of a sports science background. Could you tell us your views on the physical training in the recruit course?

**Richard Sochacki:** [00:09:13] Yeah, it's really good. It's a well structured course on Mondays and Thursdays we'll do strength training and that's a progressive strength program. On Tuesdays and Fridays we'll do cardio and much to everyone's turmoil is usually the beep test. So we're slowly progressing with that with a lot of grimacing faces. But it's not all doom and gloom in the middle and a Wednesday the PT trainers put us through a nice stretching and sort of rehab session so you're not always get a chance to do a little bit of rest. I think when you come into the join the academy, you do need to have a reasonable level of fitness. But as Liv said, they identify that level of fitness. They put you in the correct groups and then you progress throughout the 32 week course. But it's good for it's good it's good to get up in the morning. Be forced to do the PT.

**Olivia Palmer:** [00:10:02] You don't want to be the one that doesn't come in.

**Richard Sochacki:** [00:10:05] I imagine previously in other jobs I wouldn't have had to do it. So it's nice. It's nice to be made to become fit.

**John Pratt:** [00:10:11] Richard, with your past experiences, what values do you think make a good police officer and what values do you personally have that you bring to the job?

**Richard Sochacki:** [00:10:19] Well, I think the main two would be integrity and honesty. I think you need to know what you're doing when you do it, that it's right and that you can be held accountable to the decisions and the actions that you you make in the job. Again, I think I bring both of them into the job. I had them certainly when I was working at the prison service again highly accountable, highly scrutinised job. And I think they're probably two of the most important values that you need.

**John Pratt:** [00:10:47] How about yourself, Olivia?

**Olivia Palmer:** [00:10:48] I took the words right out of my mouth. Absolutely integrity, honesty are two of the big ones that sort of stand out for me. And accountability. Owning your mistakes. If you make mistakes or holding yourself accountable. Yeah, I couldn't have worded it better.

**Richard Sochacki:** [00:11:04] I think the one additional thing is you're not going to be the polished article straight away, and it might take you years to become the polished article. I think you just have to fully submerge yourself into the training recruiting program or the training program, should I say, and accept that you will make mistakes, learn from those mistakes. Just basically give it your all, whether it's a value or whether as a characteristic you should have, but definitely give it your all.

**John Pratt:** [00:11:28] As we come to an end of our conversation today. Do you have any advice for future recruits who are considering applying?

**Olivia Palmer:** [00:11:34] Yeah, I think when you start right from the start, you're EOI, being honest. I guess. You know, Tas Police aren't looking for the perfect person because there's no such thing. But owning what you've done in the past. Being honest throughout the entire recruitment process, you don't tell people what you think they want to hear. You can sort of see straight through that. Ensuring your paperwork is all up to date. You've done everything right. Otherwise, that can hold you back, especially if you're, you know, when the next course is starting and you're only like you were a couple of months away, that can hold you back a couple of weeks and you might be delayed into getting into another course. And I think keeping your fitness up. Keeping your eye on the recruitment website because there's heaps of tips on there as it is and just not aiming for the bare minimum. Holding yourself accountable and to a high standard and just not feeling let down if if you don't get to where you want to be.

**John Pratt:** [00:12:29] Excellent. Well, I'm glad the course is all coming together well for you. And that the theoretical side of it is now being put into practice and you can see the benefits of it. It's great to see you both progress through the course. And I wish you both all the very best for the rest of it.

**Richard Sochacki:** [00:12:41] Thank you.

**John Pratt:** [00:12:49] Join us next time as we speak to Sergeant Simon Clayton and Senior Constable Ruth Purcell about what the Tasmania Police recruitment team is looking for when you apply. If you like what you heard today, please subscribe on your favourite podcast app. You can stay up to date on our website at recruitment.police.tas.gov.au/podcast.