# Episode 4 - Recruitment Services - V1.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.

**John Pratt:** [00:00:48] On episode four of This is Tas Police, I'm chatting to Sergeant Simon Clayton and Senior Constable Ruth Purcell from Recruiting Services. Ruth and Simon are part of the team that gets out and about across the state, talking to interested people, young and old, about joining Tasmania Police as police officers themselves. They know exactly what values and skills are needed in the job and they can tell pretty quickly whether or not someone has what it takes.

**John Pratt:** [00:01:12] Today we'll get to hear from them about what the recruiting team is looking for when someone applies to join, and they'll share some tips to help you make sure you're as ready as possible when you apply.

**John Pratt:** [00:01:21] Simon And Ruth, it's great to have you both here. Let's get started.

**Simon Clayton:** [00:01:25] Thanks, boss. Glad to be here.

**John Pratt:** [00:01:27] We're here to talk about what the Tasmania Police recruitment process looks like. Simon, can you give us a bit of a rundown on what's involved?

**Simon Clayton:** [00:01:35] Yes. So any applicants that are interested in joining Tasmania Police can go to our website. The entry standards are on there, the recruitment process is on there. Pretty much when you're ready to apply, you submit what we call an expression of interest and that'll come through to our office and the staff will then look at doing the background checks and checking that all the information in the application to make sure that it's actually correct. And then from there, if we proceed to take them to a fitness testing, they'll get an invite to a fitness testing. Pass that and they'll advance to written testing and then hopefully to an interview and to our selection pool and then onto a course.

**John Pratt:** [00:02:12] Ruth Simon mentioned that there are fitness tests involved in the application processes, but I'm also aware that there's suitability and psychometric testing components as part of the process as well. Can you explain those in a bit more detail and why they're so important?

**Ruth Purcell:** [00:02:26] Yes, Inspector. So as Sergeant mentioned, there are the fitness testing, which is one of the first components in applying to be a police officer. The online testing is predominantly game based testing.

**Simon Clayton:** [00:02:42] In the cognitive ability tests there's six game-based tests. There's two problem solving, two numeracy or three numeracy, I think, and one verbal knowledge. And then in the emotional intelligence test, there's different images and narratives to test whether or not you can actually understand what emotion that person is going through. And then we get into the big job suitability test, which is about 350 questions, and they look for risk factors.

**Ruth Purcell:** [00:03:09] That's predominantly the old psych testing that when we all probably went through 20 odd years ago. That's similar to what that was back then.

**John Pratt:** [00:03:18] Fair enough. Simon Can you talk a bit more about the interview and assessment Day that's part of the application process.

**Simon Clayton:** [00:03:24] Basically, the applicants will turn up to to be interviewed. We do three at a time. Sometimes if we're running a double board day, we'll do six. But they'll do an individual written scenario. So it's just a scenario that will give them that we're looking for common sense and decision making and just see whether or not they can think on their feet. Then they'll do what we call a team building exercise. Now that could be a written team building exercise or it could actually be a physical exercise. And in that we're looking to see whether or not people can work together or whether someone takes over or sits back or what sort of input each applicant has. Because when they get onto a course, they've got to be able to work together as a recruit training course. They'll then do a individual physical scenario. And this this causes a lot of applicants anxiety when when they get to it because they don't know what's what's involved. But again, it's just a simple scenario that police attend every day. And whilst we're not looking for them to be police officers because they haven't had the training, we're looking for common sense decision making, how they actually deal with a little bit of conflict and then they move into to do the interview with your good self as the as the chair and then two other people. Sometimes we might have the police psychologist on the board, but generally we will have two other inspectors and maybe a sergeant. And the interviews last probably 45 minutes to maybe an hour and a half, depending on how much the applicants would like to talk.

**John Pratt:** [00:04:51] When someone is applying to join Tasmania Police, what should people do to make their application as strong as possible?

**Simon Clayton:** [00:04:56] There's a very good saying that preparation before application. It's not something that you suddenly wake up and go, I'm going to be a police officer and I'm going to apply. It's something that you've probably thought about or you've discussed with family and friends. And to give yourself the best opportunity is, one, going and have a look at our website. But the first hurdle that a lot of people fall over is the fitness standard. And a lot of people think that it's just turning up and they'll pass the fitness standard. They don't have to work for it. It's the easiest part of our process to get through, and it's really the only part that the applicant can control because they can train, they get fit, they get up to the standard so they know that they can pass our entry standards and then put their application in. The rest of it then falls into our hands and we can give them some advice. And we do at fitness testing days now. We give him a bit of an information session as to what to expect. But that's pretty much the area that most applicants fall over is because they don't train for the fitness and they just think because I play sport, I run 5-10 ks, then then I'll be able to do the fitness testing and it just doesn't work that way.

**John Pratt:** [00:06:05] Ruth Do you have any comments in relation to how an applicant can make their application as strong as possible?

**Ruth Purcell:** [00:06:10] Yeah, I was just going to add on to Sergeant Clayton that we do have some videos on our website in relation to the beep test and the agility tests that we currently do as part of the fitness testing. So I would encourage anyone to have a look at those and practise. So it's definitely important to make sure that you can pass the fitness testing because as the sergeant said, that's something that will let you down.

**John Pratt:** [00:06:32] Ruth, I'm sure you have an interesting story about what happened when you first applied. Can you tell us about that?

**Ruth Purcell:** [00:06:36] We've been in the job now for 21 years. When I first applied the exam and things were a little bit different back then. I had to redo part of an essay, which was obviously the written component back then, undertook that and then eventually got back through. So I guess what is important out of this is that you might not necessarily get through the first time, but if it's something that you really want to do and that you're determined to succeed in, then just don't give up after your first attempt.

**John Pratt:** [00:07:10] So without giving too much away, you joined the service in your late twenties. How is the application process different for school leavers?

**Ruth Purcell:** [00:07:17] School leavers now might be a good time to identify obviously that we have a Year 12 program which we run every year. Applicants can apply in grade 11, which opens around October each year for grade 11 to apply for the program when they are actually in year 12. It runs now for a week in the school holidays, predominantly in April and September school holidays. And between all of us in the recruiting office, we run that through with them and that gives the applicants that are interested in policing as a career an insight into what various areas do. The specialist areas, secondary roles, forensics, which is always a highlight. So yeah, things have certainly changed and the things that policing has to offer now are certainly different to when I did apply back in my late twenties.

**Simon Clayton:** [00:08:10] Can I just add to that? Because I didn't apply in my late twenties. I applied as soon as I left school from grade 12 and that was in 1984. So I don't mind saying I'm 55. And I thought I was ready, and the local police officer thought I was ready. But when I got to interview, I wasn't ready. And the chair of the panel highlighted that fact because I had a bit of a temper back then and it didn't do me any favours in the interview. And I went away and actually reflected on that and worked in a warehouse where I was exposed to different ages, different nationalities and different work styles with a lot of people. And that that actually made me grow up a little bit more. And I came back in '87 and was lucky enough to get through. It was only my intention to stay here until I actually found something better to do and 35 years later I still actually haven't found anything better to do, So I can't recommend the job enough for what the advantages actually give me. But I also hear from people, say kids 17-18 year olds have no life experience. And I probably didn't back then, but now we're seeing a lot of kids come from country areas. A lot of kids now been working in McDonald's, retail, fast food outlets since they're about 14, and some are actually trainers by the time they get to grade 12. So to me, that's life experience is what you've actually done to be able to develop yourself and make yourself better, not just sit at home and do nothing.

**Ruth Purcell:** [00:09:32] Just to add to that, those that have obviously been working in different areas like McDonald's and Subway and things like that have come across argumentative customers, customers that may not be happy with their order and things like that. So to us they have already experienced some form of life experience. So don't just think that at the age of 17 or 18 when you think that you might be young and maybe not ready, that you need more life experience. To us, that is some degree of life experience, isn't it?

**Simon Clayton:** [00:10:00] And we want a lot of young kids now under saw themselves. They'd actually don't believe in themselves. And when we explain to them, particularly on our grade 12 program, that what you actually do and the work that you do is exactly what a police officer does. We are just trained to do it at a higher standard and you see this little light bulb go off and a lot of them take it back into their into their lives after they leave the grade 12. Yeah.

**John Pratt:** [00:10:22] So, I mean, as you just described, you love what you do each day. What's the best part of the job for you and why do you recommend that job to others?

**Simon Clayton:** [00:10:29] I've worked in a lot of different areas across the state. Probably the best posting I ever had was King Island, where I spent two or three years over on King Island. Just because of the work and the small knit community. And I suppose growing up, Deloraine, I've always been a country boy at heart and I like that aspect of country policing. So that's why King Island was. It's probably the favorite posting. But I've been in recruiting now for six years, and the biggest thrill and the most satisfaction I get is out of the Grade 12 program. You see these kids come through at Great 11 and in grade 12, and some we're even starting now, we talk to grade nines and grade tens and you remember them when they come through. And they get on to a course and they're very nervous. They're unsure of themselves. They don't know what they want to do. And then within 12 months, you see them graduating off a course, not all of them. But you see them develop and grow from that little shy, anxious kid that's come in on a Sunday night on the grade 12 program, to then graduating and the development. And then you see them down the track a couple of years later. That gives me the greatest satisfaction and enjoyment at the moment, seeing those people. And we often say to them that Ruth's the mom and I'm the dad, and you have those proud parental moments when they graduate. And and that's probably the best part of my job at the moment is getting those young kids through it and seeing how much they develop.

**John Pratt:** [00:11:49] We're coming to the end of our conversation now. And my final question is for both of you. Can you tell me the best piece of advice you have for anyone considering applying to join Tas Police? Simon, we'll start with you.

**Simon Clayton:** [00:11:59] Just be prepared. We have a lot of people that apply that don't actually understand what policing is about and not to degrade and talk about other professions, but we go into jobs where no one else goes. We talk about active armed offenders. We're running into danger when everyone else is running away from from the danger. We go to fatal car accidents. But we also do a lot of community policing and our recruiting sort of stuff. So the biggest advice I would give is actually know what you're getting yourself into. Follow our police website, follow New South Wales, Victoria, other police websites. So you get an understanding of what policing is all about and what police officers actually do. Also talk to family and friends. We get a lot of applicants come through and they haven't told to their family and friends about applying. It's giving yourself the best opportunity to to prepare yourself, and part of that is doing your research so that you know what you're getting yourself into. And that's where we find a lot of people fall down. They just haven't done the research or they don't know what they're getting themselves into.

**John Pratt:** [00:12:57] Ruth, how about you?

**Ruth Purcell:** [00:12:58] Yeah, boss. Look, I've loved my career and everything that I've done. You do like as sergeant said, you have those bad jobs that you go to and things like that. But the main thing is I had family members in the job before I joined and they wanted me to go and talk to friends of theirs to get some ideas of what they actually went to, what they've seen, what they've done. Obviously, it didn't put me off applying and I was of the opinion that if it was meant to be, it was going to be. Which obviously it was, and I haven't looked back over 21 years. The thing with recruiting now that we do do information sessions at the end of fitness testing. We also have various information sessions around the state. Either keep an eye on Facebook and as the sergeant said, be mindful of what we do, go to job wise. But that is also where we advertise when we have upcoming free fitness sessions or information sessions and come to those prepared as well. We're pretty much all an open book during those. If anyone has any questions or wants to know anything they can ask us, feel free to ask us or talk to us individually before or after that session. We're more than happy to take emails with any questions or phone calls. So yeah, anyone has anything that they want to know, just ask someone.

**Simon Clayton:** [00:14:15] The good thing is now that we're we based at the academy, people drop in. We love people coming in and chatting to us. We've got Senior Constable Caitlin Rawlings in the northern part of the state. Exactly, can do the same. If people want to do a one on one session or whatever, all they need to do is contact us either by phone or by email and we can set up one on one information sessions with people that want to know about policing and about recruiting and the processes and all that sort of stuff. It's it's just getting people to take that leap and have that little bit of belief in themselves that they can actually do it. And until they take that leap and hear about it from us, that might be just that little bit that pushes them over the edge and gets them into a recruit course.

**Ruth Purcell:** [00:14:50] We also have our recruiting cars that are both down here and up north. So it's normally one of us that are driving those vehicles. So if anyone sees those and wants to stop and have a chat to one of us, we're more than happy to talk to people that want to know any more information as well while we're out and about.

**John Pratt:** [00:15:06] Simon And Ruth from our conversation this afternoon, you've both had lengthy careers in Tasmania police and you're both obviously very happy and have enjoyed those careers. It's clear that you're both committed and certainly dedicated to recruiting for Tasmania Police. I commend you for what you do. Thank you very much for your time this afternoon.

**Ruth Purcell:** [00:15:24] Thank you, Inspector.

**Simon Clayton:** [00:15:25] Thank you. Loved it.

**John Pratt:** [00:15:30] It’s been great talking to Sergeant Clayton and Senior Constable Purcell today. I hope you enjoyed the conversation as much as I did.

**John Pratt:** [00:15:52] Next week we are going to chat with Inspector Natasha Freeman who is charge of Learning and Development at the Tasmania Police Academy. We’ll get an insight into what learning can look like once you’re in the job, and we’ll discuss the promotional process and the opportunities that exist for those who want to advance their careers.

**John Pratt:** [00:15:30] If you liked what you heard today, please subscribe on your favourite podcast app. While you are there, consider leaving us a review or rating to let us know how we are going.

**John Pratt:** [00:15:53] You can also stay up to date with podcast episodes on our website at: recruitment.police.tas.gov.au/podcast.