# Episode 5 - The Academy - 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:** [00:00:49] On episode five of This is Tas Police. I'm chatting to Inspector Natasha Freeman from Learning and Development Services about the Tasmania Police Academy. We often talk about the academy in relation to our new recruits, but as a professional learning organisation we're committed to providing ongoing opportunities for all of our officers, allowing them to gain skills and continuously develop those skills throughout their careers. Part of Tash's role is to ensure that Tasmania Police officers have access to ongoing training and professional development so they can best serve our community. Today we'll chat about what that 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. Tash, thanks for joining me today.

**Natasha Freeman:** [00:01:31] Thank you. Pleasure to be here.

**John Pratt:** [00:01:33] Many people won't have had the pleasure of visiting our academy before. The Academy was built in 1976 in rugby in southern Tasmania. Can you describe the facility for those who haven't been here?

**Natasha Freeman:** [00:01:43] Sure, John, thanks. So the academy is actually built for the recruits but does so many more things than just that. So we actually have 53 permanent staff here supporting the day to day business of running the academy. And those staff contribute to meals, accommodation and the development of curriculum and lesson plans and so on. So there's a fair bit of background work that goes into actually running the academy from day to day. The facilities consist of things like driver training facility, firearms range, the gymnasium, accommodation, as I said before, the dining room. We have a fairly good library facility as well as an auditorium, which we often can bring in some external presenters to take an alternate learning opportunities for our people and also other members of the community.

**John Pratt:** [00:02:34] And unlike a lot of academies, we also have our own beach as well.

**Natasha Freeman:** [00:02:37] We do. It's a absolutely beautiful location, which we are very fortunate to be sitting alongside every day at our normal regular duties.

**John Pratt:** [00:02:47] So we've spoken to some recruits recently about the sorts of training they complete while at the academy. But as we both know, that's just the beginning. Can you tell us a bit about what the training looks like for officers once they're in the job?

**Natasha Freeman:** [00:02:57] Okay. So once officers are in the job, they will start to get a feel for what they're most interested in. General duties policing may be very close to their hearts, and a lot of people do continue to contribute to policing in that way. But some people develop interests in other areas and they can include investigative areas, intelligence, search and rescue, or other specialist roles such as bomb response, Special Operations Group and public order management, just to name a few. So some of these roles are secondary roles that would sit alongside their primary role, but we run courses that can help develop the skills to open up some of those pathways for in-service members once they've graduated into the police service.

**John Pratt:** [00:03:40] Like you mentioned, a number of roles there that are available to police officers once they're in the job. Could you just tell us how learning and development services help those officers to move around the different areas and how you provide the training to them?

**Natasha Freeman:** [00:03:52] Well, we run an annual training needs analysis across the organisation, and through that process we discover some training gaps or opportunities to prepare additional training plans and courses. So annually, we will run approximately seven promotional courses and then, on top of that, around 20 other specialist courses. And as I said, they may relate to things like detective training or search and rescue bomb response, like I said before. In addition to that, we need to make sure that our people have contemporary training opportunities in terms of their operational skill sets. And this is a really big component of maintaining safety in the field. So again, we run that training needs analysis, and we provide training opportunities for our members in the field to upskill. So it could be relating to firearms training or method of entry or responding to mental health related incidents or edged weapons, and so on. So these are all things that really help us make sure that our people are safe when they're attending operational incidents in their respective roles.

**John Pratt:** [00:05:02] You've mentioned a number of different training areas in what you were just saying, and most people, when they think of police training, probably think of firearms and urgent duty driving along with the ones that you've just mentioned. Are there any other areas of training that people might be surprised to hear about?

**Natasha Freeman:** [00:05:16] Sure. So through the promotional process, there's some lessons that go along towards emotional intelligence training, diversity and inclusion, leadership, media training and things like that that people probably wouldn't expect would form part of the police training. So these are things that can be found in the in those promotional courses, but also in other areas such as your in-field work, tactical first aid training and things like that. Again, going towards making sure our people are as safe as they possibly can be to mitigate any risks to their personal safety.

**John Pratt:** [00:05:50] You've mentioned promotional processes, which is a big part of what learning and development services do. You and I are both inspectors. Can you just give us a rundown on your journey to get to that rank?

**Natasha Freeman:** [00:05:59] Alright, so I was part of course two of 1998, so going back a couple of decades there and really enjoyed the general duties work. I was starting to become interested in investigative work around 2004 and achieved a position at the Glenorchy Criminal Investigation Branch. And that's where I stayed for a few years. In 2010 I was promoted to sergeant and worked across a range of roles as a sergeant, such as what was known then as fraud and a crime now known as Cyber Crime Investigations. And I had the opportunity to go and work with our Professional Standards Command, and from there I was promoted to inspector in 2016. So I've been an inspector for almost seven years now. And again in that time, I've had the opportunity to move around quite a bit actually. So I started off as a staff officer to our assistant commissioner and from there moved into a division known as South East Division, where I worked out of Bellerive Police Station. And my current posting now is Learning and Development Services, where I've been for the last three years. So I've had a really fortunate career where I've been able to move around across front line roles and investigative roles and work through the promotion process as well.

**John Pratt:** [00:07:15] So for someone that was going through the ranks now, could you just tell us how learning and development services would support someone through that process?

**Natasha Freeman:** [00:07:23] Well, I guess as I said before, we run in the in the vicinity of around 25/26 programs a year, and we have a fairly rigorous promotion process as well. So there's some clear pathways that directly align with the UTAS components as well. So as you're working through your promotion process, you actually get to achieve some academic certificates along the way, such as the Bachelor of Social Science or the graduate certificate as you working through those ranks. So I guess that's how we support people's development once they're in the service, we offer those programs and have those clear set pathways where people get to choose what they would like to do. But we also run some mandatory training to make sure that, as I said before, people can maintain their contemporary operational skills and improve their safety in the field as well.

**John Pratt:** [00:08:12] And so does learning and development services also provide advice to those officers who are progressing through the system?

**Natasha Freeman:** [00:08:18] Absolutely. That's a big part of our role, and our team are very approachable and knowledgeable and always willing to have some one-on-one conversations to help people decide on their best pathway for them.

**John Pratt:** [00:08:31] And you mentioned the University of Tasmania, which is obviously part of the curriculum and promotional process. Is there assistance provided to people who are progressing through from the University of Tasmania?

**Natasha Freeman:** [00:08:41] Yeah, there's two ways to obtain assistance for working through those university components. The first way is directly with the university. So any opportunity or any support, I should say, that the university offers any other student that is also available to police officers. So the other way is to come directly to learning and development services where we have very well qualified education advisors who have teaching qualifications and experience and can help people work through some of those tricky essay writing skills or assignment preparations and so on. If people haven't done it in recent times.

**John Pratt:** [00:09:17] Tash, I've saved the trickiest question for last what do you think Tasmania Police offers members that other careers don't?

**Natasha Freeman:** [00:09:24] Thank you. Well, I think everybody sort of knows that policing is it might be one job, but it's there's so many opportunities to diversify within that one job. So as we've mentioned already, generally you start out within a general duties position, but as you start to develop your interest further, you've got many opportunities, whether that is an investigative work or a more specialist role. But for me, I really find that the unique opportunity that police have is the service to the community that you bring during particularly tragic or chaotic incidents. And there's no bigger reward than being that person who turns up to an incident that requires somebody to take charge and take control and provide that support to the community in what is often their hour of need. And when you can do that because you have the skills to do it and you have the training to do it, it can be a very rewarding opportunity.

**John Pratt:** [00:10:21] I have to agree it is a great job. There are a number of opportunities that are available to you as an employee. It's been great to hear about the areas that you've worked through and it's also been great to hear about your story progressing through the promotional process. I thank you for joining us on the podcast today.

**John Pratt:** [00:10:40] So far on This is Tas police podcast, we've chatted to our former commissioner, Darren Hine, and our new commissioner, Donna Adams. We've also heard from our recruitment services team and some new recruits. There have been some interesting and inspiring conversations from people who have experienced everything Tasmania Police has to offer. And this is just the beginning. Tune in next week when we'll meet a police officer from interstate who's come across to join our service and is completing our accelerated training program. Shannon Foden will take us through a week in her life as a recruit, so come back next week for a behind-the-scenes look at training in the Tasmania Police Academy.

**John Pratt:** [00:11:15] 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:** [00:11:46] You can also stay up to date with podcast episodes on our website at: recruitment.police.tas.gov.au/podcast.