# Episode 6 - Outstations - v1.mp3

**Inspector John Pratt:** Hello and welcome to Tasmania Police's 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 respects to elders, past and present. We recognise the Tasmanian Aboriginal people as the continuing custodians of the rich cultural heritage of Lutruwita, Tasmania.

**Inspector John Pratt:** Thanks for joining us for another episode of the podcast. Today we're talking to trainee constables Mitch Beer and Karly Davies about their next step in their police training journey. We all know what the anticipation of starting a new job can feel like. It's no different for our trainee constables, who are about to hit the streets for their first taste of on the job training, otherwise known as outstations. We'll also chat with Nat Eldershaw, one of our course directors at our northern campus, to hear what the expectations of our trainee constables are while an outstations, and how they're supported by their peers and academy staff. Thanks for joining me today, Mitch, Carly and Nat, before we get started, I'd just like to hear a bit about our recruits. Mitch, can you tell me a bit about yourself, your background, and what made you make the decision to join Tasmania Police?

**Trainee Constable Mitch Beer:** Yeah. So thanks. Before I joined Tas police, I was a berry farm manager at Christmas Hills in North Tasmania, and I've always wanted to join the police. I thought about doing it when I was 12 and never really found the right time, so I decided to just throw my hat in the ring and ended up getting in first go at 27 and it's been great.

**Inspector John Pratt:** What had always interested you about joining Tas Police?

**Trainee Constable Mitch Beer:** I grew up knowing a few police officers, just like local police officers that have a little bit to do with and always looked up to them and looked up to other police officers around the area. And just something that's always interested me in the way that there's so many opportunities in the one job as well.

**Inspector John Pratt:** Karly, what about yourself? Can you tell us a bit about your background and what made you make the decision to join Tas police?

**Trainee Constable Karly Davies:** Yes, absolutely. So I, like Mitch, have had an interest in being a police officer for quite a long time. So I'm on the more mature age spectrum in terms of recruits in this course. So I'm 33 and I submitted my first expression of interest with police early in my 20s. However, I then decided that I wasn't quite sure if I was ready to settle down in Tasmania at that point. So I took on a career in travel, which I was in for ten years. I then had two children and worked within our family construction business for the last 4 or 5 years, and then when the northern course becoming available, I thought now is the time and again I went through that expression of interest and recruitment process and here we are.

**Inspector John Pratt:** Nat, as I mentioned, you are a Sergeant in Tas police and you are one of the course directors for our northern cohort for this particular recruit training course. Can you tell us a bit about your background in Tas police and what's led you to be a course director?

**Sergeant Nat Eldershaw:** I joined Tasmania Police in 2001. I was Course 4 of 2001. I graduated in 2002 to Launceston and sort of over the last 20 years have dodged around most of the available positions in the Northern district, worked in country and traffic works in public order, worked in prosecution, worked in drug squad. In the last sort of half of my career, I became an operational skills instructor, and I found that I really enjoyed that teaching aspect of policing as well, and the opportunity came up to do it as a full time position here in the North. So I jumped on the opportunity to become a police teacher for lack of a better term, and I've thoroughly enjoyed it. I've done it now for a year and a month and really, really enjoyed the teaching aspect of policing. It's totally different to anything else that I've done in my career. And again, it's just another great example of policing having 100 careers in one and 100 opportunities in one. So I transitioned from being a sergeant in prosecution to being the instructor here. Basically finished there one Friday and started here the following Monday. It was as easy as that.

**Inspector John Pratt:** Thanks, Nat. Mitch and Karly, as we've discussed, you're both training at our northern campus in Launceston, which means you get to undertake your training closer to the support of your family and friends. Karly, can you explain the benefits to staying closer to your home for you?

**Trainee Constable Karly Davies:** Absolutely. Being able to do the course in Launceston has meant that I could do the course at all. Basically, as I mentioned before, I have young children, so there were only two and four, and I'm actually based in the north west of the state, so it wasn't an option for my whole family to relocate to Hobart for me to be able to do the course. So having it available in Launceston was the reason that I'm here.

**Inspector John Pratt:** So it's fair to say without the opportunity to train in Launceston, you wouldn't be currently undertaking your training with Tas police.

**Trainee Constable Karly Davies:** Yeah, that's that's absolutely correct.

**Inspector John Pratt:** And how are you finding it? Juggling the training and also juggling your family, plus the family business.

**Trainee Constable Karly Davies:** It has its challenging moments, but it all comes down to organisation and discipline, like self discipline for me, making sure that I've got my week set up and I'm prioritising the time still with my family and my husband, and I guess just knowing that it's it's short term, really. At the end of the day, we're only here for seven months. So knowing that I just had to get through that seven months and then I could get into the career that I've always wanted to be in, has made it possible for me to keep working through a day at a time.

**Inspector John Pratt:** And the transition from working in the traveling industry to working in the building industry, then through to Tas police. Have you found that transition?

**Trainee Constable Karly Davies:** I think I have some really good transferable skills from those professions. So the communication aspect and working with a wide variety of people. The studying aspect has definitely been the biggest transition for me. It's been a long time since I've been in a classroom environment and having to manage study load and learning a lot of new skills at one time. But all in all, it's been great. It's been what I expected, so I'm loving it.

**Inspector John Pratt:** How about yourself, Mitch? Can you tell us the benefits that you've experienced with being able to train up north?

**Trainee Constable Mitch Beer:** So I'm similar, like I'm based in Westbury now. I bought a house in Westbury before I joined, so that's helped a lot. We're renovating that, my partner and I, and I've got a property at Deloraine that I'm building a shed on at the moment. So without being on the northern course, I wouldn't have been able to do as much of that. And along with the support structure around family and partner, and that having all of them close and going to my own bed every night, as opposed to a less comfortable academy bed, has definitely been a bonus.

**Inspector John Pratt:** And a berry farmer to police officer, that's quite a change. How are you coping with that?

**Trainee Constable Mitch Beer:** It is quite a change. I'm really enjoying it. I found as a farm manager I had a few leadership skills that have been transferable, I believe, into policing and did quite a few different things before that. That sort of helped me with communication, and that's one thing. I was tractor salesman at one stage, and I believe that definitely helped with communicating to all sorts of different people.

**Inspector John Pratt:** So Mitch and Carly, your courses in Launceston, as we've discussed, and your training concurrently with a cohort of trainees who are training at the police academy in Hobart. So obviously, you know those people. Do you feel like you're missing out on anything by training up north?

**Trainee Constable Karly Davies:** No, I think that the course has been running up north for a few years now. So over time it's progressively getting more inclusive for us northerners. We've had fantastic opportunities with our course directors up here and operational skills facilitators coming to us for different portions of the course, both from Hobart and operational roles within Launceston. And the campus has been set up really nicely here for us. It's really made it feel like our own little home after doing week one at the Academy and being like, oh, are we going to miss this. I've actually found that I haven't missed it at all. Much preferred being able to go home every day.

**Inspector John Pratt:** How about yourself, Mitch? Is there anything that you think that you actually miss out on by training up north, as opposed to training in the South?

**Trainee Constable Mitch Beer:** There's definitely one thing, uh, and that would be the Caesar salad at the eatery, at the Academy. But everything else, I mean, it's been really good. As Karly said, the instructors up here are great. It's sometimes it's harder to learn on the screen, but there's positives and negatives to both. However, I think it's definitely better for me to be able to go at my own home every night.

**Inspector John Pratt:** So if there was anybody from the north of the state, you know, Launceston or further west, would you recommend them taking up the option to train in Launceston if it became available to them?

**Trainee Constable Mitch Beer:** Definitely. I would definitely recommend the northern training as opposed to southern, especially if they want to go home every night and have family up here as a support structure. And operationally, I don't think there's anything we're missing out on at all.

**Inspector John Pratt:** Other than Caesar salad.

**Trainee Constable Mitch Beer:** Other than Caesar salad.

**Inspector John Pratt:** Um, now, if we can just move on to today's topic and that's outstations, can you explain exactly what outstations is and why it forms such an important part of the training program for the recruits?

**Sergeant Nat Eldershaw:** The best way to describe outstations is that it's like a mini apprenticeship. I suppose it's the opportunity for these guys to take some of the stuff that they've learned here and put it into practice in an operational environment, so it's real life, but they're given the support of someone who's working very, very closely with them. So they're going to go out. They will work straight away. They'll be into a police car responding to jobs on the radio. Whatever comes in, they'll be there to respond to. But they will have someone there as a as a mentor and a teacher to make sure that they're doing everything correctly and getting the experience from the jobs that they attend that they need. Outstations is a crucial part of this training, because it provides a lot of context for the stuff that we teach that would otherwise just be theory. And we find that people who come back from outstations really like the fact that they can apply their knowledge and understand things that may have otherwise been confusing for them in a classroom.

**Inspector John Pratt:** And when the recruits go on their outstations, they work with the shifts, which ultimately they'll graduate to when they leave their training. Is that correct?

**Sergeant Nat Eldershaw:** That is correct. To the point where I know that some of the Western stations have them rostered. Their rosters are out months in advance, and they've already been placed on the shifts that they'll be on post graduation. So everything that they're going to do on their outstations, period, they'll come back to the academy for a short period of time, and then they'll be out with those people who they've just worked with already.

**Inspector John Pratt:** That must be good for the recruits, as they get to know who they're ultimately going to work with once they graduate.

**Sergeant Nat Eldershaw:** It's a massive benefit for the whole outstations concept. It adds some validity to it. It makes it even more real life, and makes it easier for these guys to settle into those shifts and know that post graduation, that's who they're going to be working with. I anticipate that they'll be quite excited come graduation to know who they're going back to and know who their mentor is going to be, and know who their supervisor is going to be. It's a really beneficial thing.

**Inspector John Pratt:** Can you tell us how outstations has changed since you went through your training?

**Sergeant Nat Eldershaw:** I had a look at this question, and I had to think quite a bit because it's vastly different. These guys have quite high expectations on them as to assessable work. The outstations period actually forms part of their assessment. So they have a workbook that must be completed. That's certainly wasn't the case when I did it well over 20 years ago now. I had the opportunity when I was on outstations, to go to St Helens for a few weeks to see what country policing was like. That was facilitated so that I could go and have a look at that as well, as well as spending a period of time in Launceston where I ultimately graduated to. I would suggest the biggest difference is that at that time, outstations was usually done at a time in the course that benefited the academy structure. So everyone went on outstations over the Christmas period. I joined in October, so I went on outstations after having only been at the academy for eight weeks. So my knowledge base was fairly low compared to these guys who have been here for 20 weeks and they're heading out to outstations now. So I think that the structure of our course, where outstations falls into it, and the expectations of these guys for what they have to do whilst on outstations is vastly different and much more beneficial. They'll get a much different educational experience out of our stations than I did back then.

**Inspector John Pratt:** Karly, you've spent the last 20 weeks at the Academy learning the theory and practical skills behind becoming a police officer. You're about to head out and put it all into practice. What are your thoughts that are going through your mind as you're about to head out to outstations?

**Trainee Constable Karly Davies:** To be completely honest, this is the moment I've been waiting for. I'm a really hands on learner. So every week, doing classroom work, learning all the theory, learning the operational skills. I've just been looking forward to being able to apply what I've learned in that real life setting. The Academy does a great job at facilitating scenarios to kind of reiterate what we've been learning along the way, and even taking part in those scenarios really makes you realize how much you've learned and how far you've come in such a short period of time. So I think being able to again practice those skills like outstations is going to take that to the next level, really.

**Inspector John Pratt:** So with the 20 weeks training that you've undertaken to date, do you think you're as prepared as you can be to undertake outstations?

**Trainee Constable Karly Davies:** Well, you don't know what you don't know, but I'd like to think so. I feel comfortable with what we have learnt, and then I'm looking forward to taking it day by day and learning from other people who are operational once we get out there next week.

**Inspector John Pratt:** Do you have any concerns about commencing your period of outstations?

**Trainee Constable Karly Davies:** No, just some adjusting, I guess, because basically we're going to be stepping into the shifts that we will be working. So it'll be like a rejig of my life again, working on how shift works, going to work in with my family. And yeah, I think that's probably my my biggest concern. Happy to take on feedback and learn in the next six weeks and go from there.

**Inspector John Pratt:** How about yourself, Mitch? Are you looking forward to getting out there onto the streets?

**Trainee Constable Mitch Beer:** I definitely am similar to Karly, i'm very much a hands on learner and I've really enjoyed our defensive tactics and driving and shooting at the academy, but I'm really looking forward to getting out and putting everything we've learned into practice. We've been bombarded with so much information over the past 20 weeks. It's been amazing to learn and we've come so far, but to put it all into practice, will just be. Yeah, it'll be great.

**Inspector John Pratt:** Nat, the feelings that both Mitch and Karly have are pretty common for what recruits in their position are actually experiencing. What advice do you have for both of them as they prepare for their first shifts?

**Sergeant Nat Eldershaw:** I think that these guys are well and truly ready to go on our stations. We reach a point in this course where our stations is what they need, and I think that they just need to stick with an understanding that they have enough knowledge to get out there and have a crack. They all have really strong communication skills. They certainly wouldn't be here if they didn't have that, and they just need to employ the knowledge that they've got and those communication skills that they've got, and trust that that'll guide them through.

**Inspector John Pratt:** Fostering strong connections with colleagues is critical to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of our people. Establishing trust and rapport is not just about following protocols, it's about creating an environment where every officer feels respected, supported, valued and safe. Nat, when Mitchell and Karly are on outstations, they'll have the rank of Special Constable. Any tips for how special constables can build rapport and trust with their new colleagues and supervisors?

**Sergeant Nat Eldershaw:** Yeah for sure, the biggest piece of advice that I can give is to get in and have a red hot crack. It's really important that you show a commitment to policing. Show a commitment to learning as well. Really show that you are enthusiastic and keen to have a try of anything. No one is going to criticise you if you get something wrong whilst you are out there on outstations. The feedback that we always receive from supervisors, for anyone that's performed poorly, is that they weren't prepared to have a go at things. So it's just a big case of get in, have a go, again, use your communication skills to build relationships with those people around you and really show them how good you potentially are going to be once you're a little bit of experience as a police officer.

**Inspector John Pratt:** Mitch, are you doing anything mentally or emotionally to prepare yourself for what you're about to endure?

**Trainee Constable Mitch Beer:** I'm going over a lot of not really mentally or emotionally, but I'm definitely going over a lot of material that we've learned previously to prepare myself and just rejig my memory on how to do certain things. So just following up on prior learning really.

**Inspector John Pratt:** How about yourself, Karly? Is there anything specific you're doing in relation to preparing yourself for your period of outstations?

**Trainee Constable Karly Davies:** For me, it's equally as much about my lifestyle and what I actually am going to do on outstations. So as I said before, making sure I feel like I've got like a good routine and I'm allowing enough time for myself and my family on my days off, but preparing for while I'm on outstations. I can be a little bit of a perfectionist at times, so preparing myself that I'm not going to be perfect at everything, and that it's okay to get things wrong and just have a go and learn along the way.

**Inspector John Pratt:** So we've spoken about the training and how your training in the north of the state, which is closer to your place of residence. What about when you do your outstations, Karly? Will that be close to where you live?

**Trainee Constable Karly Davies:** Yes, yes. So at the moment I'm an hour and 15 minutes each way from the Academy, and my new station will be in Burnie and will only be 15 minutes from home. So much closer.

**Inspector John Pratt:** How about yourself, Mitch? How does your outstation placement fit with where you're living?

**Trainee Constable Mitch Beer:** So it's very similar. It's only about five minutes difference, so the difference will be going all the way across one system as opposed to going halfway across one system to the police station, so won't make a lot of difference. The parking in Launceston, however, may be a slight hindrance.

**Inspector John Pratt:** Nat are there any common mistakes or pitfalls that Mitch, Karly and all the other recruits should be aware of before they go on outstations?

**Sergeant Nat Eldershaw:** We had a pre outstations talk prior to doing this part of the podcast, and I spoke about ensuring that they maintain a good social interaction with people who are outside of policing, just to maintain that sort of level of social scene, maintaining long term friendships and maintaining commitments outside of the workplace so that the work environment doesn't become a possessive thing. Sort of one of those things that it's it's always there. So I would really strongly suggest that they maintain those social, those social circles that they previously had established prior to becoming police officers. And we also spoke about maintaining physical fitness. Ensuring that they adapt well to shift work if they've never done it before. Understanding that shift work is a very different thing, and maintaining physical fitness even when you're tired. The benefits to physical and mental health and the ability to sleep properly really relate back to ensuring that a level of physical fitness is maintained. Some of those things tend to drop off when people do shift work because it becomes easy to do.

**Inspector John Pratt:** So now that you're almost at the end of your training period, you're the perfect people to give some advice to others who are thinking about applying to join Tas police. Karly, who do you think is an ideal candidate for joining?

**Trainee Constable Karly Davies:** I think it's pretty well been drilled into us throughout this whole process that there is no exact ideal candidate. Like Tasmania Police is looking for a large range of people to join the force. So anybody who is really willing to have a go and is able to communicate with people, I think would be a good candidate, a good place to start if you believe that you're able to do those two things.

**Inspector John Pratt:** How about yourself, Mitch? Do you have any advice on who would make an ideal candidate?

**Trainee Constable Mitch Beer:** Yes, Karly said. There's not really one sort of person that makes an ideal candidate. You just you've got to have good communication skills and be able to apply yourself to the learning and just get in there and have a go. It's pretty much all you need to do.

**Inspector John Pratt:** Karly, what advice do you have for anybody that's considering to join Tas police?

**Trainee Constable Karly Davies:** If you know any police officers, have a really good chat to them. That's what I did prior to learning a few of my friends who are already in I had a good chat to them about the reality of the role. The online resources are also great. There's lots of information about the course structure when the course is starting, ways that you can actually do the course. So north or south for example. And also the fitness requirements are a big one. So when you turn up to the fitness testing days make sure that you're actually ready to go.

**Inspector John Pratt:** Mitch, what advice do you have for anybody that might be considering joining Tas police, and especially those people that might be from regional areas?

**Trainee Constable Mitch Beer:** The podcast today was a big thing. I listened to it before applying and again in the days leading up to my interview during the process. But the big thing for me was physical fitness. I needed to do a lot of work prior to having my fitness test in the way of cardio. So keeping on top of that and training for the fitness requirements was definitely a big thing that needs to be done, I think.

**Inspector John Pratt:** Finally, Nat, what words of encouragement or wisdom do you have to Mitch and Karly as they embark on this all important phase of their training.

**Sergeant Nat Eldershaw:** Ohhh these two will do very well. Just have some faith that the knowledge that you have is what you need to do to get stuck in on outstations. Have a crack is my other big advice. If you two are both hands on learners, the way that you will succeed with outstations will be to throw your hand up and get involved with absolutely everything that you can. The more variety that you can experience, the more tasks you can undertake. The more paperwork that you can do, the more you will get out of your 6 weeks on outstations. So just get stuck in and have a red hot dip at all of it.

**Inspector John Pratt:** I think the ability to have people trained in the north of the state, at the northern campus has certainly proved very successful. We have probably 40 odd police officers who wouldn't be members of Tas police had they not had the opportunity to train in the North. I think it's also important to recognise that the outstations training that you're about to undertake is really the culmination of all the practical and theoretical training that you've undertaken in the Academy, so I wish you all the very best. I hope you have a safe and enjoyable time, and look forward to hearing how you get on when you finish your six weeks outstations.

**Trainee Constable Mitch Beer:** Thanks, Inspector.

**Inspector John Pratt:** That's it for this episode of This Is Tas Police. I hope you enjoyed the conversation. In our next episode, we'll hear from our recruits as they undertake their periods of training whilst on outstations. Stay up to date with all our episodes by subscribing on your favourite podcast app, and you can find all our previous episodes on the Tasmania Police recruitment website: recruitment.police.tas.gov.au/podcast.