

Victoria Police Manual

The Victoria Police Manual is issued under the authority of the Chief Commissioner of Police in s.60, Victoria Police Act 2013. Non-compliance with or a departure from the Victoria Police Manual may be subject to management or disciplinary action. Employees must use the VPM Professional and ethical standards to inform the decisions they make to support compliance.

Serious crime rewards

Context

In the process of investigating serious crimes, Victoria Police may use rewards to discover new avenues of enquiry, identify and encourage witnesses to come forward and provide new intelligence.

This policy includes:

- the process to apply for government rewards
- the process to increase the original reward offer
- guidance to rescind rewards
- guidance regarding private offers of rewards
- the process for payment of rewards
- contacts for specific reward schemes.

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Scope and application

This policy applies to all Victoria Police employees involved in the investigation of serious crimes.

Responsibilities and procedures

1. Government rewards

1.1 *Applying for government rewards*

A reward is a legitimate tool that can be used as part of an investigative strategy of serious crimes such as terrorism, homicide, serious sexual assaults, or crimes of high community or victim impact.

- Rewards for serious crimes can only be considered in the following circumstances:
 - in the case of homicide – at the conclusion of the inquest, unless exceptional circumstances exist
 - in all other cases – when all other avenues of enquiry have been exhausted and the investigation has stalled.
- Members may choose to use rewards as an investigative tool for the purpose of generating new avenues of enquiry, producing new intelligence, identifying and encouraging new witnesses to come forward or locating a fugitive.
- People who have provided information, intelligence, statements or otherwise supported an investigation prior to the offer of reward are not eligible to apply for any part of such reward unless they provide new information that was not known to them prior to the offer of reward. Applications must outline the exceptional circumstances for consideration by the Serious Crimes Reward Committee (SCRC) such as how the information became known to the applicant after they disclosed the initial information, intelligence, statements. The SCRC must be provided with information from investigators to enable assessment of the genuineness of the claim, the timing of the new information, and the eligibility for reward.
- Victoria Police employees and employees of other government agencies who have an enforcement role or who are involved in the administration of justice are ineligible to apply for rewards.
- Applications are made by contacting the Secretariat of SCRC (OIC, Human Source Management Unit (HSMU)). HSMU will create an event shell in Interpose and forward it to the requesting member for completion. All relevant documents should be attached to this Interpose shell and must include the investigation/operation name and:
 - an application report (refer to section 1.2 for further information)
 - a drafted reward offer (refer to section 1.3 for further information).
- The Interpose file must be circulated through the chain of command to the Secretariat, SCRC for final approval.
- All documents attached to the file should be classified correctly with reference to **VPM Information categorisation, collection and recording**.
- Applications should not include a reward value as this will be determined by the SCRC only.

1.2 *Application report*

Applicants must provide a comprehensive report in the format provided by the Secretariat including:

- circumstances of the investigation
- details of consultation with the victim's family (if applicable)
- risks to the community if the crime remains unsolved
- details of avenues of enquiry already explored
- proposed media strategy and
- if immunity from prosecution is recommended.

1.3 Reward offer

A reward offer must be written in accordance with the template approved by the SCRC and needs to clearly articulate its purpose, which may be to obtain information leading to:

- the receipt of specific information (e.g. locating the remains of deceased persons)
- the apprehension of a person whose identity is already known (e.g. fugitive)
- the apprehension and conviction of person(s) responsible for an offence.

When immunity from prosecution is recommended, the reward notice must include the below paragraph:

"In appropriate cases, the DPP may consider, according to established guidelines, the granting of indemnification from prosecution to any person who provides information as to the identity of the principal offender or offenders in this matter".

The reward notice must stipulate that any payment of a reward is subject to the applicant signing a deed of confidentiality prior to payment.

1.4 Approval process

Members may apply for government rewards which will be available up to a figure specified in the following table. The applications will be processed by the Secretariat and presented to SCRC.

Government rewards – application and approval	
Amount	Application
1. Up to \$100,000	Request for reward must be approved by relevant department head and then by: • Assistant Commissioner, ICSC • Deputy Commissioner, Public Safety and Security (PSS)
2. \$100,001 to \$1,000,000	Request for reward must be approved by relevant department head and then by: • Assistant Commissioner, ICSC • Deputy Commissioner, PSS • the Chief Commissioner of Police (CCP)
3. Above \$1,000,000	Request for reward must be approved by relevant department head and then by: • Assistant Commissioner, ICSC • Deputy Commissioner, PSS • the CCP • the Minister for Police

1.5 *Post reward approval*

- Following the approval of the reward the senior investigator should:
 - decide when the reward is to be announced
 - e-mail details of the announcement to the Chief of Staff, Office of the Chief Commissioner (OCCP) for notification to the Minister's Office
 - notify HSMU
 - notify Media Director's Office
 - advise the OIC, Crime Stoppers and ensure the Crime Stoppers toll free telephone number is the sole contact.
- Following the reward announcement, the Secretariat will forward the notification of the reward to the Chief of Staff, OCCP for information.
- The approving officer must return the file to the Secretariat (via the OCCP where the Minister is the approver), who will arrange for the placement of a notice in the Government Gazette.
- The Secretariat will advise the senior investigator of the outcome and retain ownership of the Interpose shell containing the relevant documentation until further movement of the file is required.
- The file will contain a record of all activities concerning the application.
- All original hardcopy files are to be stored with the Secretariat.

1.6 *Applications to increase original reward offer*

If an application to increase the amount of a reward is sought, it will be the responsibility of the lead investigator to ensure all relevant documentation is forwarded to the Secretariat. A comprehensive report must be submitted outlining the justification and forensic purpose in applying to raise the reward amount.

1.7 *Annual review of serious crime rewards*

The HSMU must:

- complete an annual review of all outstanding serious crime rewards between 1 April and 30 June each year
- request units with previously approved rewards that have not been paid to confirm they are still required and
- report the outcome of the annual review to the SCRC in July each year.

1.8 *Rescinding rewards*

- A reward may be rescinded if the unit that applied for it identifies it is no longer required or appropriate and it has not been paid.
- Applications to rescind rewards must be made to the Secretariat.
- The Secretariat will create an event shell in Interpose and forward it to the requesting member for completion. The Interpose shell should include:
 - investigation/operation name
 - application report (refer to section 1.10 of this policy for further information)
 - draft rescinding reward
 - all relevant documents as attachments.

- The Interpose file must be circulated through the chain of command for processing by the Secretariat.
- All documents attached to the file should be classified correctly in accordance with **VPM Information categorisation, collection and recording**.

Government rewards – Approval to rescind	
Amount	Application
	A request to rescind a serious crime reward must be approved by the relevant department head and then by:
Up to \$100,000	• Assistant Commissioner, ICSC • Deputy Commissioner, PSS
\$100,001 - \$1,000,000	• Assistant Commissioner, ICSC • Deputy Commissioner, PSS • the CCP
Above \$1,000,000	• Assistant Commissioner, ICSC • Deputy Commissioner, PSS • CCP • Minister for Police

1.9 *Post-approval to rescind a reward*

Following the approval to rescind a reward that has not been paid, the applicant must:

- decide when to announce the rescission
- e-mail details of the rescission to the Chief of Staff, OCCP for notification to the Minister's office
- notify HSMU
- notify the Crime Media Manager and Director, Media and Corporate Communications, Media, Communications and Engagement Department (MCED) and
- notify the Secretariat who will arrange for a notice to be placed in the Government Gazette
- upload a copy of the relevant Government Gazette to Interpose.

1.10 *Application report for rescinding reward*

Applicants must provide a report in the format provided by the Secretariat, including:

- circumstances of the investigation
- outcome of any court processes, including inquest and criminal trial
- details of consultation with the victim's family, if applicable
- circumstances leading to the recommendation to rescind the reward (i.e., death of only suspect, change of circumstances) and
- proposed media holding lines.

1.11 Media holding lines regarding rescinding a reward

Media holding lines regarding the rescinding of a reward should be prepared in the template approved by the SCRC and need to clearly articulate the:

- nature of the offence
- date the reward was rescinded.

2. Private rewards

- Private individuals and organisations are not obliged to consult police before offering a reward but may seek police assistance in the offering of rewards. In such cases, investigating members must ensure that:
 - the request is in writing and includes a formal request for police assistance and an undertaking of payment
 - any reward offer does not breach s.89, *Crimes Act 1958*.
- When an investigating member receives a written request, they should prepare a report containing:
 - details of the offence
 - details of the investigations undertaken
 - the investigating member's approval or recommendations regarding the reward.
- Following approval, the investigating member should review any proposed reward notice to ensure:
 - the notice includes Crime Stoppers as the sole contact
 - a copy of the reward notice is sent to the OIC, Crime Stoppers
 - the reward notice does not indicate that Victoria Police is the sponsor.

3. Media releases

- Media releases on all rewards should be prepared in consultation with the Crime Media Manager and Director, Media, Communications and Engagement Department, (MCED).
- Victoria Police is responsible for issuing appropriate media releases in the case of government rewards.

4. Payment of rewards

- When a reward payment is sought the lead investigator will contact the HSMU who will then provide access to the Interpose shell to attach an application in the approved format.
- The HSMU will review the application, seek amendments where required and schedule the application on the agenda of the SCRC.
- The HSMU will prepare a condensed report on the application for the benefit of the SCRC.
- The SCRC may seek specialist advice in determining an application.
- Applicants for rewards will not attend these hearings unless their presence is requested by the SCRC. This includes the police applicant as well as any civilian applicant.
- Victims (or their representatives) should not contribute, or be asked to contribute, to:
 - the payment of a reward
 - the costs of an investigation.
- Rewards will only be paid at the conclusion of all court proceedings and must not be

offered in exchange for any witness providing evidence.

5. Special reward scheme

- Several external organisations offer standing rewards for information given by members of the public. These will not be processed by the SCRC. Applications for these rewards should be made as follows:
 - fraud reward schemes – refer applications to the Superintendent, Tasking and Coordination, Crime Command
 - other reward schemes – refer application to the Assistant Commissioner, Crime Command.

Related documents

- VPM Human sources

Further advice and information

For further advice and assistance regarding these Policy Rules, contact your supervisor or local training officer.

Update history

DATE UPDATED	SUMMARY OF CHANGE	FORCE FILE NUMBER
18/11/19	Updated into new format in line with VPM review and name updated. Updates made to post reward approval process in line with current practice.	FF-139903
04/02/2026	Updated to include processes for annual reviews, rescinding rewards and administrative updates.	FF-202970