Queensland Police Officers' Perceptions of the Promotion and Transfer System:

Results of 1998 Baseline Survey

November 1998

Research and Prevention Division

Abbreviations used in this paper

CJC	Criminal Justice Commission
HRM	Human Resource Management
QPS	Queensland Police Service
QPS Review Committee	Queensland Police Service Review Committee
Review Commissioner	Commissioner for Police Service Reviews

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Acknowledgments

Thanks are due to the following officers of the Queensland Police Service who assisted with the administration of the survey:

- Antoine Burdette
- Senior Sergeant Lee Jeffries
- Senior Sergeant Phil Barrett
- Pam Blowers

Michael Ries was primarily responsible for designing the survey and preparing this report. Andrew Ede and Kelly Maddren assisted with the data analysis.

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Executive summary

The report of the Queensland Police Service Review Committee (July 1996) recommended that the Queensland Police Service (QPS) introduce a new selection panel system and that it be monitored and evaluated by the Criminal Justice Commission (CJC) in conjunction with the QPS.

A new system along the lines proposed by the Review Committee was introduced by the QPS on 1 May 1998. The key features of this system are:

- generic appointments to rank, rather than to a specific position
- formation of 'standing' regional panels for each generic group advertised
- use of accredited selection panel conveners who are external to the region or command to which selections are being made
- inclusion of a respected community member on panels.

This research paper presents the findings of a baseline survey undertaken in early 1998, prior to the introduction of the new system. The survey collected data on the perceptions held by police officers about the fairness and efficiency of the promotion, transfer and review system of the QPS as it was then operating. The survey will be repeated in mid-1999, as a means of assessing whether the recent changes which have been introduced have changed officers' perceptions of the system.

Interpreting the Survey

It should be stressed that the survey only measures *perceptions*. For example, although many officers believe that there is a bias towards appointing applicants from within the same region as the advertised position, it does not necessarily follow that there actually is bias in the selection process. Also, responses to surveys of this kind will be coloured by respondents' own experiences of the promotion system. Not surprisingly, those officers who have obtained promotion tend to have a more positive view of the process than those who have been unsuccessful.

Key findings

A total of 1,053 officers with five years or more experience were invited by e-mail message to participate in the survey. Of this number, 551 officers (52.3%) completed the survey.

Perceptions

The survey asked 21 questions designed to measure respondents' perceptions of the promotion, transfer and review systems of the QPS.

Overall, respondents had a negative view of the fairness and efficiency of the QPS promotion, transfer and review systems.

More than 50 per cent of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the following statements:

- there is a bias towards appointing applicants from within the particular region that the position is located

- it is difficult for officers to demonstrate their merit in the selection process
- the quality of selection panel decisions needs significant improvement
- length of service should be given more emphasis in the assessment of merit
- too much emphasis is placed on the interview process by QPS selection panels
- an officer's potential to perform in a position is rarely given adequate consideration during the selection process
- QPS selection panels place too much weight on educational qualifications
- the review process is confusing and difficult to understand.

Similarly, more than 50 per cent of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the following statements:

- the QPS promotion and transfer system is fair
- selection panels are consistent in their approach
- officers located outside regional headquarters have an equal chance of gaining appointments there.

Other key findings were:

- As indicated, respondents who had been successful in obtaining an appointment tended to have a more positive view of the process than those who had been unsuccessful. However, even amongst successful respondents a relatively high proportion held negative perceptions of the fairness and efficiency of the promotion and transfer system.
- Officers of higher rank were more likely than those of lower rank to consider that the QPS promotion and transfer system is fair and that proper procedures are followed.
- Officers with lower levels of education were more likely to agree that QPS selection panels place too much weight on educational qualifications, while those with higher qualifications were more likely to disagree with that statement.

Experiences of the process

Respondents were also asked questions about their actual experiences with the selection panel process. The findings included:

- a significant proportion of respondents (44.6%) indicated that they had applied for a position where they had previously worked with or for a panel member
- around two-thirds of respondents were aware of other applicants who were personally known to selection panel members
- respondents generally did not think that they were advantaged by being personally known to the panel, but they tended to believe that being personally known worked in favour of other applicants

- about two-thirds of respondents who were unsuccessful in their last application for a position sought post-selection feedback
- of those respondents who sought feedback, only 35 per cent were satisfied with the feedback they received
- a substantial proportion of those who did not seek feedback gave as their reasons either a lack of faith in the system or prior negative experiences with the feedback process
- the two main suggestions for improvement of the provision of feedback were that providers be more specific and more frank.

Comments

Finally, respondents were invited to comment on what they saw as the major problems with the QPS promotion, transfer and review systems and to identify ways in which these systems could be improved.

The six most commonly identified problems with the promotion and transfer process were:

- nepotism/cronyism/corruption/bias
- inconsistencies between selection panels
- the emphasis placed on academic qualifications
- lack of recognition for seniority/length of service
- regionalisation and regional bias
- delays.

The three most popular suggestions for improving the current QPS promotion and transfer systems were to introduce:

- independent selection panel members
- a centralised selection panel system
- length of service/experience as a selection criterion.

Comments as to how the review process could be improved varied considerably from officer to officer. However, a large number of respondents indicated that time delays in the process needed to be reduced.

Part 1: Introduction

Purpose of report

This research report arises from a recommendation of the 1996 Queensland Police Service Review Committee (QPS Review Committee) that proposed that the new selection panel system be introduced for a trial period of two years, and that it be carefully monitored and evaluated by the Criminal Justice Commission (CJC) in conjunction with the QPS. The report presents the results of a baseline survey undertaken prior to the introduction of the new system, which collected data on the perceptions held by police officers about the promotion, transfer, and review systems of the QPS.

This initial section provides a brief account of the background of the merit selection process employed by the QPS and details the relevant recommendations of the QPS Review Committee. The section also briefly outlines the research plan and the survey instrument adopted, as well as the rationale behind and the limitations of the study.

Background

Before 1990, promotion and transfers in the Queensland Police Force (as it was then known) were largely made on the basis of seniority. The effectiveness and competence of an officer were not of primary importance. The Promotions and Transfers Board (comprising Assistant Commissioners) made recommendations on appointments below Commissioned Officer level to the Commissioner of Police. Promotions to Commissioned Officer Level were by recommendation of the Commissioner to the Minister and Cabinet and approved by Governor-in-Council.

Following the recommendations of the Fitzgerald Report, the *Police Service Administration Act 1990* provided for appointments to be made impartially and on merit.

In the period between the adoption of the merit-based system and the publication of the report of the QPS Review Committee, the QPS promotion and transfer system had been examined by several committees and review bodies, including:

- an internal QPS Review Committee in 1992
- the Public Sector Management Commission Review in 1993
- the CJC Report on *Implementation of Reform within the QPS* in 1994.

The report of the QPS Review Committee, like the others before it, identified widespread dissatisfaction among officers with the promotion and transfer system (p.116). The report highlighted five major issues of concern raised by officers throughout the State:

- regional bias in promotion and transfer decisions
- inconsistent decision making by selection panels
- perception that the role of 'experience' in assessing merit has been devalued
- lack of common competencies required for each rank
- the workload generated for officers on selection panels.

Recommendation 56 of the QPS Review Committee Report proposed that substantial changes be introduced to the promotion process to address the above problems and perceptions, including the introduction of a new system of selection panels which would:

- use generic appointments where appropriate
- constitute 'standing' regional panels for each generic group advertised
- have periodical sittings for each such panel
- have tight central control of selection criteria and weightings
- uses panel convenors who have undergone an appropriate accreditation process and who are external to the region or command for which selections are being made
- include an external independent member such as a retired magistrate or other respected community member with some knowledge of policing, who has full voting rights
- not be of single-gender composition.

The changes to the promotion and transfer system as prescribed in Recommendation 56 of the QPS Review Committee were introduced through the amendment and reissue of Section 16 of the QPS Human Resource Management (HRM) Manual on 1 May 1998.

Recommendation 56 further proposed that the new selection panel system be introduced for a trial period of two years, and that it be carefully monitored and evaluated by the CJC in conjunction with the QPS.

In accordance with this recommendation a research plan was developed which included two baseline surveys designed to capture data prior to the implementation of the proposed changes on officers' perceptions of the promotion and transfer system. Key elements of the plan were:

- a survey of officer perceptions about the promotion and transfer system (the Applicant Survey)
- a survey of selection panel members (the Panel Member Survey).

The Applicant Survey was designed to collect data in relation to: QPS officers' level of involvement in the promotion and transfer system; experiences with the selection panel process; the provision of post-selection feedback; perceptions of the quality of the various parts of the promotion, transfer, and review process; and problems identified and suggestions for improvement.

The questionnaire consisted of 49 questions, divided into the following six sections:

- Perceptions of the promotion, transfer and review system
- Involvement in the promotion and transfer system
- Personal knowledge
- Feedback
- Comments
- Demographics.

A draft questionnaire was provided to the QPS for comment. The questionnaire was also piloted in three separate locations within the Brisbane Metropolitan Area. As a result of the feedback received, several questions were modified. See appendix for a copy of this questionnaire.

The Panel Member Survey was designed to collect data from those officers actually involved in conducting the selection process in relation to: their experiences with the selection panel process; the provision of post-selection feedback; the workload of selection panel members; and selection panel training.

It is proposed to repeat these surveys in the latter part of 1999, in order to ascertain if the changes to the promotion and transfer process have had an impact on officer perceptions of that process.

Why do this study?

Collecting data on the perceptions of QPS officers' about the promotion and transfer process is important as perceptions of fairness in managerial decision making have been closely related to certain job-related behaviours of employees. As Eskew (1993, p.188) states:

> In general, it has been found that individuals who perceive decision making systems as fair provide actions that benefit the organization and impact organizational effectiveness (i.e., increased performance). This has prompted organizational researchers to examine a specific type of behaviour that also benefits the organization and promotes organizational effectiveness; organizational citizenship behaviour.

Organisational Citizenship Behaviour is defined as work-related behaviours that are discretionary, not related to the formal organisational reward system, and, in the aggregate, promote the effective functioning of the organisation (Organ, 1988). Organisational Citizenship Behaviour has been described as including categories of behaviour such as altruism, conscientiousness, sportsmanship, courtesy, and civic virtue.

Research in the area of organisational justice suggests that selection decisions, the procedures followed in making them, and the interpersonal skills of decision makers, will have an effect on individuals' attitudes about the fairness of outcomes from those decisions (Eskew 1993, p. 186).

It is important to collect baseline data in order to properly evaluate whether the changes made by the QPS to the system will, in time, have an impact (positive or negative) on officer perceptions of the fairness and efficiency of the promotion and transfer system.

Limitations of study

The study is limited by its design in that it seeks to measure only officer perceptions. It has been recognised in the literature on this topic that employees who believe they have received an outcome less than they deserve, regardless of the way they form this judgment, are likely to respond negatively to the process (McEnrue 1989, p. 817). Thus, the outcome of an individual applicant's involvement in the promotion and transfer system may shape his/her perceptions as to its fairness. For example, if an officer takes the view that a particular person will be successful in obtaining a particular appointment over themselves, and this actually occurs, then rightly or wrongly the views about the fairness of the selection process will be re-enforced. There may be instances where respondents have been truly disadvantaged in the QPS merit selection process, but it is equally likely that some officers will merely perceive this to be the case.

As Caulfield (1991, p. 9) states:

> Put simply, only one member is going to be completely happy with the final selection, yet there could be a dozen or so others who would see that choice as poor - they should have been chosen, they were better. It is a bitter pill to swallow. Much easier to blame the system than to do some critical self assessment.

It should also be noted that the QPS has introduced, or is in the process of introducing, other changes to the promotion and transfer process. These changes include automatic progression to Senior Constable upon successful completion of certain prerequisites, including the Constable Development Program and the introduction of prerequisites for promotion to Inspector including successful completion of the Management Development Program and an Assessment Development Centre. These additional changes may also have an impact on officer perceptions of the promotion and transfer process.

Structure of report

This report presents the findings from the Applicant Survey according to the following headings:

- methodology and sample characteristics
- perceptions of the promotion, transfer and review system
- personal experience of applicants
- comments of applicants.

Part 2: Methodology and sample characteristics

This chapter describes the methodology used in the Applicant Survey and the characteristics of the officers who responded to the survey.

Survey procedures

The sample frame consisted of a randomly generated group of officers across the State. The data were collected by means of a computer-based survey utilising the QPS Bulletin Board and e-mail systems.

The officers selected were sent an e-mail message from the Commissioner of Police, endorsed by the presidents of the Queensland Police Union of Employees and the Commissioned Officers Union. The e-mail message requested officers to access the QPS Bulletin Board and complete the questionnaire. Reminder messages were sent to all officers in the sample 14 days following the initial message.

Having completed the questionnaire, respondents were asked to click on the 'submit evaluation' button which automatically downloaded the officers' individual responses to a secure database.

Sample selections and response rates

The initial e-mail message was sent to officers on 31 October 1997, with the closing date for receipt of responses set at 28 November 1997.

In the course of analysing the data it was discovered that extensive over-sampling had occurred in two regions due to an error in the sample generation program. To correct this error, a further statewide sample was generated and the survey was readministered via an e-mail message of 6 March 1998. The closing date for receipt of responses was 3 April 1998.

To ensure that the officers surveyed had some prior experience with the QPS promotion and transfer system, the sample was taken from officers with at least five years' sworn service (Constable pay point 5 and above). The sample construction included a random selection of one in five male officers, one in two female officers of the rank of Sergeant and above; and one in four of female officers below the rank of Sergeant. Female officers were over-sampled to ensure that there were sufficient females in the study to test for possible gender differences in responses.

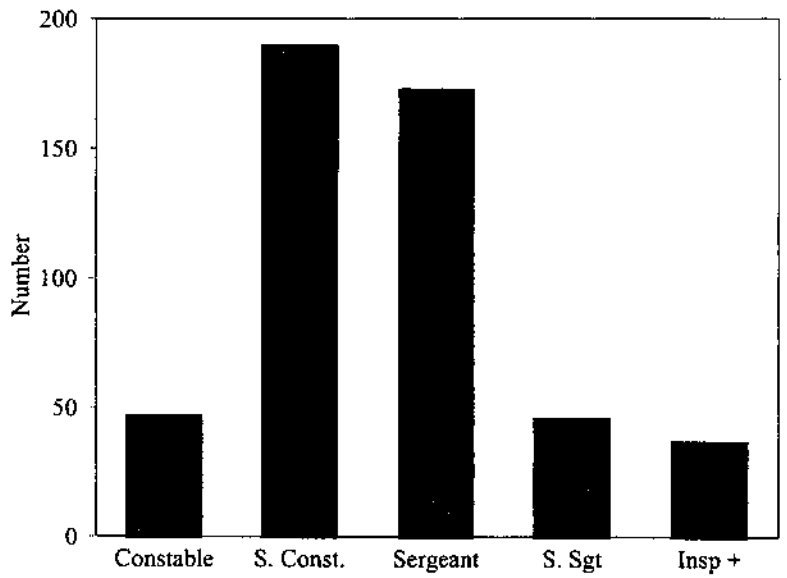
A total of 1,053 officers were sent the survey with 551 completed questionnaires received. This represents a response rate of 52.3 per cent, which is relatively good for studies of this kind. Given the high response rate, it is likely that the Applicant Survey results broadly reflect the views and experiences of the total population of police officers in the QPS.

Characteristics of sample

Rank of respondents

The distribution of the rank of respondents is displayed below (figure 2.1). The data indicate that the majority of respondents were concentrated in the ranks of Senior Constable and Sergeant.

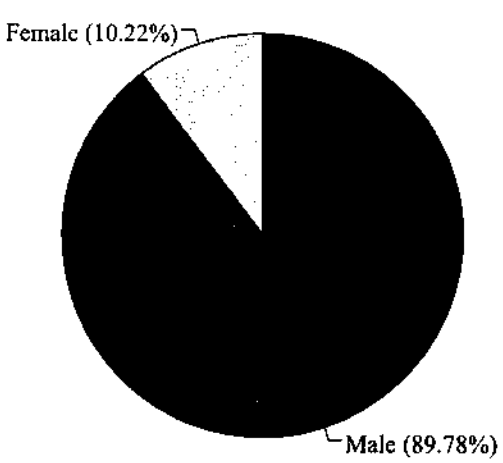
Figure 2.1 — Current rank of respondents



Gender of respondents

The proportion of male respondents was substantially higher than female respondents. The gender breakdown of respondents broadly reflects the target population for the survey and is displayed in figure 2.2 below.

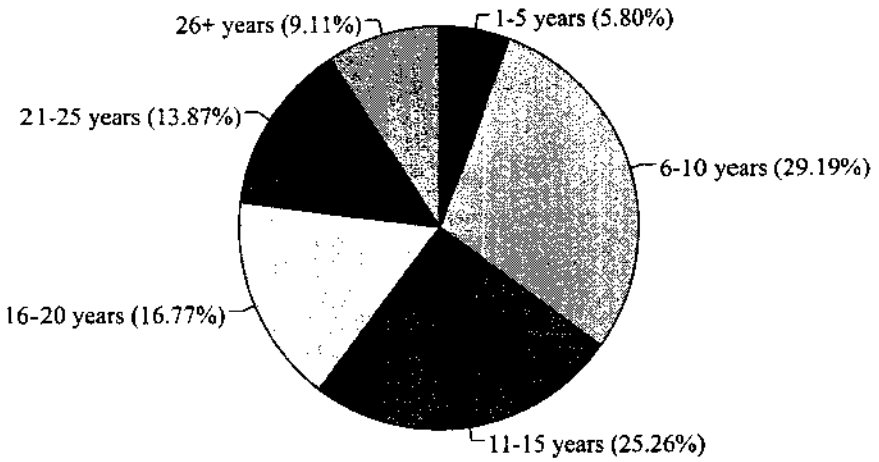
Figure 2.2 — Gender of respondents



Years sworn into Queensland Police Service

Figure 2.3 below demonstrates that, at the time of the survey, the majority of respondents had been sworn in for periods of six to fifteen years.

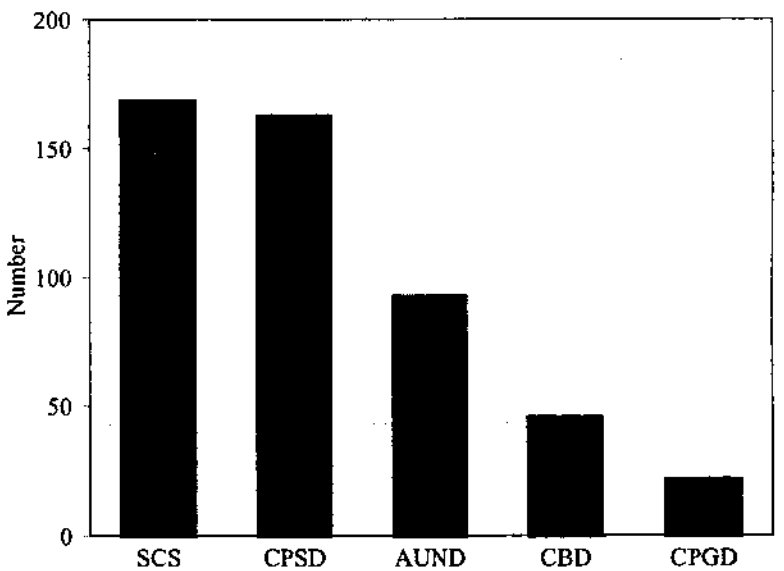
Figure 2.3 — Years sworn to Queensland Police Service



Level of education

Figure 2.4 indicates that the majority of respondents had not attended university. Most respondents had as their highest level of education attendance and/or completion of secondary education or completion of some post-secondary diploma, TAFE certificate or trade qualification.

Figure 2.4 — Level of education



SCS = Some or completed secondary education.
CPSD = Completed other post-secondary diploma, TAFE certificate or trade qualification.
AUND = Attended university, no degree.
CBD = Completed bachelors degree.
CPGD = Completed postgraduate diploma or degree.

Region of respondents

A total of 32 respondents (6.5%) chose not to indicate which region they were from. The numbers of respondents from each region are displayed in table 2.1 below.

Table 2.1 — Region of respondents

Region	N	%
Far Northern	36	7.3
Northern	33	6.7
Central	36	7.3
North Coast	54	11.0
Southern	39	7.9
South Eastern	41	8.3
Metro North	51	10.3
Metro South	39	7.9
State Crime Ops	32	6.5
Other HQ functions (e.g. CJC, PSU, Operations Support Command, Office of the Commissioner, Corporate Services)	100	20.3
Did not indicate region	32	6.5
TOTAL	**493**	**100**

In summary, the survey sample had the following characteristics:

- most were male
- most were concentrated in the ranks of Senior Constable and Sergeant
- the majority had less than 15 years service in the QPS
- the majority had not attended university
- respondents were spread across all regions.

The gender, rank and regional distribution broadly reflected the target population for the survey.

Part 3: Section A — Perceptions of the promotion, transfer and review systems

Section A asked 21 questions designed to measure respondents' perceptions of the promotion, transfer and review systems of the QPS. Each question contained a statement to which officers were requested to respond on a five-point scale, ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree.

This chapter presents the survey findings from Section A by grouping the responses under the following headings:

- fairness, consistency and bias
- selection panel policies and procedures
- review process.

Fairness, consistency and bias

Four statements in Section A explored issues of perception of fairness, consistency and bias.

Responses across entire sample

Table 3.1 below presents the total proportion of officers' responses to questions one to four across the entire sample.

Table 3.1 — Responses to statements re fairness, consistency and bias: total sample

Statement	% Agree or strongly agree	% Neither agree nor disagree	% Disagree or strongly disagree
A1. The QPS promotion and transfer system is fair.	14.0	18.5	67.5
A2. There is bias towards appointing applicants from within the particular region that the position is located.	69.5	18.1	12.4
A3. QPS selection panels are mostly consistent in their approach.	17.9	20.9	61.2
A4. Officers located outside regional headquarters have an equal chance of gaining appointments there.	9.5	34.3	56.1

Table 3.1 demonstrates that the majority of the total respondents (N = 493) held negative perceptions as to the fairness of the promotion transfer and review systems. Most disagreed with the following statements:

- the QPS promotion and transfer system is fair (67.5%)
- selection panels are consistent in their approach (61.2%)

- officers located outside regional headquarters have an equal chance of gaining appointments there (56.1%).

In addition, 69.5 per cent of respondents agreed that there is a bias towards appointing applicants from within the particular region that the position is located.

Responses by success in gaining an appointment

As discussed in Part 1, the outcome of individual selection decisions may shape applicants' perceptions as to the fairness of the promotion system. A chi-square test was performed to determine whether being successful in obtaining an appointment in the period since 1 January 1995 influenced the way officers responded to these questions.

In three out of the four statements, significant differences were found between those who had been successful in obtaining an appointment in the period since 1 January 1995 and those who had not (see table 3.2).

However, while there were some differences between the proportion of successful and unsuccessful officers who held a given perception, there remained a high proportion of applicants who, despite being successful, held negative perceptions about the issues of fairness, consistency and bias. In summary, a substantial proportion of successful officers disagreed with the following statements:

- the QPS promotion and transfer system is fair (62%)
- selection panels are mostly consistent in their approach (58.1%)
- officers located outside regional headquarters have an equal chance of gaining appointments there (48.8%).

In addition, 64.5 per cent of respondents who were successful in obtaining a position were of the view that there is a bias towards appointing applicants from within the particular region that the position is located.

Table 3.2 — Responses to statements re fairness, consistency and bias by success in gaining an appointment

Statement		Appointment N=203	No appointment N=232	p value
A1. The QPS promotion and transfer system is fair.	**Agree**	18.2	10.4	.00000 ***
	Neither	19.7	15.9	
	Disagree	62.0	73.7	
A2. There is bias towards appointing applicants from within the particular region that the position is located.	**Agree**	64.5	72.8	.02818 *
	Neither	22.2	15.1	
	Disagree	13.3	12.1	
A3. QPS selection panels are mostly consistent in their approach.	**Agree**	21.2	14.6	.00954 **
	Neither	20.7	20.3	
	Disagree	58.1	65.1	
A4. Officers located outside regional headquarters have an equal chance of gaining appointments there.	**Agree**	11.8	6.5	.05891 ns
	Neither	39.4	32.3	
	Disagree	48.8	61.2	

Notes:
1. Fifty-eight respondents (11.8% of the sample) did not indicate whether they had been successful at QB5.
2. Successful was defined as obtaining an appointment since 1 January 1995.
3. For ease of presentation, this table combines the responses 'strongly agree' and 'agree' and the responses 'disagree' and 'strongly disagree'. However, when determining significant differences, chi-square tests were performed on the entire range of responses.
   ns = no significant difference was found
   * = significant at p<.05
   ** = significant at p<.01
   *** = significant at p<.001

Responses by rank and gender

A chi-square test was performed to determine whether officers of different ranks had significantly different responses to the statement: 'The QPS promotion and transfer system is fair'.

Table 3.3 — Perceptions of fairness by rank

Statement	Rank	N	% Agree or strongly agree	% Disagree or strongly disagree	Sig. Diffs
A1. The QPS promotion and transfer system is fair.	**Constable**	**47**	2.1	85.1	***
	Senior Constable	**190**	11.6	68.4	
	Sergeant	**172**	14.6	69.2	
	Senior Sergeant	**46**	15.2	69.6	
	Inspector or above	**37**	37.8	29.7	

Note: For ease of presentation, this table combines the responses 'strongly agree' and 'agree' and the responses 'disagree' and 'strongly disagree'. However, when determining significant differences, chi-square tests were performed on the entire range of responses.
*** = significant at p<.001

Table 3.3 indicates that officers' perceptions of the fairness of the QPS promotion and transfer system tends to increase as they progress up the rank structure. The higher the rank of the officer the more likely that he/she has achieved positive outcomes from the promotion and transfer system and the more likely he/she has been called upon to sit on selection panels. It is not surprising that those primarily responsible for selection decisions would more readily view the system as fair.

There were no significant differences in the responses from different ranks to the statement: 'QPS selection panels are mostly consistent in their approach'.

There were no significant differences in the responses of males and females to either statement.

Responses by region

There were no significant differences found between officers from different regions to either of the statements: 'There is a bias towards appointing applicants from within the particular region that the position is located' and 'Officers located outside of regional headquarters have an equal chance of gaining appointments there' . However, respondents from Far Northern Region (85.7%) and State Crime Operations (84.4%) were more likely to agree that there is a bias towards appointing applicants from within the particular region that the position is located, than were respondents from other regions (see table 3.4 below).

It should be noted that respondents' perceptions may have been based on experiences of applying for positions in regions other than the region which they are currently serving.

Table 3.4 — Perceptions of regional bias by region of respondent

Statement	Region of respondent	N	% Agree or strongly agree	% Disagree or strongly disagree	Sig. Diffs
A2. There is a bias towards appointing applicants from within the particular region that the position is located.	Far Northern	35	85.7	5.7	ns
	Northern	33	60.6	12.1	
	Central	36	61.1	11.1	
	North Coast	54	59.2	24.1	
	Southern	39	61.5	23.1	
	South Eastern	41	65.9	14.6	
	Metro North	51	70.6	13.7	
	Metro South	39	71.8	12.9	
	State Crime Ops	32	84.4	3.1	
	Other HQ Functions	100	71.3	7.0	

Note: For ease of presentation, this table combines the responses 'strongly agree' and 'agree' and the responses 'disagree' and 'strongly disagree'. However, when determining significant differences, chi-square tests were performed on the entire range of responses.
ns = not significant

Selection policies and procedures

Ten statements in Section A explored issues relating to QPS selection policies and procedures.

Results by entire sample

Table 3.5 below presents the total sample's response to each of these questions.

Table 3.5 — Responses to statements re selection panel policies and procedures: Total sample

Statement	% Agree or strongly agree	% Neither agree nor disagree	% Disagree or strongly disagree
A5. The procedures for QPS selection panels as set out in the HRM Policy and Procedures Manual are clear.	43.3	36.4	20.3
A6. It is difficult for officers to demonstrate their merit in the selection process.	71.3	11.9	16.8
A7. The quality of selection decisions made by QPS panels needs significant improvement.	72.6	20.0	7.3
A8. Length of service should be given more emphasis in the assessment of merit.	76.4	8.6	15.1
A9. The pre-qualifying programs as currently proposed for progression to ranks are a positive step.	47.4	14.2	38.4
A10. Too much emphasis is placed on the interview process by QPS selection panels.	67.1	21.2	11.8
A11. An officer's potential to perform a position is rarely given adequate consideration during the selection process.	67.9	18.2	13.9
A12. Since 1 January 1995, the Key Selection Criteria chosen by the QPS have accurately reflected the actual requirements for police officer positions.	28.3	24.8	46.8
A13. QPS selection panels place too much weight on educational qualifications.	55.4	22.2	22.4
A14. Referee checking is important to establish each officer's level of past performance.	83.7	6.9	9.3
A15. In practice, QPS selection panels do not closely adhere to the proper processes as laid down in the legislation and HRM policies.	32.7	50.7	16.5
A21. All QPS officers should be provided with formalised training in applying for positions.	84.1	8.6	7.3

Table 3.5 above demonstrates that the majority of respondents to these statements had negative perceptions of the QPS selection policies and procedures. Most respondents agreed with the following negative statements:

- it is difficult for officers to demonstrate their merit in the selection process (71.3%)
- the quality of selection panel decisions needs significant improvement (72.6%)
- length of service should be given more emphasis in the assessment of merit (76.4%)

- too much emphasis is placed on the interview process by QPS selection panels (67.1%)
- an officer's potential to perform a position is rarely given adequate consideration during the selection process (67.9%)
- QPS selection panels place too much weight on educational qualifications (55.4%).

Similarly, 46.8 per cent of respondents disagreed with the positive statement: 'Since 1 January 1995 the Key Selection Criteria chosen by the QPS have accurately reflected the actual requirements for police officer positions'.

In contrast, smaller proportions of officers agreed with the following positive statements:

- the procedures for QPS selection panels as set out in the HRM Policy and Procedures Manual are clear (43.3%)
- the pre-qualifying programs as currently proposed for progression to ranks are a positive step (47.4%).

High proportions of respondents agreed with the following relatively 'neutral' statements:

- referee checking is important to establish each officer's level of past performance (83.7%)
- all QPS officers should be provided with formalised training in applying for positions (84.1%).

The majority of the respondents (50.7%) chose neither to agree nor disagree with the statement: 'In practice, QPS selection panels do not closely adhere to the proper processes as laid down in the legislation and HRM policies'. This may indicate a lack of first-hand knowledge of either the processes which panels are obliged to follow or whether panels actually operate in accordance with these processes.

Results by success in gaining appointment

A chi-square test was performed to determine whether being successful in obtaining an appointment in the period since 1 January 1995 influenced the way officers responded to these questions.

In eight of the ten questions significant differences were found, to varying degrees, between those who had been successful in obtaining an appointment in the period since 1 January 1995 and those who had not (see table 3.6).

Table 3.6 — Responses to statements re selection panel policies and procedures by success in gaining appointment

Statement		Appointment	No Appointment	p value
A5. The procedures for QPS selection panels as set out in the HRM Policy and Procedures Manual are clear.	Agree	43.9	41.4	.43688 ns
	Neither	36.5	38.8	
	Disagree	19.7	19.8	
A6. It is difficult for officers to demonstrate their merit in the selection process.	Agree	64.1	77.0	.00004 ***
	Neither	11.9	12.6	
	Disagree	23.9	10.4	
A7. The quality of selection decisions made by QPS panels needs significant improvement.	Agree	69.3	77.9	.01149 *
	Neither	21.8	17.3	
	Disagree	8.9	4.8	
A8. Length of service should be given more emphasis in the assessment of merit.	Agree	70.8	82.3	.00044 ***
	Neither	8.4	7.3	
	Disagree	20.7	10.4	
A9. The pre-qualifying programs as currently proposed for progression to ranks are a positive step.	Agree	47.8	44.9	.33251 ns
	Neither	15.8	12.9	
	Disagree	36.4	42.3	
A10. Too much emphasis is placed on the interview process by QPS selection panels.	Agree	59.6	71.9	.00710 **
	Neither	24.6	20.8	
	Disagree	15.8	7.3	
A11. An officer's potential to perform a position is rarely given adequate consideration during the selection process.	Agree	63.0	74.9	.01860 *
	Neither	20.2	15.2	
	Disagree	16.8	10.0	
A12. Since 1 January 1995 the Key Selection Criteria chosen by the QPS have accurately reflected the actual requirements for police officer positions.	Agree	30.6	26.9	.12912 ns
	Neither	26.1	24.7	
	Disagree	43.3	48.5	
A13. QPS selection panels place too much weight on educational qualifications.	Agree	48.7	61.9	.03852 *
	Neither	23.6	21.6	
	Disagree	27.6	16.5	
A14. Referee checking is important to establish each officer's level of past performance.	Agree	87.2	81.4	.39732 ns
	Neither	6.9	7.4	
	Disagree	5.9	11.2	
A15. In practice, QPS selection panels do not closely adhere to the proper processes as laid down in the legislation and HRM policies.	Agree	25.6	43.7	.00091 ***
	Neither	56.7	45.9	
	Disagree	17.8	10.4	
A21. All QPS officers should be provided with formalised training in applying for positions.	Agree	82.7	84.9	.02587 *
	Neither	8.4	9.9	
	Disagree	8.9	5.2	

Notes:

1. Fifty-eight respondents (11.8% of the sample) did not indicate whether or not they had been successful at QB5.
2. For ease of presentation, this table combines the responses 'strongly agree' and 'agree' and the responses 'disagree' and 'strongly disagree'. However, when determining significant differences, chi-square tests were performed on the entire range of responses.

ns = no significant difference was found
* = significant at $p<.05$
** = significant at $p<.01$
*** = significant at $p<.001$

While there were some differences between the perceptions of successful and unsuccessful officers, there remained a significant proportion of successful respondents that held negative perceptions about QPS selection policies and procedures. In summary, most successful officers agreed with the following negative statements:

- it is difficult for officers to demonstrate their merit in the selection process (64.1%)
- the quality of selection decisions needs significant improvement (69.3%)
- length of service should be given more emphasis in the assessment of merit (70.8%)
- too much emphasis is placed on the interview process by QPS selection panels (59.6%)
- an officer's potential to perform a position is rarely given adequate consideration during the selection process (63%).

Responses by rank and gender

No significant differences were found in the responses of officers of different ranks nor between males and females to the statements about selection policies and procedure.

Table 3.7 — Perceptions of selection panel processes by rank

Statement	Rank	N	% Agree or strongly agree	% Disagree or strongly disagree	Sig. Diffs
A15. In practice, QPS selection panels do not closely adhere to the proper processes as laid down in the legislation and HRM policies.	**Constable**	**47**	25.5	2.1	***
	Senior Constable	**189**	29.1	9.0	
	Sergeant	**172**	39.5	19.2	
	Senior Sergeant	**46**	34.7	28.3	
	Inspector or above	**37**	27.0	45.9	

Note: For ease of presentation, this table combines the responses 'strongly agree' and 'agree' and the responses 'disagree' and 'strongly disagree'. However, when determining significant differences, chi-square tests were performed on the entire range of responses.
*** = significant at $p<.001$

Table 3.7 above indicates that officers' perceptions that selection panels closely adhere to proper processes as laid down in the legislation and HRM policies tend to increase as they progress up the rank structure. As noted earlier, the higher the rank the more likely that the respondent has been called upon to sit on selection panels.

Responses by level of education and years of service

No significant differences were found between respondents of different levels of education in response to the statement: 'An officer's potential to perform a position is rarely given adequate consideration during the selection process'.

Similarly, no significant differences were found between the respondents of differing years of service in response to the statement: 'Length of service should be given more emphasis in the assessment of merit'.

Table 3.8 — Selection panels' treatment of qualifications by level of education

Statement	Education	N	% Agree or strongly agree	% Disagree or strongly disagree	Sig. Diffs
A13. QPS selection panels place too much weight on educational qualifications.	Some/completed secondary	168	68.4	10.1	***
	Completed post-secondary/TAFE/ trade	162	62.3	16.6	
	Attended university — no degree	93	51.6	23.7	
	Completed bachelors degree	46	4.3	67.4	
	Completed post-grad degree or diploma	22	27.2	59.1	

Note: For ease of presentation, this table combines the responses 'strongly agree' and 'agree' and the responses 'disagree' and 'strongly disagree'. However, when determining significant differences, chi-square tests were performed on the entire range of responses.
*** = significant at p<.001

However, table 3.8 above indicates that officers with lower levels of education were significantly more likely to agree that QPS selection panels place too much weight on educational qualifications, while those with higher qualifications were more likely to disagree.

Review process

Respondents were asked five questions in order to measure their perceptions of the promotion and transfer review process. The results of the responses to these questions have been the subject of a separate report entitled *Monitoring the QPS Promotion and Transfer Review Process* (Review Report), October 1998.

The responses to these questions indicated that officers who had some actual involvement in the review process tended to hold stronger views (both positive and negative) about the review process, while officers who had not had involvement in the process were more likely to select the response 'neither agree nor disagree'.

The findings show that officers who had been involved in the review process as an applicant for review generally had a more negative attitude than those who were involved as appointees. This finding corresponds with others in the Review Report, which indicate that a very small proportion of applicants for review (2.6% in 1996 and 1.4 % in 1997) were successful in obtaining appointment to the position they sought to challenge.

Applicants for review were more likely to disagree that Commissioners for Police Service Reviews (Review Commissioners) are consistent in their recommendations (43.8%), that applicants who demonstrate a genuine grievance will get a favourable recommendation from a Review Commissioner (59.7%), and that the review process treats all officers fairly (59.6%). Similarly, they were more likely to agree that Review Commissioners make their recommendations on unreliable information (49.1%).

Alternatively, a very high proportion of appointees whose appointment is subject to an application for review are successful in retaining that appointment. Correspondingly, those involved in the review process exclusively as an appointee generally had a more positive view of the review process. Appointees were more likely to perceive that the Review Commissioners were consistent in their recommendations (37.5%) and that the review process treats officers fairly (41%). Appointees were also more likely to disagree with the statement that recommendation were based on unreliable information (32.5%). Thus, it would appear that the outcomes of the review process have an influence on the individual respondent's perceptions of that process.

Officers generally found the review process confusing and difficult to understand, regardless of whether they had been involved in the process or not, and irrespective of level of education and years of service.

Conclusions

Overall, respondents to Section A of the Applicant Survey held negative perceptions of the fairness and efficiency of the QPS promotion, transfer and review processes.

More than 50 per cent of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the following negative statements:

- there is a bias towards appointing applicants from within the particular region that the position is located
- it is difficult for officers to demonstrate their merit in the selection process
- the quality of selection panel decisions needs significant improvement
- length of service should be given more emphasis in the assessment of merit
- too much emphasis is placed on the interview process by QPS selection panels
- an officer's potential to perform a position is rarely given adequate consideration during the selection process
- QPS selection panels place too much weight on educational qualifications
- the review process is confusing and difficult to understand.

Similarly, more than 50 per cent of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the following positive statements:

- the QPS promotion and transfer system is fair
- selection panels are consistent in their approach
- officers located outside regional headquarters have an equal chance of gaining appointments there.

Significant differences were found between the perceptions held by respondents who had obtained an appointment in the period since 1 January 1995 and those who were unsuccessful. Nevertheless, there remained a significant proportion of successful respondents who held negative perceptions of the fairness and efficiency of the promotion and transfer system.

There does not appear to be a strong link between a successful outcome in the appointment process and positive perceptions of the promotion and transfer system.

In contrast, the responses to questions about the review process indicated a link between positive outcomes in the review process and positive perceptions of that process. A greater proportion of officers who had been involved in the review process as applicants for review held negative perceptions of the review process when compared with those respondents who were involved as appointees. This corresponds with other findings from the Review Report, which indicates that a very high proportion of appointees subject to an application for review are successful in retaining the appointment the subject of the challenge.

A possible explanation of this finding is that appointees subject to an application for review are likely to have had comparatively few experiences with the review process, and a high success rate of retaining their appointment on review. On the other hand, respondents who were successful in obtaining an appointment in the period since 1 January 1995 may have been involved in a number of selection processes of which he/she was only successful in one. Thus, these officers' overall perceptions of the fairness or otherwise of the promotion and transfer system may be influenced by experiences in a number of different selection processes in addition to the one which they were successful in obtaining.

Officers' perceptions that the QPS promotion and transfer system is fair and that proper procedures are followed tends to increase as they progress up the rank structure. The higher the rank of the officer the more likely that he/she has achieved positive outcomes from the promotion and transfer system and/or has been called upon to sit on selection panels, and therefore more willing to defend the operation of the process.

Officers with lower levels of education were significantly more likely to agree that QPS selection panels place too much weight on educational qualifications, while those with higher qualifications were more likely to disagree with that statement.

There were no significant differences found between respondents from different regions to either of the statements relating to regional bias. However, a high proportion of respondents from Far Northern Region (85.7%) and State Crime Operations (84.4%) agreed that there is a bias towards appointing applicants from within the particular region that the position is located. It should be noted, however, that respondents may have been commenting on experiences of applying for positions in regions other than the region which they were currently serving.

There were no significant differences found in the responses of males and females, nor between officers of differing lengths of service to statements in Section A.

Part 4: Experiences of the promotion and transfer process

Section C — Personal knowledge

Survey findings

Frequency of use of personal knowledge

The frequency with which the issue of personal knowledge arises appears high. Of those who responded to Section C, 44.6 per cent indicated that in their last application for a position they had previously worked with or for a member of the panel. In addition, 67.5 per cent of respondents had applied for a position since 1 January 1995 where they believed that another applicant had worked with or for a panel member.

Influence of personal knowledge

Respondents were asked: 'In relation to the last position for which you applied, do you believe that the panel member(s) knowledge of your performance influenced the selection panel's decision to your advantage or disadvantage or not at all?'. As shown in table 4.1, the largest proportion of respondents (37.2%) stated that they did not know whether the use of personal knowledge influenced the panel in relation to themselves.

Table 4.1 — Perception of the influence of personal knowledge on the respondent's own application

Influence on panel member decision	Number of respondents	%
Advantage	69	20.5
Disadvantage	48	14.3
No influence	94	28.0
Don't know	125	37.2
TOTAL	336	100

Respondents were also asked to comment on whether a panel member's knowledge of another applicant(s) had have influenced the selection panel's decision to the other applicants advantage. A much larger percentage of respondents to this question (56.6%) were prepared to state that personal knowledge of a panel member was used to advantage another applicant (see table 4.2).

Table 4.2 — Perception of the influence of personal knowledge on other applicants'

Influence on panel member decision	Number of respondents	%
Advantage	209	56.6
Disadvantage	15	4.1
No influence	44	11.9
Don't know	101	27.4
TOTAL	369	100

Section D — Feedback

Survey findings

Of the respondents to Section D who were not successful in their last application for a position (N = 281), 62.3 per cent sought feedback. Respondents who indicated that they did not seek feedback were asked to specify the reasons feedback was not sought.

Reasons for not seeking feedback were proffered by 74 respondents. The reasons put forward have been coded and are displayed in table 4.3 below:

Table 4.3 — Unsuccessful applicants' reasons for not seeking feedback

Reasons for not seeking feedback	Number of respondents	%
Received sub-standard/inconsistent feedback in past	14	18.9
No point/no faith in selection process	28	37.8
Circumstances altered such that no longer necessary	7	9.5
Not necessary/accepted decision	20	27.0
Fear of failure	1	1.4
No time	2	2.7
Apathy/disappointment	2	2.7
TOTAL	74	100

Some typical complaints of of inconsistent or poor feedback in the past were:

> Every time feedback is asked for you are told a different thing. Some panel convenors sound like they have a standard answer they give each applicant and do not help you refine your application in any way.

> Waste of time, get same responses, 'close to mark', 'many applicants' etc.

Of those respondents who indicated that they had no faith in the selection process, some typical responses were as follows:

> I believe that it was made perfectly clear to me by a panel member that whilst s/he was on the panel I would not be selected.

> I don't believe people are selected on merit, only on who they know on the panel and what instructions have been given to panel members by hierarchy. Jobs for the boys so to speak.

One officer went as far to say that he was instructed to withdraw an application by a panel convenor:

> Instructed to withdraw from position by panel convenor because I may have got the position over his preferred applicant. If I didn't withdraw, it would influence his comments as my supervisor for any subsequent position applications by me.

Some typical comments of those officers who accepted the decision and did not seek feedback were:

> Because I was well aware that the reason I had missed out was because of nervousness at the interview.

> It appeared to me that the successful applicant was the best person for that position. His experience/knowledge was superior to mine therefore considered it unnecessary to seek feedback from an already busy panel convenor.

A complete list of all the responses to this question is available from the Research and Prevention Division.

Of those who sought feedback, only 76 respondents (35.5%) were satisfied with the feedback they received.

Respondents were asked to comment on what areas, if any, that the provision of feedback could be improved. There were 178 respondents to this question, five of whom indicated that the provision of feedback did not need improvement. The remaining 173 respondents offered 192 suggestions, which have been coded and displayed in table 4.4 below:

Table 4.4 — Suggestions for improving the provision of feedback

Suggestions	Number of respondents	%
Providers be more specific as to areas where applicant could improve	59	30.5
Providers be more prepared for feedback session	12	6.2
Improve consistency from panel to panel	17	8.8
More frank/honest in feedback	35	18.1
Feedback be provided faster	13	6.7
Ensure that it is provided/compulsory	12	6.2
More training for providers	5	2.6
Feedback in writing	20	10.4
Other suggestions *	19	9.8
TOTAL	192	100

Notes: * Other suggestions included: provision of feedback be less rushed; change selection panel system/composition; feedback be provided in person; provided by all members of the panel; show other short listed person's resume; tape feedback sessions; greater focus on development; definition of merit be stated; provider to listen to criticism of decision.

Of those respondents who criticised criticised feedback for being too vague and non-specific typical responses were:

> Specific reference to each criteria 'failed' instead of the usual 'you were all very close'.
>
> The feedback lacked quality, direction and failed to identify reasons where the successful applicant was better than I, and in what areas I should concentrate my efforts to present better or improve myself. A very general wash over to say the least.
>
> Feedback is normally vague and a non-specific answer.

Of those respondents who indicated that the system required more frank and open discussion of reasons for non selection, some typical responses were as follows:

> The responses by convenors should be more blunt, it is my experience that they don't want to upset you so they say you were very close. This is not what I want to know, I would rather be told what I need to improve and if possible how to do it.
>
> If the convenor told the truth it would be a step in the right direction. When you are told conflicting versions of what the decision is made on it makes one wonder about how fair dinkum the rotten system is.
>
> Full, frank and open feedback in written form if requested from the convenor. I have doubts that any of the feedback that I have ever received has been forthright and honest which proves no benefit at all to me with future applications.

A complete list of all the responses to this question is available from the Research and Prevention Division.

Conclusions

The situation where a panel member has personal knowledge of an applicant occurs regularly. A total of 44.6 per cent of respondents indicated that they had applied for a position where they had previously worked with or for a panel member. A total of 67.5 per cent of respondents were aware of other applicants of whom selection panel members had personal knowledge.

A significant proportion of respondents (56.6%) perceived that the selection panel's personal knowledge worked to the advantage of other applicants while only 20.5 per cent perceived personal knowledge worked to their own advantage.

Of the respondents who were unsuccessful in their last application for a position, 62.3 per cent sought post-selection feedback. Of those respondents, only 35 per cent were satisfied with the feedback they received.

Of those who did not seek feedback, it was evident that a substantial proportion failed to do so because of either a lack of faith in the system or prior negative experiences with the feedback process.

The two main suggestions for improvement of the provision of feedback were that providers be more specific and more frank.

Part 5: Section E — Comments

Section E invited respondents to answer three questions.

Problem(s) with promotion transfer and review systems

Respondents were asked: 'What do you see as the major problems, if any, with the current QPS promotion, transfer and review systems?' and to list the problems identified in rank order of importance. The first three problems listed by respondents were coded and the number of respondents who nominated each issue are displayed in table 5.1.

A total of 468 officers responded to this question. Of these respondents, three indicated that there was no problem with the current systems, a further 16 respondents offered no comment or their comment was so unclear it was not able to be coded. The remaining 449 respondents identified problems with the QPS promotion, transfer and review systems.

The six most frequently identified problems were as follows:

Nepotism/Cronyism/Corruption/Bias

The most commonly identified problem(s) were nepotism and bias. A total of 30.2 per cent of all respondents nominated these types of issues in their top three problems. Some typical responses were:

> If you have a 'sponsor' on the panel you have a distinct advantage over other applicants.

> Often panel members/convenors have determined who they believe should be the successful applicant prior to receiving applications.

Inconsistencies between selection panels

A total of 15.2 per cent of all respondents nominated inconsistencies in the selection panel system as one of the major problems with the system. Some typical responses were:

> Panels are inconsistent in their selection criteria.

> The difference in panel composition dictates that each panel will place an extremely different emphasis on skills for a position within the same job description.

Emphasis on academic qualifications

In all, 13.8 per cent of respondents complained that one of the major problems with the current system was an overemphasis on academic qualifications in the selection process. Some typical responses were:

> The main problem is that far too much emphasis is placed on educational qualifications and loyal service is not considered. Officers in office situations are preferred above those who are outside and doing real police work.

> Education outside the QPS is a strong advantage to some, whilst others, due to family commitments, cannot seek the same education and are disadvantaged.

Lack of recognition for seniority/length of service

Exactly 13 per cent of officers indicated that there was not enough recognition given to seniority or length of service in the selection panel process. Some typical responses were:

> You must pay respect to length of service unless that member obviously does not have the competence for the position.

> Officers qualified or have experience in that particular field getting over looked for an officer with less service and experience.

Regionalisation/Regional Bias

A total of 10.2 per cent of respondents referred to issues arising out of regionalisation or the existence of regional bias in respect to appointment decisions. Some typical responses were:

> Obvious bias shown to applicants from within the regions where the vacancy exists.

> The problem is with regionalisation. The QPS is effectively a separate police service within each region.

Delays

Some 10.5 per cent of respondents singled out delays in the promotion and transfer system as a significant problem. Some typical responses were:

> The delay in the formulation of panels. No feedback given to applicant as to why there is a delay.

> Extremely time consuming and slow.

A complete list of all the responses to this question is available from the Research and Prevention Division.

Table 5.1 — Problems identified within the QPS promotion, transfer and review systems

Types of problems identified	No. of respondents who identified problem (N=472)	Total % of respondents who identified problem in their top three
Nepotism/cronyism/corruption/bias	142	30.2
Inconsistencies between selection panels	72	15.2
Inappropriate emphasis on academic qualifications	65	13.8
No recognition of seniority/length of service	61	13.0
Regionalisation/regional bias	48	10.5
Delays	45	10.2
Inappropriate reliance on interview	35	7.4
Inappropriate use of personal knowledge	32	6.7
Problems with review process	30	6.3
System favours 'salespersons' (i.e. good application/interview technique)	28	6.0
Lack of emphasis on work performance	21	4.4
Problems with selection criteria	19	4.0
Process too subjective	16	3.3
Selection decisions based on inadequate information	16	3.3
Limited promotional opportunities	15	3.2
Selection processes employed	15	3.2
Process not accountable	13	2.8
Merit confusing/misunderstood	12	2.6
Inappropriate feedback	11	2.4
Inadequate selection panel training	10	2.1
Inadequate training for applicants	10	2.1
System constantly changing	10	2.1
Inappropriate panel composition/structure	10	2.1
Lack of career path/advice	6	1.3
Other*	39	7.7
No problems with current system	3	0.6
Unable to comment/no Answer	16	3.3

Notes: * 'Other' responses included: panels' failure to follow procedures; problems with referee reports; too much emphasis on experience in actual position; process causes disharmony; lack of communication; potential not taken into account; gender issues; administrators of process; insufficient time given to panels; lateral transfers under used; Management Development Program; family considerations not taken into account; inadequate performance measures; interstate officers preferred; promotion by positions vs rank.

Ways to improve QPS selection processes

The survey invited respondents to specify ways, if any, in which the current QPS selection process could be improved.

A total of 444 officers responded to this question. Of these respondents, 11 indicated that no changes were required or that contemplated changes were sufficient. A further 44 respondents provided no comment, or their response was so unclear it couldn't be coded.

The remaining 389 respondents suggested ways in which the QPS selection process could be improved. The first three options for improving the process nominated by each respondent were coded. The number of respondents who offered each type of suggestion is displayed in table 5.2.

The three most frequently suggested options for improving the QPS promotion and transfer system are detailed below.

Independent panel members

Of all the respondents to this question, 20.5 per cent nominated the use of independent panel members in their top three suggestions as to how the selection panel could be improved. For example:

> The panels should be 100% independent even if it means using no police connected panel members.
>
> Independent panels with obvious expert advice when required.

Centralised panel system

A total of 17.3 per cent of all respondents suggested a centralised panel as a solution to problems of inconsistency. Some typical examples of these types of responses include:

> Establishment of central permanent/semi-permanent panels comprised of highly trained and experienced members.
>
> A section devoted entirely to doing panels. This section could comprise about 20 to 30 staff on a rotational basis of six to twelve months that could do all panels throughout the state. This would ensure that there is some sort of consistency.

Length of service/experience a selection criterion

In all, 10.3 per cent of officers suggested that length of service or experience should be included as a criterion for promotion and transfer. Some typical responses were:

> Minimum length of service required before an officer can apply for a higher rank.
>
> By seniority and merit being given equal status within selection. Surely years of service have to be given some sort of merit.

A complete list of all the responses to this question is available from the Research and Prevention Division.

Table 5.2 — Ways to improve the QPS promotion and transfer system

Suggestions for improvement	No. of respondents who made suggestion for improvement (N=445)	Total % of respondents who included suggestion in their top three
Independent panel members	91	20.5
Centralised panel	77	17.3
Make length of service/experience a criterion	46	10.3
Dedicated panel members per region	29	6.5
Processes to reduce possibility of bias	26	5.8
Improve consistency between panels	21	4.7
Improve selection panel training/competence	21	4.7
Reduce emphasis on interview	20	4.4
Selection criteria more specific/relevant	19	4.3
Introduce qualifying exams/prerequisites	17	3.9
Reduce emphasis on educational qualifications	16	3.6
More weight on work performance	15	3.4
Improve applicant training	14	3.1
Alter emphasis on referee checks	14	3.1
Simplify selection panel procedures	13	2.9
Make panels more accountable	12	2.6
Improve feedback	9	2.2
Improve referee checking procedures	9	2.1
Reduce time taken in process	9	2.0
Abolish present system/revert to previous	8	1.8
Change application process	7	1.6
Change interview procedure	7	1.5
Better marketing of current system	5	1.1
Change selection panel composition	5	1.1
Other*	24	8.6
No changes/satisfied with proposed changes	11	2.5
No Answer/Indistinguishable	44	9.9

Notes: * 'Other' responses included: more time given to panels; change emphasis on applications; improve selection panel reporting process; better auditing/review of panel process; improve performance appraisal system; improve/validate information before panels; follow NZ model; increase emphasis on potential; abolish/change review process; tape selection panel interviews; more generic advertising; provide more in-service training time; changes to integrity as a criterion; more weight on knowledge; more weight on local issues; recognition that problems exist; ways to evaluate true competencies; stop changing goal posts; introduce points system.

Ways to improve review process

The survey invited respondents to comment on ways in which the review process could be improved. results of the responses to these questions have been the subject of a separate report entitled *Monitoring the QPS Promotion and Transfer Review Process*, October 1998.

In the course of responding to this question, 118 officers (N=412) indicated that they were unable to comment. Most officers cited their lack of exposure to the review process as to why they were unable to provide such comment.

Of those respondents who felt able to comment (N=294) most indicated that they thought the review process could be improved in some fashion, with only 15 respondents indicating that no improvement was necessary.

Comments as to how the review process could be improved varied considerably from officer to officer. However, a large number of respondents (49) indicated that delays in the process needed to be reduced.

The perceptions identified in the report of the QPS Review Committee were reiterated to varying degrees in the comments of officers.

A complete list of all the responses to this question is available from the Research and Prevention Division.

Conclusions

The major problems with the QPS promotion and transfer system as identified by the respondents to the Applicant Survey were:

- nepotism/cronyism/corruption/bias
- inconsistencies between selection panels
- the emphasis placed on academic qualifications
- lack of recognition for seniority/length of service
- regionalisation and regional bias
- delays.

These responses largely mirror the problems identified in the report of the QPS Review Committee except for the increased emphasis on nepotism, cronyism, bias and corruption. It may be that these types of problems are more likely to be raised in the context of a confidential questionnaire.

The three most popular suggestions for improving the current QPS promotion and transfer system were to introduce:

- independent selection panel members
- a centralised selection panel system
- length of service/experience as a selection criterion.

Comments as to how the review process could be improved varied considerably from officer to officer. However, a large number of respondents (49) indicated that delays in the process needed to be reduced.

Overall, the perceptions identified in the report of the QPS Review Committee were reiterated to varying degrees in the responses to this survey.

References

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QPS Review 1996, *Report on the Review of the Queensland Police Service* [Bingham Review], Prepared for the Honourable Russell Cooper MLA, Minister for Police and Corrective Services and Minister for Racing, QPS Review Committee, Kingswood Press, Brisbane.

Report on a Commission of Inquiry Pursuant to Orders in Council [Fitzgerald Report] 1989, Government Printer, Brisbane. Title of Inquiry: Commission of Inquiry into Possible Illegal Activities and Associated Police Misconduct [Fitzgerald Inquiry] 1989, Chaired by G E Fitzgerald, QC.

Appendix

PROMOTIONS AND TRANSFER

APPLICANT SURVEY

Some of the questions below will require you to recall how many times you were involved with various parts of the promotion and transfer process in the period from 1 January 1995 to the present. Your **best estimate** is all we require.

The information provided will be reported only in the form of statistical summaries and your individual identity will not be recorded in any form. The questionnaire is **completely confidential**. When you respond your answers to questions will be down loaded directly into a secure data base.

There are no right or wrong answers- we would just like your own personal experiences and views. Most questions can be answered by clicking on the button which most closely represents your view. Some questions require you to type your response. The survey takes approximately 10-15 minutes to complete.

You are requested to complete the survey by 14 November 1997. Your promptness in responding and returning this survey will be greatly appreciated. When you complete your survey you simply click on the "submit evaluation" button below to automatically forward your responses to the special data base created for the promotion and transfer system evaluation.

The findings of the survey will be published via the Bulletin Board for the information of all officers. It is expected that the analysis of the data will be completed by December 1997.

If you have any queries about this questionnaire, please direct them to :

Senior Sergeant Phil Barrett - Telephone (07) 3364 6866 or via email

Thank you for your time and participation.

SECTION A

PERCEPTIONS OF THE PROMOTION, TRANSFER & REVIEW SYSTEM

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.

QA1. The QPS Promotion and Transfer system is fair

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5

QA2. There is bias towards appointing applicants from within the particular Region that the position is located

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5

QA3. QPS Selection panels are mostly consistent in their approach

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5

QA4. Officers located outside of regional headquarters have an equal chance of gaining appointments there

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5

QA5. The procedures for QPS selection panels as set out in the HRM Policy and Procedures Manual are clear

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5

QA6. It is difficult for officers to demonstrate their merit in the selection process

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5

QA7. The quality of selection decisions made by QPS panels needs significant improvement

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5

QA8. Length of service should be given more emphasis in the assessment of merit?

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5

QA9. The pre-qualifying programs as currently proposed for progression to ranks are a positive step

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5

QA10. Too much emphasis is placed on the interview process by QPS selection panels

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5

QA11. An officer's potential to perform a position is rarely given adequate consideration during the selection process

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5

QA12 Since 1 January 1995 the Key Selection Criteria chosen by the QPS have accurately reflected the actual requirements for police officer positions

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5

QA13. QPS Selection panels place too much weight on educational qualifications

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5

QA14. Referee checking is important to establish each officer's level of past performance

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5

QA15. In practice, QPS selection panels do not closely adhere to the proper processes as laid down in the legislation and HRM policies

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5

QA16. The different Commissioners for Police Service Reviews are generally consistent in their recommendations

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5

QA17. Commissioners for Police Service Reviews make their recommendations on unreliable information

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5

QA18. Applicants who demonstrate a genuine grievance will usually get a favourable recommendation from the Review Commissioner

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5

QA19. The review process is confusing and difficult to understand

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5

QA20. The review process treats all officers fairly

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5

QA21. All QPS officers should be provided with formalised training in applying for positions

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5

SECTION B

INVOLVEMENT IN THE PROMOTIONS AND TRANSFER SYSTEM

QB1. Since 1 January 1995 in what capacity, if any, have you been involved in the Promotions and Transfer System? (select as many as apply)

Applicant
Panel Member (Including as Convenor)
No Involvement

If No Involvement
GOTO SECTION E

QB2. Since 1 January 1995 approximately how many positions have you applied for?

No of times (approx)

If nil GOTO QB9

QB3. In relation to your last application were you short listed for interview? (select one)

Yes No

QB4. Since 1 January 1995 approximately how many times were you short listed for interview ?

No of times (approx)

QB5. Since 1 January 1995 were you successful in obtaining an appointment? (select one)

Yes No If NO GOTO QB7

QB6. Was your last appointment the subject of an application for review? (select one)

Yes No

QB7. Since 1 January 1995 have you applied to review a selection panel decision? (select one)

Yes No If NO GOTO QB9

QB8. Approximately how many times have you applied to review a selection panel decision since 1 January 1995?

No of times (approx)

QB9. Since 1 January 1995 approximately how many times have you been a panel member?

No of times (approx)

SECTION C

PERSONAL KNOWLEDGE

This section should only be answered by those officers who have applied for a police officer position since 1 January 1995.

QC1. In relation to the last position for which you applied, had you ever worked with or for any of the panel members?(select one)

Yes No If NO GOTO QC3

QC2. In relation the last position for which you applied, do you believe the that the panel member(s) knowledge of your performance influenced the selection panel's decision to your advantage or disadvantage or not at all? (select one)

Advantage
Disadvantage
No influence on Decision
Don't Know

QC3. Since 1995 have you applied for a position in which one of the other applicant(s) had worked with or for one of the panel members?(select one)

Yes No If NO GOTO SECTION D

QC4. Do you believe that the panel member's knowledge of the other applicant(s) influenced the selection panel's

decision to the other applicant(s) advantage or disadvantage or not at all?(select one)

Advantage
Disadvantage
No influence on Decision
Don't Know

SECTION D

FEEDBACK

QD1.Were you successful in your last application for a position? (select one)

Yes No If Yes GOTO SECTION E

QD2.If you were unsuccessful in your last application did you seek feedback from a panel member or convenor? (select one)

Yes No If Yes GOTO QD4

QD3. For what reasons didn't you seek feedback? (please specify)

GOTO SECTION E

QD4.Were you satisfied with the feedback you received? (Select One)

Yes No

QD5.On the basis of your experience, in what areas, if any, could the provision of feedback be improved? (please comment)

SECTION E

COMMENTS

QE1.What do you see as the major problems, if any, with the current QPS promotions, transfer & review systems? (Please rank in order of importance)

QE2.In which ways, if at all, could the selection panel process currently employed by the QPS be improved? (Please comment)

QE3.In which ways, if at all, could the review process be improved?" (Please comment)

SECTION F

DEMOGRAPHICS

Could you provide the following details about yourself so that we can group similar officers together.

QF1.What is your current rank? (select one)

Constable
Senior Constable
Sergeant
Senior Sergeant
Inspector or above

QF2.Are you male or female?(select one)

Male Female

QF3.Answering this question is optional. In what region are you currently serving?(select one)

Far Northern
Northern
Central
North Coast
Southern
South Eastern
Metro North
Metro South
State Crime Operations
Other Headquarters Functions (e.g. CJC, PSU, Operations Support Command, Office of the Commissioner, Corporate Services etc)
Other (please specify)

QF4.How many years since you were sworn in to the Queensland Police Service

years

QF5.Which best represents the area of the Police Service you currently work in?(select one)

General duties/Watchhouse/Traffic
Criminal Investigation (e.g. CIB,JAB,SCOC,Specialist Investigation Squads)
Scenes of Crime/Technical
Regional/HQ Administration/Training
Other (please specify)

QF6.What is your highest level of education?(select one)

Some or completed secondary education
Completed other post-secondary diploma, TAFE certificate or trade qualification
Attended university, no degree
Completed bachelor's degree
Completed postgraduate diploma or degree

QF7.Were you sent a personal E-Mail message requesting that you complete this questionnaire?(select one)

Yes No

ONCE YOU HAVE FINISHED, PLEASE CLICK ON THE "SUBMIT EVALUATION" BUTTON BELOW TO AUTOMATICALLY FORWARD IT TO THE PROMOTION & TRANSFER SYSTEM EVALUATION DATA BASE.