

**QUEENSLAND POLICE SERVICE  
ACADEMY TRAINING:**

**THE VIEWS OF RECRUITS**

**Oxley and Townsville Campuses  
August 1997**

**Research and Coordination Division**

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## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

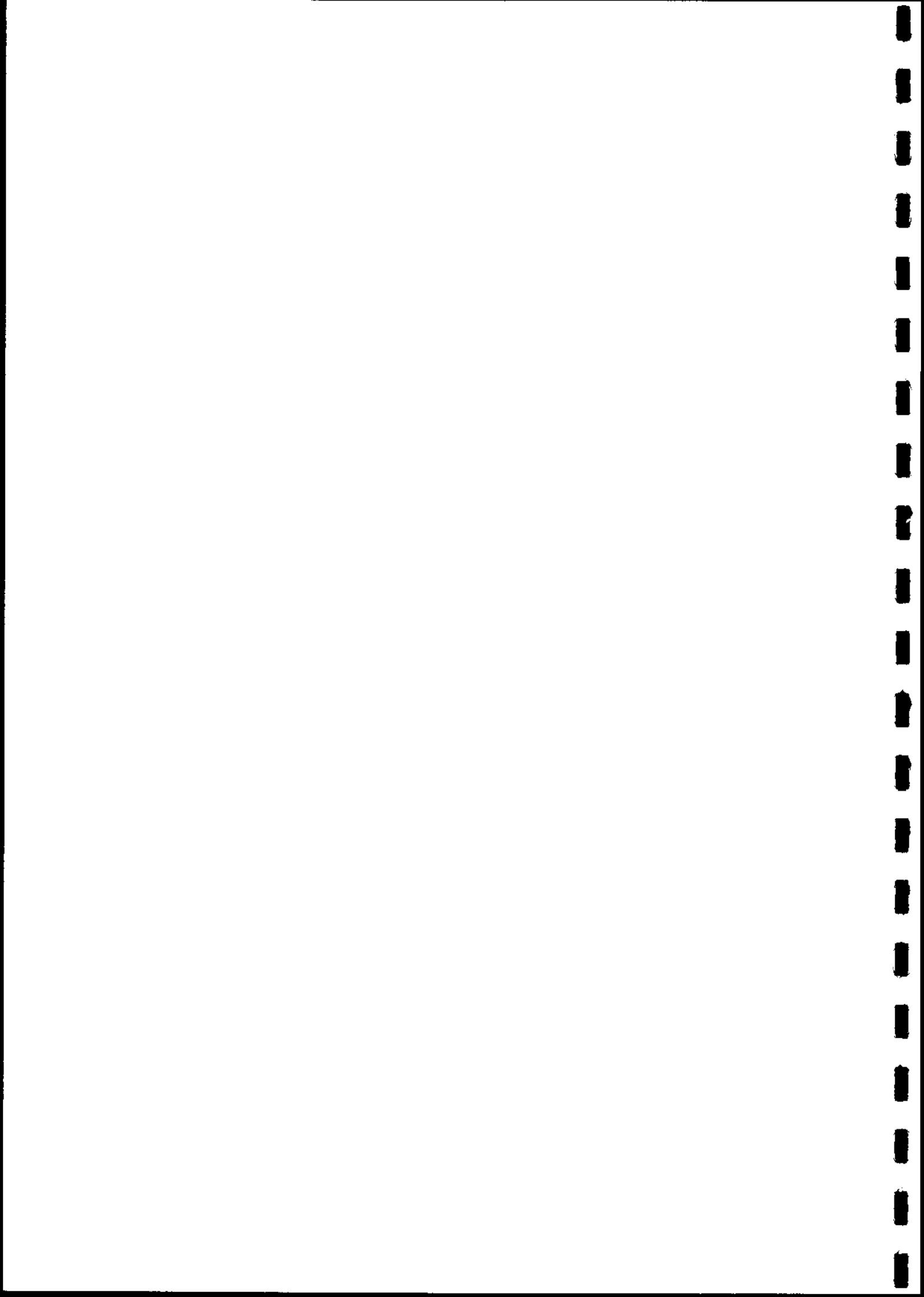
The Criminal Justice Commission (CJC) wishes to acknowledge the assistance of the Queensland Police Service Academy in planning the administration of the recruit surveys. Thanks are also due to the Recruiting Section of the Queensland Police Service, which made available data for this study, and the Human Resources Division, which provided helpful feedback on a draft of Part B of the paper.

This paper was prepared by Avril Alley and Linda Waugh of the CJC's Research and Coordination Division.

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## ABBREVIATIONS

ATSI	Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander
CJC	Criminal Justice Commission
PBL	Problem Based Learning
PEAC	Police Education Advisory Council
QPS	Queensland Police Service
QPSA	Queensland Police Service Academy

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

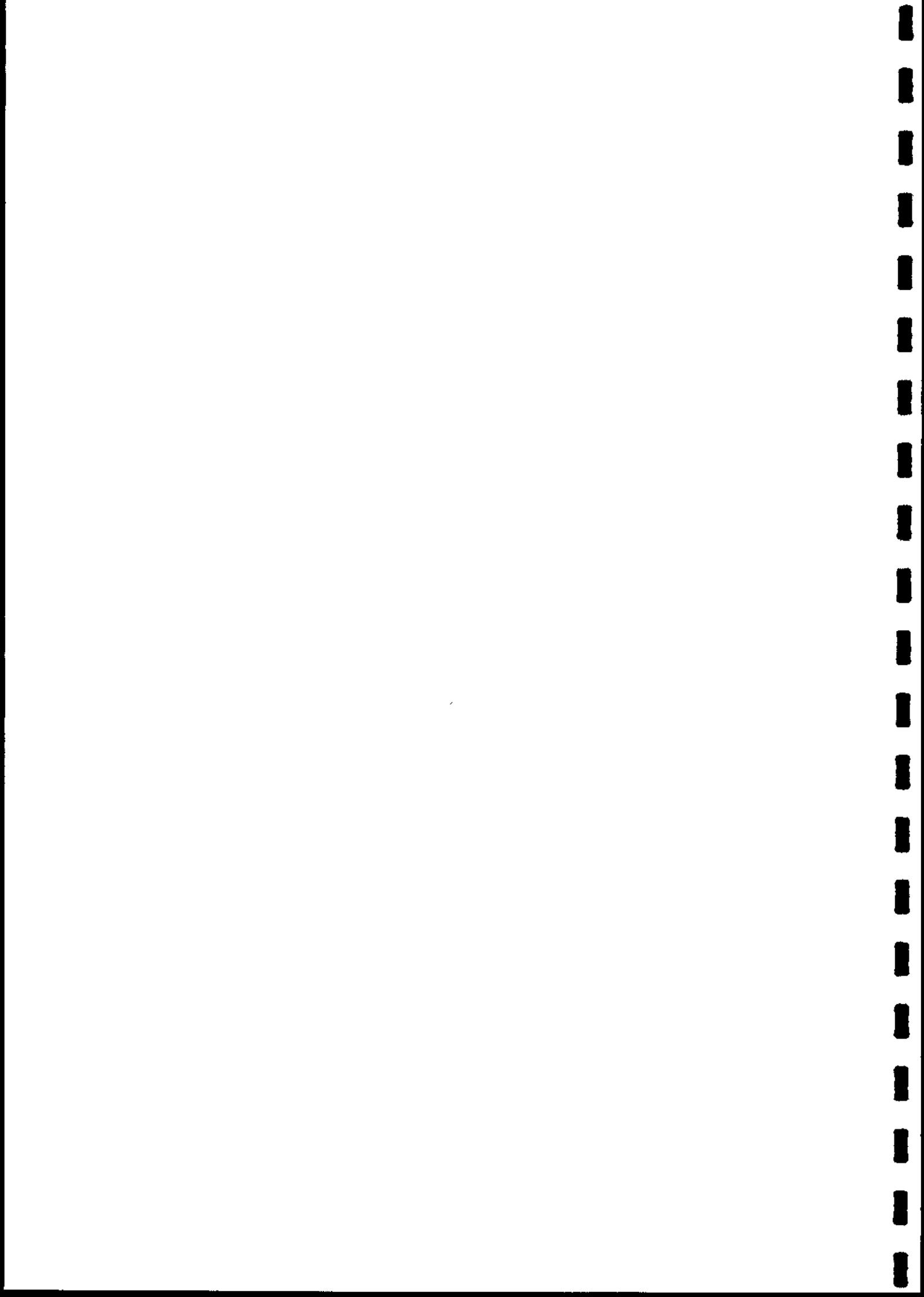
This research paper is divided into two parts. Part A presents the results of surveys administered to the October 1996 recruit intake of the Queensland Police Service (QPS). The surveys relate to recruits' view about their training, education and experience at the Queensland Police Service Academy (QPSA). Part B addresses issues relating specifically to the establishment of the second campus of the QPSA at Townsville. It draws upon an additional survey administered to the May 1997 Townsville intake and recruitment statistics provided by the QPS.

The main findings reported in Part A are:

- Most recruits expressed positive views towards tertiary education and most indicated a desire to undertake further study in the next five years.
- Generally, there was a high level of satisfaction with the Academy training program, including content areas, teaching methods and teacher performance. The most commonly proposed changes to the Academy training program related to the Problem Based Learning (PBL) approach, station duty and the Physical Skills Education program.
- Although support for living-in was high at the beginning of training, there was a marked drop in support by the end of training.
- At the end of training, most recruits were satisfied with their choice of career: few had actually considered resigning during their training and most were committed to a 20-year career in the Police Service.
- The most common preference among recruits was to work in the area of criminal investigation. Few said that they wanted to work in areas such as general operational policing, traffic, or community liaison.
- Most recruits preferred to be stationed at a provincial or metropolitan station.
- The recruits tended to accept the strict model of discipline applied by the Academy, including the role of physical education, as part of police training. However, fewer than half of the recruits agreed that they were treated and respected as mature adults by Academy staff.

The main findings in Part B are:

- There is no firm evidence at this stage that the establishment of the Townsville campus has led to an increase in recruit applications from the northern regions of the State. Recruits from northern areas generally appear to find the Townsville campus an attractive training option but almost all in the first two intakes would have been prepared to train at the Oxley campus if necessary.
- There needs to be ongoing monitoring to ensure that consistency of recruiting standards is maintained between the two campuses.
- The standard of recruit training at Townsville appears to be at least equivalent to that at Oxley, with recruits at the Townsville campus reporting greater satisfaction in some areas. These positive responses may reflect the more personalised teaching environment at Townsville, which is a result of smaller training groups, the newness of the program, and the more intimate nature of the campus. Townsville recruits were also considerably more likely to agree that they were treated and respected as mature adults by Academy staff and less inclined to describe the culture of the Academy as 'strongly disciplinarian'.



## INTRODUCTION

This research paper reports the key findings of surveys administered by the Research and Coordination Division of the Criminal Justice Commission to the October 1996 recruit intake of the Queensland Police Service (QPS). The Division is required by the *Criminal Justice Act 1989* to monitor education and training within the QPS. The surveys are designed to obtain information on the views, expectations and aspirations of recruits, as well as their preparation for the role of police officer. The surveys were administered in class time to recruits at both the Oxley and Townsville campuses in October 1996 at the beginning of training, and again in April 1997 at the end of the six-month training period. The questionnaires were completely confidential and survey respondents were guaranteed anonymity.

Part A of the research paper summarises the overall results of the surveys administered to the October 1996 recruit intake on matters relating to their training and education at the Queensland Police Service Academy (QPSA). Differences between the responses of recruits at Oxley and Townsville are also reported where relevant.

A significant development in the training of QPS police recruits was the establishment in mid-1996 of a second campus of the QPSA in North Queensland at Townsville. Part B assesses whether the establishment of the new training facility in Townsville has succeeded in attracting more applicants and recruits from northern regions, and compares recruits' training experiences and views on training standards at the two campuses. Part B draws upon the surveys administered to the October 1996 recruit intake as well as an additional survey of the May 1997 Townsville intake at the beginning of training. These data are also supplemented by recruitment statistics provided by the QPS.

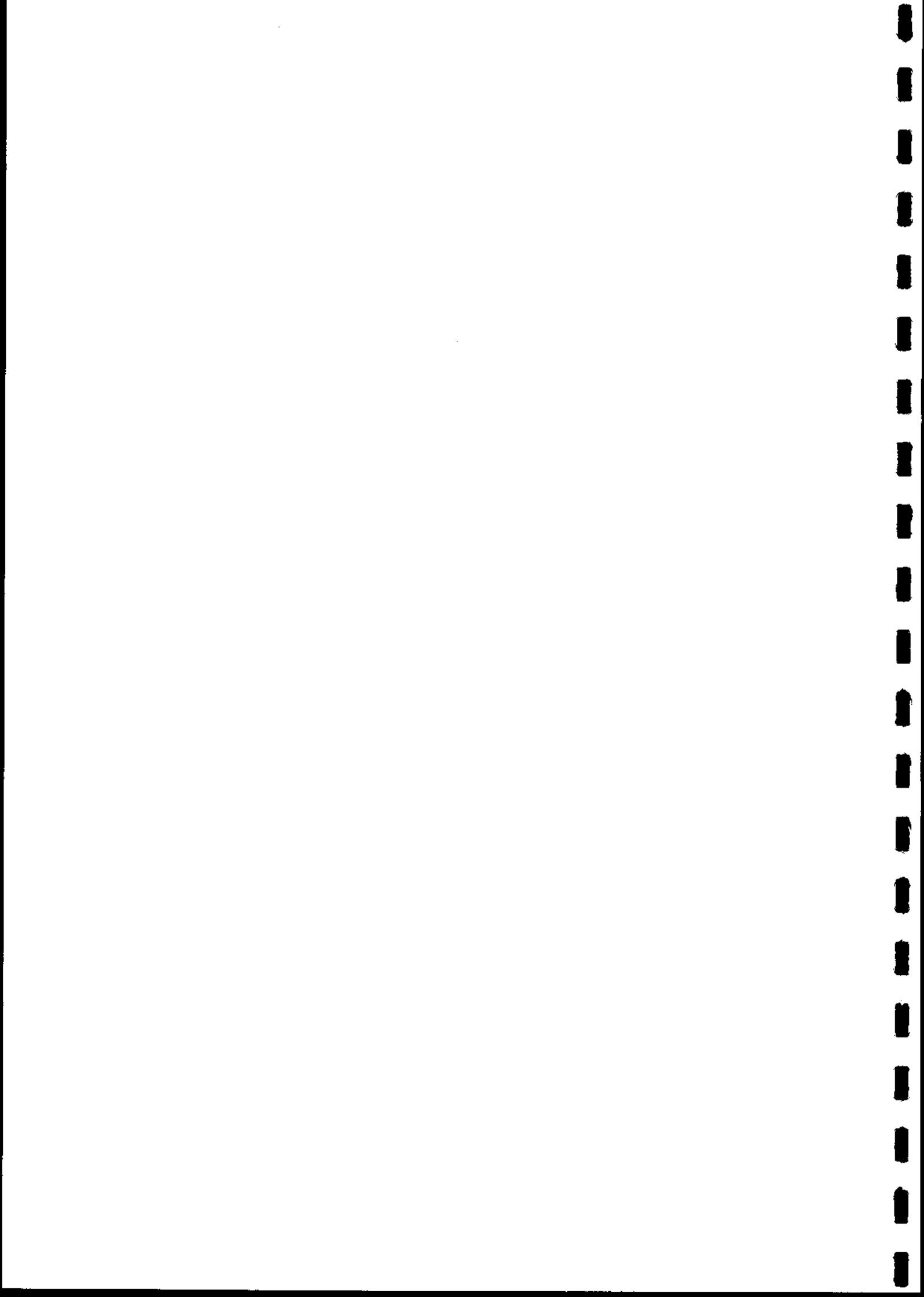
It must be emphasised that the results reported here are not to be taken as a comprehensive evaluation of the new Townsville training facility. Rather, this research paper is concerned primarily with the perceptions and views of recruits about their training.

### *PRESENTATION OF STATISTICAL DATA*

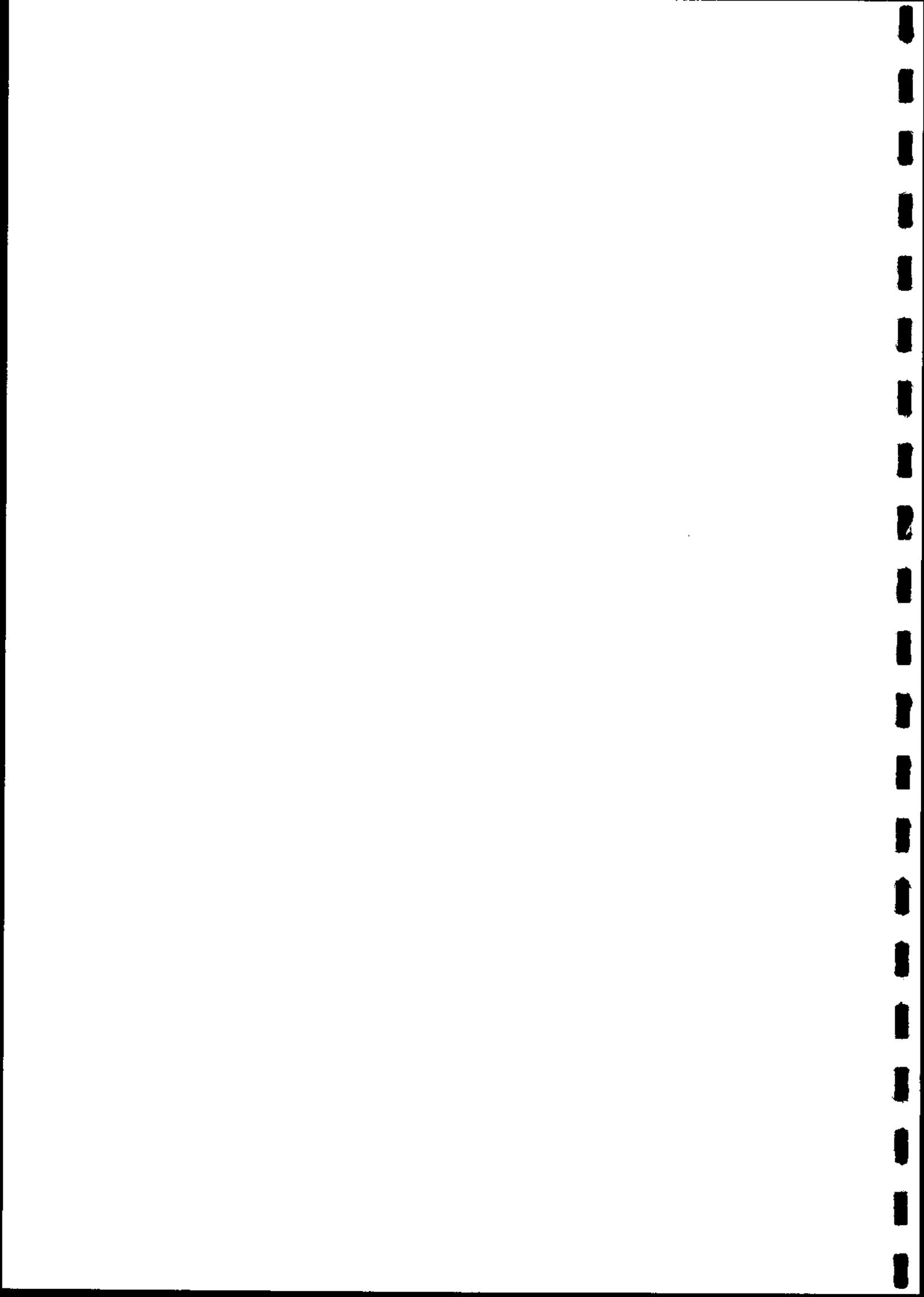
This paper often compares the findings of the two recruit groups, or recruits' views at the beginning and end of training. With these comparisons there is always the possibility that the differences are the result of chance factors rather than real differences between the samples. Statistical tests enable us to estimate the likelihood of such differences being the result of chance factors. A standard chi-square test has been used to determine whether differences are statistically significant. Where the comparison is not statistically significant, the chi-square result has not been reported. Statistical significance at the .05 level means that there is less than a one in 20 chance that the difference was the result of chance factors. Similarly, a statistically significant result at the .01 level would mean less than a one in 100 chance that the difference was the result of chance factors and, at the .001 level, less than a one in 1000 chance.

Figures reported in the tables have been rounded to the nearest decimal place and figures in the text have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

The letter 'n' in figures and tables refers to the number of respondents who answered that question.



**PART A:**  
**OVERALL FINDINGS**



## *INTRODUCTION*

The key findings of the surveys are summarised according to the following major headings:

- General characteristics
- Views and expectations of recruit education and training
- Living-in at the Academy
- Career satisfaction and aspirations
- Deployment
- Institutional climate at Academy.

## *GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS*

All 124 recruits in the October 1996 intake participated in the first survey — 40 recruits at the Townsville campus and 84 at the Oxley campus. At the end of training, only 109 recruits completed the second survey due to absences or resignations from the program. The majority of recruits were from the Brisbane Metropolitan area (56%), followed by the Northern and North Coast regions (11% for both). About 3 per cent of recruits had lived in Victoria before joining the QPS.

Twenty-nine per cent of the recruits were female and 71 per cent male. The average age of recruits was 26 years and most recruits (62%) reported that they were single. Only 18 per cent of the recruits had children. Six respondents to the initial survey indicated that they were Aboriginal, and one recruit reported to be a Torres Strait Islander; however, by the end of training, only two reported that they were from an indigenous background. Seven recruits (6%) came from a non-English-speaking background, citing first languages such as Spanish, Greek, Polish and German.

Just over half of the recruits (52%) had prior exposure to tertiary education, although only 27 per cent had completed their tertiary studies. Most of the recruits with tertiary exposure (81%) indicated that they wished to continue with further study in the next five years. All except one had either part-time or full-time work experience, with five years being the average length of time in the work force.

### ***VIEWS AND EXPECTATIONS OF RECRUIT EDUCATION AND TRAINING***

The recruits were asked to indicate their views on the following education and training issues:

- their educational plans and their views on the role of tertiary education in the development of a police officer
- the importance of training in particular areas, such as communication skills, theories about the causes of crime, criminal law, and the use of weapons
- general views about their Academy training and suggestions for change
- the emphasis that should be given to various teaching methods, such as lectures from experienced police officers and observing policing in real situations
- satisfaction with the performance of their teachers.

Each of these areas is examined in more detail below.

#### **EDUCATIONAL PLANS**

At the beginning of training, 82 per cent of recruits reported that they expected to undertake further study in the next five years. By the end of training, the proportion of recruits interested in further study had dropped slightly to 76 per cent. Of those planning to undertake further study at the end of training, 22 per cent reported that they would like to study towards a TAFE course or Associate Diploma, 60 per cent indicated a bachelor's degree, and 18 per cent postgraduate studies.

#### ***TERTIARY EDUCATION AND POLICING***

The recruits were surveyed at the beginning of training about their views regarding the relationship between tertiary education and policing.

- Sixty-seven per cent of the recruits agreed with the statement, 'a tertiary education develops a better police officer'. Townsville recruits were less supportive of this statement than Oxley recruits (52% compared to 74%).<sup>1</sup>
- Most respondents agreed that 'tertiary qualifications improve the prospects of a police officer leaving the police service' (67%). Again, a larger proportion of Oxley recruits agreed with this statement (75%, compared with 50% of Townsville recruits).<sup>2</sup>
- The statement, 'tertiary qualifications are important in a policing career', received the greatest overall support (76 per cent). However, there was a marked difference between Oxley recruits (84%) and Townsville recruits (58%) in the level of support for this statement.<sup>3</sup>

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1 Responses between Oxley and Townsville recruits are statistically significant ( $p < .05$ ).

2 Responses between Oxley and Townsville recruits are statistically significant ( $p < .01$ ).

3 Responses between Oxley and Townsville recruits are statistically significant ( $p < .01$ ).

- There was considerable divergence of responses to the statement, 'there should be less emphasis on academic qualifications and more on practical training', with 40 per cent of respondents agreeing, 30 per cent disagreeing and another 30 per cent being unsure.

Overall, the Oxley recruits tended to place greater importance on the role of tertiary education than the Townsville recruits. However, Oxley recruits had a greater exposure to tertiary education with 30 per cent reporting that they had completed a bachelor's degree or postgraduate studies compared with only 20 per cent of the Townsville recruits in the first intake. (See Part B for data comparing the educational qualifications of recruits at the two campuses.)

#### CONTENT OF TRAINING PROGRAM

In both the pre-training and end of training survey, the recruits rated the importance of the content areas in the training program highly.<sup>4</sup> However, there were several areas that recruits tended to support less by the end of training: theories about the nature and causes of crime, problem-solving skills, ethics and social responsibility, the corporate goals of the police service, physical education, and the roles and activities of relevant agencies. The 'use of weapons' was the only subject that recruits rated as significantly more important at the end of training (see table A1).

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4 Recruits were asked to rate their responses according to a five-point scale ranging from 'very important' to 'very unimportant'.

TABLE A1 — PROPORTION OF RECRUITS DESCRIBING TRAINING IN CONTENT AREAS AS IMPORTANT:  
BEGINNING AND END OF TRAINING  
(OCTOBER 1996 RECRUIT INTAKE)

Content	Beginning of training	End of training
	Important (%)	Important (%)
(a) Corporate goals of the police service*	80.5	66.0
(b) Communication and interpersonal skills	99.2	98.2
(c) Criminal law and procedure	99.2	100.0
(d) Problem-solving skills**	100.0	94.5
(e) Use of weapons*	95.2	100.0
(f) Theories about the nature and causes of crime***	95.9	67.0
(g) Ethics and social responsibility***	98.4	85.3
(h) Physical education*	98.4	92.7
(i) Computer skills	93.5	95.4
(j) Assisting victims	96.0	89.8
(k) Self-defence	99.2	99.1
(l) The roles and activities of relevant agencies*	91.1	82.3
(m) Police service rules and procedures	97.6	96.3
(n) Different methods of policing	n/a	85.3

- Notes:
1. In the pre-training survey, recruits were asked: Based on what you know now, in preparing a person to be a police officer, how important will it be to receive training in the following areas?
  2. In the post-training survey, recruits were asked: In your view, how important are these areas in preparing you to be a police officer?
  3. 'Beginning of training' n=124 for each statement except statements (a) and (f) where n=123; 'End of training' n=109 for each statement except statement (a) where n=106; statement (l) where n=107; and statements (j), and (m) where n=108.
  4. \* indicates responses given between the beginning and end of training are statistically significant (p<.05).  
\*\* indicates responses given between the beginning and end of training are statistically significant (p<.01).  
\*\*\* indicates responses given between the beginning and end of training are statistically significant (p<.001).

### SATISFACTION WITH TRAINING PROGRAM

At the end of their training, recruits were asked to reflect on their training experiences at the Academy and the preparation for the next stage of their training — field training. While there was uncertainty about some areas, most recruits felt prepared for field training and were satisfied that they had learnt problem-solving skills. However, a considerable proportion of recruits were dissatisfied with the amount of information provided during the course: 23 per cent felt they had not received enough information about field training and 29 per cent would have liked more information on the different ways of policing the community. There was virtually unanimous agreement that 'the need for police to behave ethically was emphasised' (see table A2), although the proportion of recruits describing 'ethics and social responsibility' as an important area of training declined significantly by the end of training (see table A1).

TABLE A2 — VIEWS ABOUT TRAINING AT THE ACADEMY:  
END OF TRAINING  
(OCTOBER 1996 RECRUIT INTAKE)

Statement	Percentage		
	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Not sure</i>	<i>Disagree</i>
(a) Overall, I feel prepared for field training	67.9	27.5	4.6
(b) Critical thinking was encouraged by the course	70.4	20.4	9.2
(c) The workload was too heavy	29.4	20.2	50.5
(d) I would have liked more information on different ways of policing the community	29.4	36.7	33.9
(e) I have not been given enough information about field training	22.9	23.9	53.2
(f) The course provided me with an awareness of the differing lifestyles in Queensland today	59.6	22.0	18.4
(g) I have learned to apply problem-solving strategies to difficult policing situations	73.4	17.4	9.2
(h) The need for police to behave ethically was emphasised	97.2	1.8	0.9

- Notes: 1. Recruits were asked: Listed below are some general statements about your training at the Academy. Do you agree or disagree with each of them?
2. n=109 for each statement except for statement (b) where n=108.
3. Due to rounding, percentages may not add up to 100.

### CHANGES TO ACADEMY TRAINING PROGRAM

Despite the general satisfaction expressed by recruits about their training, 87 per cent indicated that they would like to make changes to the Academy program.<sup>5</sup> Of these, 30 per cent said that they were dissatisfied with the Problem Based Learning (PBL) approach adopted by the Academy, with 12 per cent of these naming computer training as particularly unsuited to PBL. One recruit described the approach as 'a highly frustrating and ineffective method of teaching'.

The Physical Skills Education program was criticised by 16 per cent of recruits with most indicating that there was an over-emphasis on fitness and gate testing.<sup>6</sup> Several suggested that survival techniques or self-defence were more important.

Sixteen per cent of recruits suggested that station duty be increased, and 13 per cent suggested there be more role plays or practical exercises. Some recruits criticised the length of the introductory foundation unit (Module 1), with 13 per cent suggesting it be shortened from six weeks to four weeks. Ten per cent suggested that more time be spent on practical courses such as firearms, driving, arrest and traffic duty training.

5 Each recruit could provide up to three suggestions for changes to the Academy training program.

6 Gate tests are formal physical skills tests which occur at identified points (progression gates) during the Physical Skills Education program.

**TEACHING METHODS**

At the end of training, the recruits were surveyed about the usefulness of the Academy's teaching methods. The most useful methods nominated were those that involved participation by recruits: station duty, lectures from experienced police officers and skills practice (see table A3). The least desirable methods were said to be lectures from academic experts and research sessions.

**TABLE A3 — PERCEIVED USEFULNESS OF TEACHING METHODS:  
END OF TRAINING  
(OCTOBER 1996 RECRUIT INTAKE)**

Training method	Percentage		
	<i>Useful</i>	<i>Not sure</i>	<i>Not useful</i>
Lectures from experienced police officers	99.1	0.9	-
Class discussion and debate	79.8	11.9	8.2
Role-plays	81.7	11.9	6.4
Lectures from academic experts	57.9	29.9	12.1
Case investigation	67.9	27.5	4.6
Skills practice	96.3	3.7	-
Audiovisual presentations	79.6	10.2	10.2
Research sessions	53.2	25.7	21.1
Station duty	100.0	-	-

- Notes:
1. Recruits were asked: Listed below are several methods of teaching that may have been used during your Academy training. Based on your experiences in the last six months, how useful did you find each of these methods?
  2. n=109 for each training method except 'lectures from academic experts' where n=107 and 'audiovisual presentations' where n=108.
  3. Due to rounding, percentages may not add up to 100.

**TEACHER PERFORMANCE**

As table A4 indicates, the overall assessment of teacher performance was favourable. The availability of teachers outside of class time appeared to be an issue for some recruits — 22 per cent felt their teachers were not available outside of class time if they needed help. However, it should be noted that, generally, training facilities do not require teachers to provide assistance outside of normal class hours. (As discussed in Part B, there were some important differences in opinion between the two campuses in relation to this and associated questions.)

TABLE A4 — PERCEPTION OF TEACHER PERFORMANCE:  
END OF TRAINING  
(OCTOBER 1996 RECRUIT INTAKE)

STATEMENT:	Percentage		
	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Not sure</i>	<i>Disagree</i>
<b>My teachers at the Academy ...</b>			
(a) listened to me when I expressed an opinion	77.8	11.1	11.1
(b) were not available outside of class time if I needed help	22.2	11.1	66.7
(c) presented information in a clear manner	77.6	9.3	13.1
(d) did not encourage me to actively participate in class	17.6	2.8	79.6
(e) were able to deal with conflict in the class well	70.8	17.0	12.2
(f) did not provide support to recruits	17.8	9.3	72.9
(g) were extremely knowledgeable in the areas in which they taught	77.8	13.0	9.3
(h) had the level of maturity I would expect from a teacher	79.6	12.0	8.3

- Notes:
1. The recruits were asked: In general, would you agree or disagree with the following statements about your teachers at the Academy?
  2. For statements (a), (b), (d), (g), and (h) n=108; for statement (c) and (f) n=107; for statement (e) n=106.
  3. Due to rounding, percentages may not add up to 100.

When asked to rate the performance of teachers at the Academy compared to other teachers they have had, most recruits indicated that the teachers were 'better than average' (42%) or 'about average' (50%). Only 8 per cent of recruits felt their teachers were 'worse than average'.

### ***LIVING-IN AT THE ACADEMY***

The 1996 Queensland Police Service Review recommended that the Police Education and Advisory Council (PEAC): '... keep under review the current live-in requirement for recruits in the pre-service program ...' (Rec. 81, p. 145). Questions about the living-in requirement were included in the survey to assist PEAC in discharging this responsibility.

### **RECRUITS' VIEWS ABOUT LIVING-IN**

At the beginning of training, most respondents agreed that recruits should be required to live-in at the Academy. A similar number stated that if living-in was optional, they would choose to do so. However, when the recruits were surveyed again at the end of training, the level of support for the living-in requirement had dropped substantially. Whereas only 13 per cent did not support the live-in requirement at the beginning of training, this proportion rose to 31 per cent by the end of training (see table A5).

TABLE A5— VIEWS ABOUT LIVING-IN:  
BEGINNING AND END OF TRAINING  
(OCTOBER 1996 RECRUIT INTAKE)

Statement	YES (%)	
	Beginning of training	End of training
(a) Recruits should be required to live-in at the Academy***	87.1	68.8
(b) If had the choice, would choose to live-in	85.5	n/a

- Notes: 1. 'Beginning of training' n=124; 'End of training' n=109.  
2. \*\*\* indicates responses given between the beginning and end of training are statistically significant (p.<.001).

The reasons given by survey respondents as to why recruits should *not* be required to live-in included:<sup>7</sup>

- recruits should be allowed to choose based on individual circumstances
- compulsory living-in requirements place a strain on family and personal relationships and generally affect the social network of recruits
- living-in creates problems or tensions among recruits, it serves no purpose and has no benefits, and it involves greater expense for recruits.

The 69 per cent of recruits who indicated a preference for the living-in requirement at the end of training gave the following reasons:<sup>8</sup>

- living-in helped to build team spirit and confidence as well as foster bonding and camaraderie between recruits
- living-in was beneficial to studying, as it enabled a better learning environment where recruits could focus on studies and also spend more time studying
- living-in is preferred because it provides recruits with greater access to facilities and creates discipline.

#### LIVING-IN EXPERIENCE

At the end of training, the recruits were asked to identify which option best described their living-in experience at the Academy: 48 per cent indicated that they 'liked living-in' while 43 per cent said they 'did not mind living-in but would have preferred to live elsewhere'. A further 8 per cent indicated that they 'did not like living-in at all' (see table A6). A comparison between campuses showed that Townsville recruits were more likely to have 'liked' their living-in experience than those recruits at Oxley, which may

7 Each recruit could provide up to two reasons for *not* supporting a live-in requirement.

8 Each recruit could provide up to three reasons for preferring to live-in.

be partly attributable to the higher standard of accommodation at Townsville (see Part B).<sup>9</sup> The reasons recruits did *not* like living-in included: the poor quality of the accommodation, lack of privacy, being away from home, family and personal commitments, and the rules and culture at the Academy.

**TABLE A6 — LIVING-IN EXPERIENCE AT THE ACADEMY:  
END OF TRAINING  
(OCTOBER 1996 RECRUIT INTAKE)**

Living-in view	Percentage
I liked 'living-in' at the Academy	48.1
I did not mind 'living-in' but I would have preferred to live elsewhere	43.4
I did not like 'living-in'	8.5

Notes: 1. The recruits were asked: Which of the following options best describes your view about 'living-in' at the Academy?  
2. n=106.

#### **LIVE-IN FACILITIES AND CONDITIONS**

When surveyed at the end of training, 70 per cent of recruits said that they found the live-in facilities and conditions suitable. Of the 30 per cent who found the facilities and conditions unsuitable, common complaints related to the provision of unhealthy or non-nutritional foods, as well as the poor standard of such facilities as the bathrooms, toilets, kitchen and laundry.<sup>10</sup>

#### **CAREER SATISFACTION AND ASPIRATIONS**

Questions about career choice and career plans were also included in the surveys. At the beginning of their training, most recruits indicated that they were acquainted with people who had chosen policing as a profession — around one-third had close relatives in policing and 64 per cent had close friends who were police officers. The recruits' reasons for wanting to become a police officer included: 'interested in police work', 'to serve the community', 'to work with people', 'to help combat crime', and 'a professional career'. Few recruits (6%) stated that they only became police officers because of failure to gain other employment.

The recruits were also asked in the surveys to report:

- the type of work they would like to be performing five years after recruit training and where they would prefer to be stationed
- their career satisfaction and the likelihood of their remaining in the QPS for most of their careers.

<sup>9</sup> Responses between Oxley and Townsville recruits are statistically significant ( $p < .05$ )

<sup>10</sup> Each recruit could provide up to three reasons stating why they found the facilities and conditions unsuitable.

**TYPE OF WORK**

At the end of training, the most common response by recruits as to their career plans in five years' time was to be working in criminal investigation, followed by working in special response units. As table A7 indicates, working in general operational policing was only the third choice of recruits (7%). Although a fairly large proportion of recruits were undecided about their career plans (22%), not one indicated that he or she would have left the QPS within five years' time. The only item on which there was a significant gender difference was working in special response units, which none of the female recruits elected.

**TABLE A7 — EXPECTED CAREER PLANS OF RECRUITS:  
END OF TRAINING  
(OCTOBER 1996 RECRUIT INTAKE)**

Area/type of work	End of training (%)		
	Male (n=67)	Female (n=26)	Total (n=104)
Criminal investigation	43.3	53.8	42.3
Special response units*	13.4	0.0	9.6
General operational policing	6.0	7.7	6.7
Traffic/Accident Investigation	7.5	0.0	5.8
Dog Squad/Water Police/Mounted Police	4.5	11.5	5.8
Social problems	3.0	0.0	1.9
Administration/Information Bureau	1.5	3.8	1.9
Forensics Science	1.5	0.0	1.0
Watchhouse	0.0	0.0	1.0
Community liaison	1.5	0.0	1.0
Criminal Justice Commission	1.5	0.0	1.0
Not decided	16.4	23.1	22.1

- Notes:
1. The recruits were asked: As far as your career plans are concerned, what type of work do you want to be doing five years after completing your recruit training?
  2. There were a further 12 cases where the gender of the respondent was unknown and four cases where career plans were not indicated. The 'total' is a breakdown of all valid responses regardless of whether the gender of the respondent was specified.
  3. \* indicates responses between male and females are statistically significant (p<.05).
  4. Due to rounding, percentages may not add up to 100.

**PREFERRED STATION**

Recruits were asked at the end of their training where they would prefer to be stationed in five years' time. Most chose a metropolitan station (47%) or provincial station (30%). Few indicated a small country station (9%) and only one indicated a preference for an Aboriginal community. Another 13 per cent of recruits were still uncertain about their preferred station.

## CAREER SATISFACTION

At the time of the first survey, 90 per cent of the recruits expected having a long-term career in policing spanning at least 20 years; this proportion fell to 74 per cent by the end of training.<sup>11</sup> However, the great majority (96%) of the recruits reported at the end of their Academy training that they were satisfied with their choice of career as a police officer. Further, most (84%) reported that during their six months of training they had *not* seriously considered resigning from the QPS. The 17 recruits who had seriously considered resigning cited reasons such as: under-achievement or difficulty with the physical demands of training (29%), outside pressures (24%), and the distance from family and friends (18%).<sup>12</sup>

## DEPLOYMENT

In the pre-training survey, recruits were asked what area of the State they would like to be stationed in. Overall, the most common response (55%) was the South-East followed by the North (31%). Only 3 per cent indicated a preference to serve in the West. The majority of Oxley recruits (71%) indicated a preference for the South-East while the most popular choice among Townsville recruits in the October 1996 intake was the North (58%).

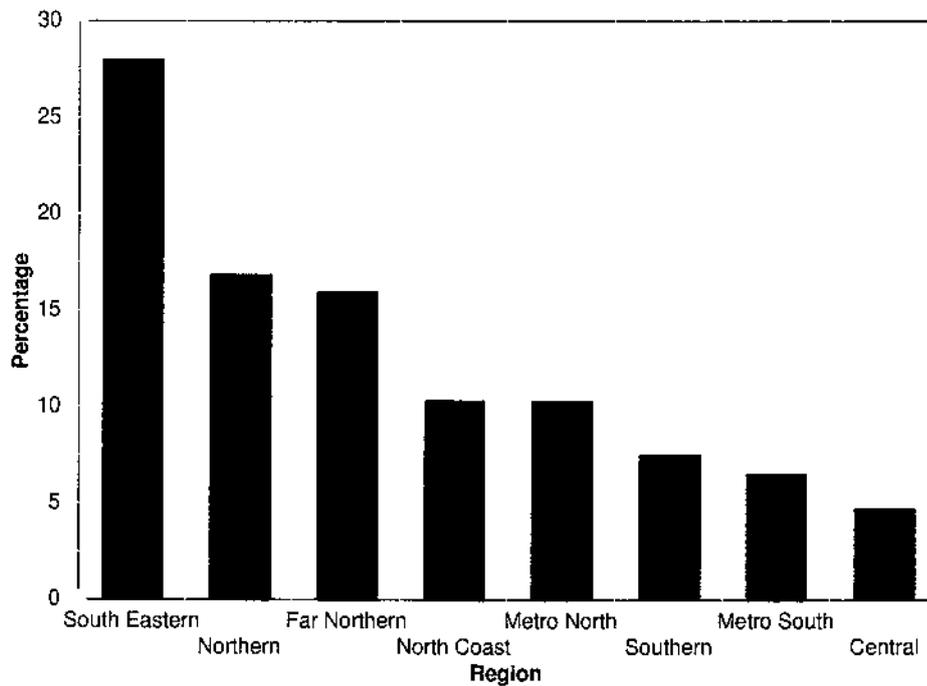
Figure A1 displays the regional deployment of recruits in the October 1996 intake at the end of their training. The pattern of deployment is similar to the preferences outlined by the recruits, with most allocated to the South Eastern Region and the northern regions. The majority of Oxley recruits were allocated to the South Eastern, Metropolitan North and North Coast Regions. Consistent with the Northern service training agreement, all of the Townsville recruits in the intake were allocated to the northern regions.

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11 Responses given between the beginning and end of training are statistically significant ( $p < .01$ ).

12 Each recruit could provide up to three reasons for having seriously considered resigning.

FIGURE A1 — PLACEMENT OF RECRUITS BY REGION AT END OF TRAINING  
(OCTOBER 1996 RECRUIT INTAKE)



- Notes: 1. Recruits were asked: To which region have you been stationed?  
2. n=107.

Ninety per cent of recruits were satisfied with the regions to which they had been allocated, with 88 per cent reporting that they had been allocated to a preferred District. Over half of the recruits (58%) indicated they had stated compassionate or extenuating circumstances when submitting their preferences; of these, 8 per cent said that they were not allocated to a preferred district.

### *INSTITUTIONAL CLIMATE AT ACADEMY*

Recommendation 80 of the Queensland Police Service Review — that 'PEAC give consideration to reviewing the culture and model of discipline adopted at the Police Academy' — has particular relevance to recruit education and training (1996, p. 145). To assist PEAC in undertaking this review, questions about the disciplinary and paramilitary aspects of Academy training, including the importance of drill training, were incorporated in the post-training survey.

### DISCIPLINARY AND PARAMILITARY STYLE

As table A8 indicates, 55 per cent of recruits agreed that 'the culture at the Academy is strongly disciplinarian'. However, 87 per cent of recruits agreed with the statement that 'the discipline enforced at the Academy is necessary to prepare recruits for policing work'. Consistent with this view, few recruits found the rules at the Academy too strict. About 83 per cent considered that 'physical skills training is a way of teaching self-discipline to recruits'.

Most recruits agreed that the Academy encouraged 'individual responsibility for completing study and assignments', but only 44 per cent agreed that they were 'treated and respected as mature adults by Academy staff'. (As discussed in Part B, there were some significant differences between the two campuses in relation to these 'climate' items.)

**TABLE A8— VIEWS ON INSTITUTIONAL CLIMATE AT ACADEMY:  
END OF TRAINING  
(OCTOBER 1996 RECRUIT INTAKE)**

Statement	Percentage		
	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Not sure</i>	<i>Disagree</i>
(a) The discipline enforced at the Academy is necessary to prepare recruits for police work	87.0	8.3	4.6
(b) Individual responsibility for completing study and assignments was encouraged by the Academy	87.0	10.2	2.8
(c) Physical skills training is a way of teaching self-discipline to recruits	83.3	7.4	9.3
(d) The rules at the Academy are too strict	15.7	15.7	68.5
(e) Recruits are treated and respected as mature adults by Academy staff	43.5	17.6	38.9
(f) The culture at the Academy is strongly disciplinarian	54.6	16.7	28.7

- Notes:
1. Recruits were asked: The following are statements about the institutional 'climate' at the Academy. Indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with the statements.
  2. n=108 for each statement.
  3. Due to rounding, percentages may not add up to 100.

**DRILL PRACTICE**

Sixty-nine per cent of the recruits supported drill practice, but 28 per cent felt that drill was not an important part of their police training (see table A9).

**TABLE A9 — THE IMPORTANCE OF DRILL:  
END OF TRAINING  
(OCTOBER 1996 RECRUIT INTAKE)**

Statement	Percentage
Extremely important	29.6
Moderately important	39.8
Not sure	2.8
Moderately unimportant	22.2
Extremely unimportant	5.6

- Notes: 1. The recruits were asked: Across the course of your training, and particularly in the last two weeks, you have been required to attend drill to prepare for the induction parade, please rate how important you think drill is?  
2. n=108.

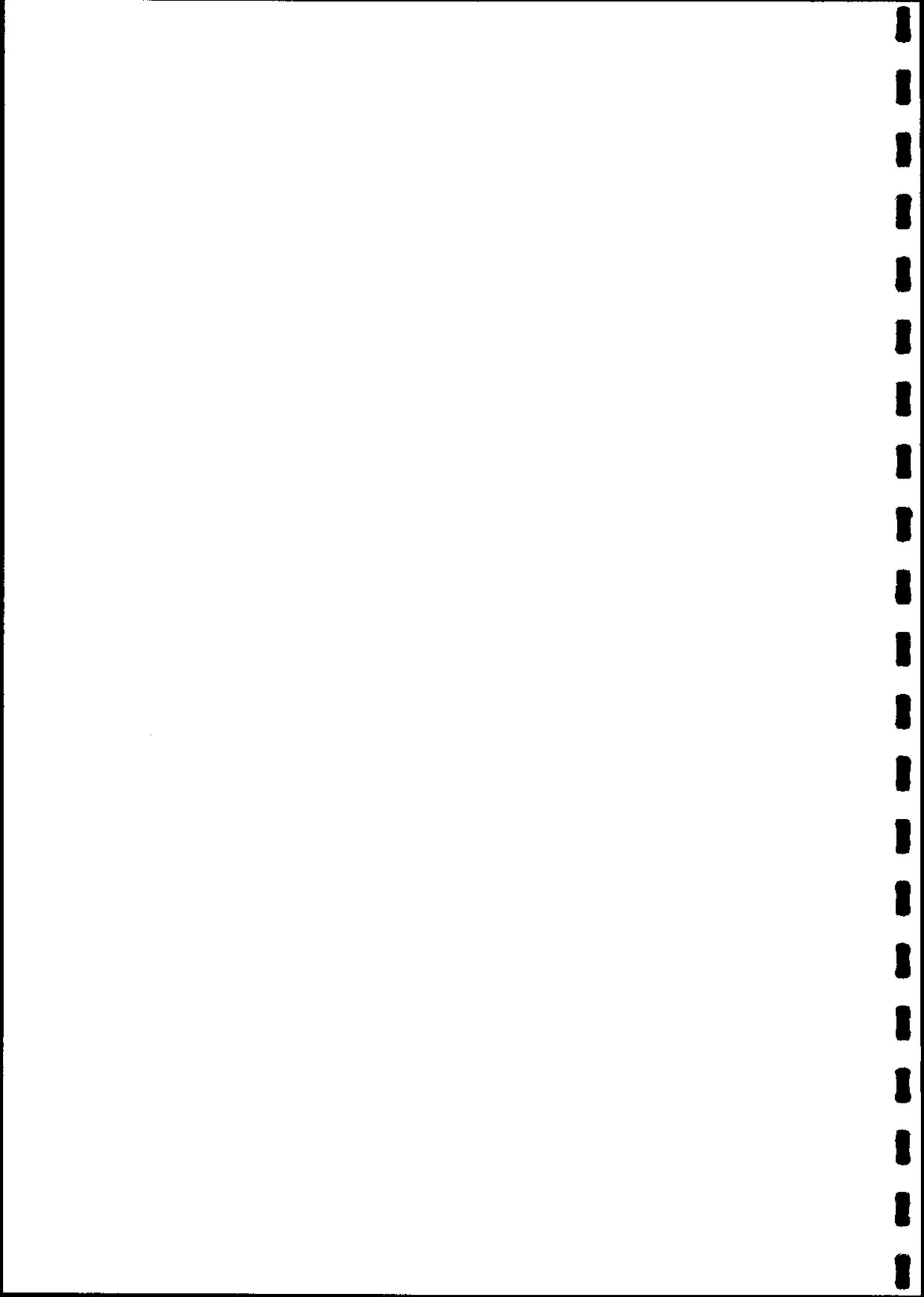
***SOCIALISING PATTERNS***

The recruits were asked to identify who they mainly socialised with during the six months of the Academy program: one-third of the recruits indicated that they mainly socialised with each other and 53 per cent said that they socialised with a mixture of people including family, recruits, and those outside of the course.

## SUMMARY OF PART A

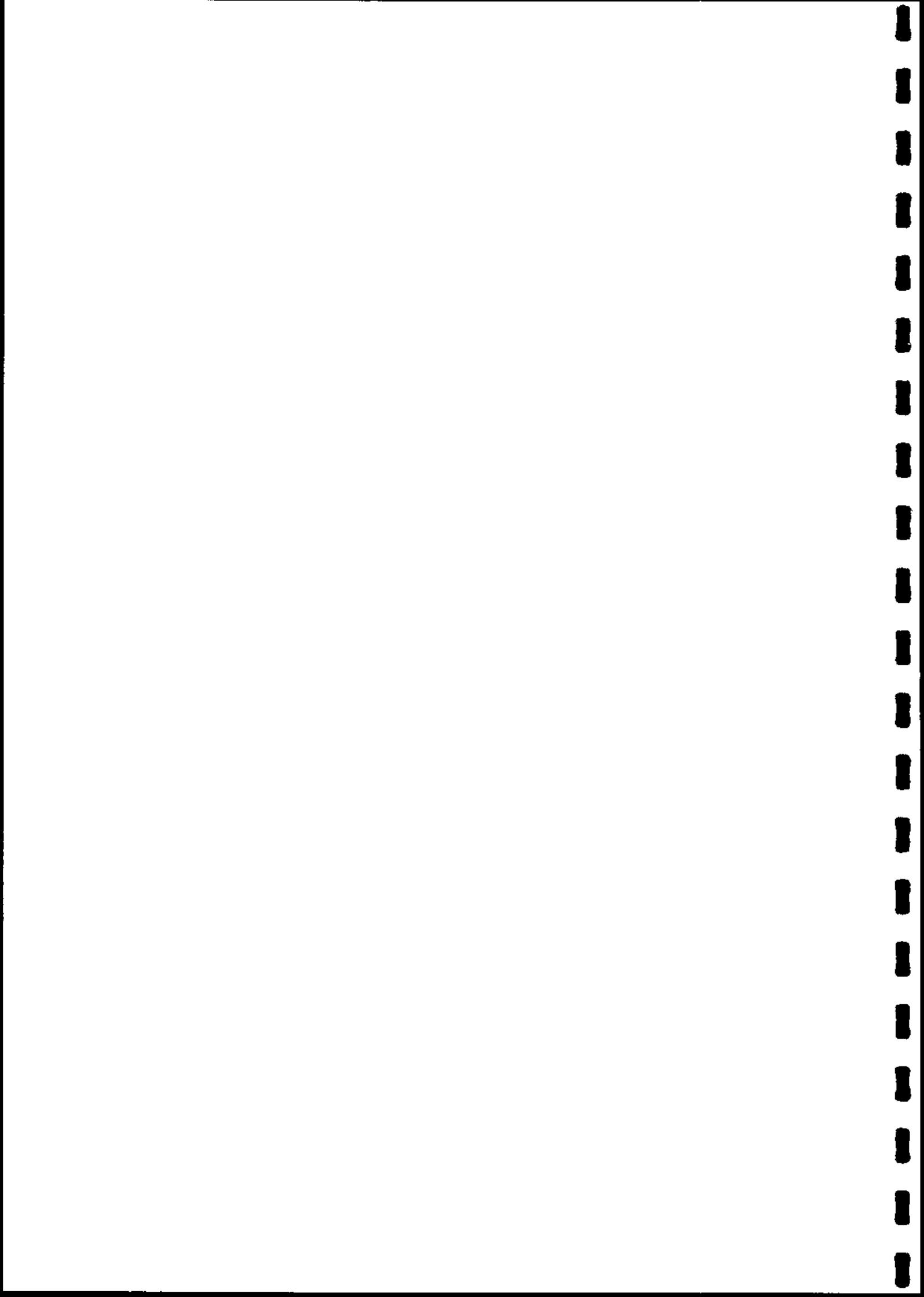
The key findings of the survey of the October 1996 recruit intake to the QPS are as follows:

- Most recruits expressed a desire to undertake further study in the next five years.
- Satisfaction with the Academy training program, including content areas, teaching methods and teacher performance, was generally high. The most commonly proposed changes to the Academy training program related to the PBL approach, station duty and the Physical Skills Education program.
- Although support for living-in was high at the beginning of training, there was a marked drop in support by the end of training.
- At the end of training, most recruits were satisfied with their choice of career: few had actually considered resigning during their training and most were committed to a 20-year career in the Police Service.
- Around half of the recruits indicated a desire to be working in the area of criminal investigation in five years' time — the most common preference. Few said that they wanted to work in areas such as general operational policing, traffic, or community liaison.
- Most recruits said that they would prefer to be stationed at a provincial or metropolitan station.
- The recruits generally accepted the model of discipline applied by the Academy, including the role of physical education, as being part of police training. However, overall, less than half agreed that they were treated as mature adults by Academy staff.



**PART B:**

**ISSUES RELATING TO THE TOWNSVILLE CAMPUS**



## **INTRODUCTION**

A significant development in 1996 was the establishment of a second campus of the QPSA at Townsville. Before then, the training centre at Oxley had been the sole provider of recruit education and training.

The Townsville campus is situated on a converted site at the old Bush Children's Home. The recruits are accommodated at the Mercure Hotel and transported to the campus by bus. The living arrangements at the Mercure Hotel are of a much higher standard than those available at Oxley.

The Queensland Police Service Review (1996) recommended that '... PEAC monitor the development and use of the Townsville Academy to ensure the best use of resources and the maintenance of standards and consistency in recruit training in the QPS' (Rec. 83, p. 147). In this context, the surveys provide data about:

- whether the Townsville campus has been effective in attracting recruits from the north who might otherwise have been deterred from joining the QPS
- the perceptions of recruits at the two campuses about the training experience and quality of training being provided.

To allow for the possibility that the initial Townsville intake may not have been 'typical', the second Townsville intake (May 1997) was also surveyed at the end of their first week of training, in order to obtain data on the recruits' reasons for training at Townsville.<sup>13</sup> In addition, QPS recruitment statistics were examined, to ascertain if there had been any increase in applications from residents of northern regions.

## ***HAS THE TOWNSVILLE CAMPUS SUCCEEDED IN ATTRACTING MORE RECRUITS FROM THE NORTH?***

### **RECRUITS FROM THE NORTH**

As table B1 shows, 72 per cent of the Townsville May 1997 intake were from the central or northern areas of the State — up from 61 per cent in the first intake.

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13 Townsville recruits in the October 1996 intake are referred to as 'Townsville 1' and in the May 1997 intake as 'Townsville 2' in the tables.

TABLE B1 — WHERE RECRUITS LIVED BEFORE JOINING THE QPS:  
BEGINNING OF TRAINING  
(OCTOBER 1996 INTAKE AND MAY 1997 TOWNSVILLE INTAKE)

QPS Region/Area	Percentage		
	<i>Oxley</i> (n=81)	<i>Townsville 1</i> (n=36)	<i>Townsville 2</i> (n=40)
Far Northern	-	16.7	20.0
Northern	-	36.1	42.5
Central	3.7	8.3	10.0
North Coast	11.1	11.1	-
Southern	3.7	-	2.5
South Eastern	8.6	-	2.5
Brisbane Metropolitan	70.4	25.0	15.0
Victoria/NSW	2.5	2.8	5.0
United Kingdom	-	-	2.5

Note: Recruits were asked: Please name the town/city/area you lived in before joining the police service.

### CAMPUS PREFERENCE

As table B2 shows, only 46 per cent of the recruits surveyed in the initial Townsville intake had chosen to go to Townsville for training. In the second intake this proportion had risen to 78 per cent. However, the vast majority of those who indicated a preference for Townsville would have been prepared to train at the Oxley campus if required. There were only two people (one in each of the two Townsville intakes) who said that they would *not* have been willing to go to Oxley. On the other hand, 18 per cent of the Oxley recruits in the October 1996 intake indicated that they would *not* have been prepared to train at the Townsville campus if positions were not available at Oxley.

TABLE B2 — CAMPUS PREFERENCE:  
BEGINNING OF TRAINING  
(OCTOBER 1996 INTAKE AND MAY 1997 TOWNSVILLE INTAKE)

GROUP	QUESTION	
	<i>Was the campus to which you were assigned your preferred choice?</i>	<i>If yes, would you have been prepared to train at the alternative campus if no positions available at preferred campus?</i>
	Yes (%)	No (%)
Oxley recruits: 'October 1996 intake' (n=84)	85.7	18.1
Townsville 1 recruits: 'October 1996 intake' (n=37)	45.9	5.9
Townsville 2 recruits: 'May 1997 intake' (n=40)	77.5	3.2

An analysis of the final pool of applicants for the October 1996 intake showed that the majority (56%) of the applicants from the northern and central regions chose Townsville as their first training preference; a further one-third (32%) were indifferent about where they trained, nominating 'either campus'. About 13 per cent of applicants from the northern and central regions chose the Oxley campus as their first training preference.<sup>14</sup>

#### RECRUITMENT OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLE

Another justification for establishing the Townsville campus was that it would encourage more indigenous people to join the QPS. There is little evidence so far of this occurring, although it may be too early to gauge the long-term impact of the establishment of a northern campus on indigenous recruitment. In each Townsville intake, three recruits (8%) identified as persons of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) descent. At Oxley, five recruits (6%) in the October 1996 intake, but only two recruits (2%) in the May 1997 intake, indicated they had an ATSI background.<sup>15</sup>

#### APPLICATIONS AND RECRUITS FROM THE NORTH

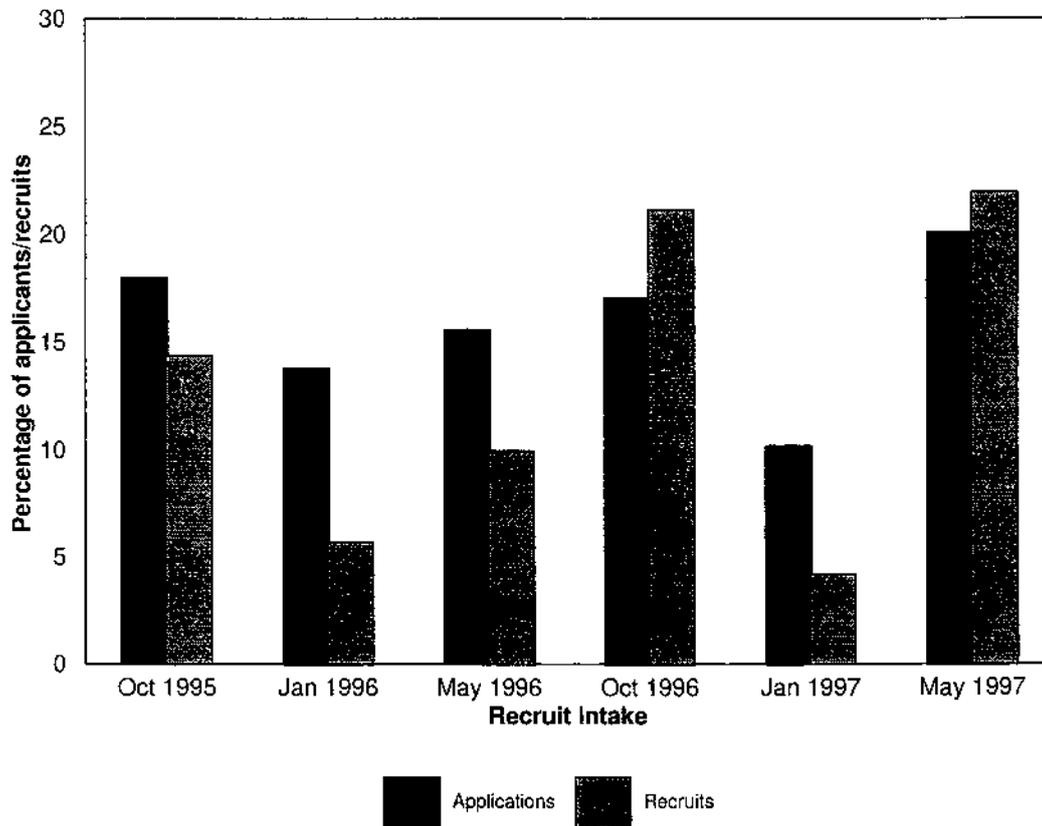
For two reasons, it is not possible *at this stage* to determine if the establishment of the new campus has been instrumental in attracting significantly more applicants to the QPS from northern and central regions of the State. First, as shown by figure B1, the composition of the applicant pools in the period since the establishment of the Townsville campus has varied greatly. The proportion of northern applicants in the October 1996 and May 1997 intakes was well above that of January and May 1996, whereas the proportion was much lower in January 1997. This intake did not include a Townsville intake, suggesting that establishment of the Townsville campus may have had more impact on the *timing* of applications than on the overall proportion of applications from northern and central regions. Secondly, it is difficult to

14 Source: Queensland Police Service, Recruiting Section.

15 Source: Queensland Police Service, Recruiting Section.

disentangle the impact of the establishment of the Townsville campus from the effect of the QPS recruitment campaigns. In anticipation of the increased demand for northern applicants, the Recruiting Section of the QPS began an intensive marketing and promotional campaign to attract more country applicants. The campaign started in 1995 — before the establishment of the Townsville campus — and concentrated on the four major northern coastal centres — Cairns, Townsville, Mackay and Rockhampton. It is therefore possible that there would have been an upward trend in the proportion of applicants from the northern regions even if the campus had not been established.

**FIGURE B1 — APPLICATIONS AND RECRUITS FROM THE FAR NORTHERN, NORTHERN AND CENTRAL REGIONS AS A PROPORTION OF TOTAL APPLICANT POOL/INTAKE**



Source: Queensland Police Service, Recruiting Section.

Note: The January 1997 intake did not include a Townsville intake — training was conducted at the Oxley campus only.

Figure B1 also displays the proportion of recruits appointed from each intake who came from the northern and central regions. The figure shows that in the first Townsville intake, the percentage of recruits from the northern and central regions was more than double the previous intake — from 10 per cent in May 1996 to 21 per cent in October 1996. This was above the proportion of applicants in the total pool who were from these regions — a turnaround from the previous three intakes where the proportion of recruits from these areas was well below the proportion of applicants. On one interpretation, this indicates that there was some priority given to northern applicants in this intake. However, in the January 1997 intake, when recruits were appointed to the Oxley campus only, there was a substantial drop in the proportion of recruits from the north. (This may be accounted for by the fact that when training is provided at only the

Oxley campus, recruits are provided with the option to delay their recruitment until the next Townsville intake.) It is therefore not possible to say at this stage that there has been any change in recruitment practices relating to northern applicants, but this situation needs to be monitored.

### EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

Table B3 compares the educational qualifications of Townsville and Oxley recruits in the October 1996 and May 1997 intakes. In the October 1996 intake, only 15 per cent of Townsville recruits had completed a degree or postgraduate studies compared to 28 per cent of recruits at Oxley. In the May 1997 intake, the proportion of Townsville recruits with tertiary qualifications increased to 25 per cent, but this was still below the proportion of Oxley recruits who had completed degrees (35%). It needs to be acknowledged that education is one of several factors taken into account in the selection process adopted by the QPS. However, these data highlight the need for continual close monitoring of the recruit selection process to ensure that there is consistency in recruitment standards between the two campuses.

**TABLE B3 — EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS AND EMPLOYMENT EXPERIENCE  
(OCTOBER 1996 AND MAY 1997 RECRUIT INTAKES)**

Education/Employment	October 1996 intake		May 1997 intake	
	Oxley (%) n=83	Townsville (%) n=40	Oxley (%) n=105	Townsville (%) n=40
Associate Diploma/Equivalent	21.7	37.5	21.0	40.0
Incomplete Degree	18.1	17.5	14.3	15.0
Degree/Postgraduate	27.7	15.0	35.3	25.0
Employment	32.5	30.0	29.7	20.0

Source: Queensland Police Service, Recruiting Section.

- Notes: 1. Data are missing for one Oxley recruit in October 1996 intake.  
2. Due to rounding, percentages may not add up to 100.

### ADVANTAGES OF TRAINING FACILITY

At the start of training, 60 per cent of the Oxley recruits in the October 1996 intake felt that their campus had greater training advantages than the North Queensland campus, whereas 52 per cent of the Townsville recruits felt that their campus had greater advantages. With the second Townsville intake, this proportion rose to 80 per cent.

The main advantage cited by Oxley recruits was that the Oxley campus had long been established and therefore had better services, facilities and staff.<sup>16</sup> Some also attributed the advantages of training at Oxley to their closer proximity to family, friends and support network. Other reasons included the climate and greater exposure and access to training at busy and larger stations. The Townsville recruits considered the advantages of training at North Queensland mainly to be the better standard of accommodation, the benefits which stem from being in a small training group, and training in the same area where they will be stationed.

<sup>16</sup> Each recruit could provide up to three reasons their campus had advantages over the other.

**HOW DID THE TWO CAMPUSES COMPARE IN TERMS OF PERCEIVED QUALITY OF TRAINING?**

There was no evidence that the quality of training at the Townsville campus was less than that provided at Oxley; in fact, on a number of items, Townsville recruits gave a significantly more positive assessment.

**TEACHER PERFORMANCE**

At the end of training, respondents in the October 1996 intake were asked to rate the performance of their teachers. Townsville recruits indicated a greater level of satisfaction with their teachers compared to Oxley recruits (see table B4). For instance, 89 per cent of Townsville recruits compared to 72 per cent of Oxley recruits felt their teachers were extremely knowledgeable in the areas taught and listened when recruits expressed an opinion. Oxley recruits also tended to be more dissatisfied with the availability of teachers outside of class time. Although both campuses employ an after-hours shift supervisor, the small staffing establishment at the Townsville campus often requires course facilitators to perform these duties, thereby increasing interaction between teachers and recruits.

In addition, the atmosphere within the classroom was viewed more favourably by Townsville recruits: only 5 per cent agreed that teachers did not encourage participation compared to 24 per cent of Oxley recruits; 83 per cent at Townsville considered that teachers were able to deal with conflict in the class compared to 64 per cent at Oxley.

**TABLE B4 — TEACHER PERFORMANCE:  
END OF TRAINING  
(OCTOBER 1996 RECRUIT INTAKE)**

Statement	Agree (%)	
	Oxley	Townsville
<i>My teachers at the Academy ...</i>		
(a) listened to me when I expressed an opinion*	71.8	89.2
(b) were not available outside of class time if I needed help*	28.2	10.8
(c) presented information in a clear manner	72.9	86.5
(d) did not encourage me to actively participate in class*	23.9	5.4
(e) were able to deal with conflict in the class well*	64.3	83.3
(f) did not provide support to recruits	22.9	8.1
(g) were extremely knowledgeable in the areas in which they taught*	71.8	89.2
(h) had the level of maturity I would expect from a teacher	74.6	89.2

- Notes:
1. The recruits were asked: In general, would you agree or disagree with the following statements about your teachers at the Academy?
  2. Oxley: n=71 except for statements c, e, and f where n=70; Townsville: n=37 for each statement except 'were able to deal with conflict in the class well' where n=36.
  3. \* indicates responses between Oxley and Townsville recruits are statistically significant (p<.05).

The high rate of satisfaction expressed by the Townsville recruits was also reflected in their response to the question: 'Overall, compared to other teachers that you have had, how would you rate your teachers at the Academy?'. Sixty-eight per cent of the Townsville recruits rated their teachers as 'better than average' and 32 per cent as 'about average'. In comparison, most Oxley recruits felt their teachers were 'about average' (60%), 29 per cent described them as average and 11 per cent rated them as 'worse than average'.

### TRAINING EXPERIENCE AT ACADEMY

At the end of training, recruits in the October 1996 intake were asked to reflect on their training experiences at the Academy. The recruits were asked about how well the course had prepared them for policing as well as the next stage of their training — field training. Although the training experience at both campuses tended to be viewed similarly by the recruits, Townsville recruits felt more 'prepared for field training' than Oxley recruits (see table B5).

**TABLE B5 — VIEWS ABOUT TRAINING AT THE ACADEMY:  
END OF TRAINING  
(OCTOBER 1996 RECRUIT INTAKE)**

Statement	Agree (%)	
	Oxley	Townsville
(a) Overall, I feel prepared for field training*	61.1	81.1
(b) Critical thinking was encouraged by the course	65.2	80.6
(c) The workload was too heavy	26.4	35.1
(d) I would have liked more information on different ways of policing the community	27.8	32.4
(e) I have not been given enough information about field training	26.4	16.2
(f) The course provided me with an awareness of the differing lifestyles in Queensland today	65.3	48.6
(g) I have learned to apply problem-solving strategies to difficult policing situations	70.8	78.4
(h) The need for police to behave ethically was emphasised	97.2	97.3

- Notes:
1. Recruits were asked: Listed below are some general statements about your training at the Academy. Do you agree or disagree with each of them?
  2. Oxley: n=72 for each statement; Townsville: n=37 except for statement (b) where n=36.
  3. \* indicates responses between Oxley and Townsville recruits are statistically significant ( $p < .05$ ).

**INSTITUTIONAL CLIMATE AT ACADEMY**

***DISCIPLINARY AND PARAMILITARY STYLE***

Townsville recruits were more likely than Oxley recruits to agree that they were treated and respected as mature adults by Academy staff and less likely to agree with the description of the culture at the Academy as 'strongly disciplinarian' (see table B6).

**TABLE B6 – VIEWS ON INSTITUTIONAL CLIMATE AT ACADEMY:  
END OF TRAINING  
(OCTOBER 1996 RECRUIT INTAKE)**

Statement	Agree (%)	
	Oxley	Townsville
(e) Recruits are treated and respected as mature adults by Academy staff**	32.4	64.9
(f) The culture at the Academy is strongly disciplinarian*	62.0	40.5

- Notes:
1. Recruits were asked: The following are statements about the institutional 'climate' at the Academy. Indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with the statements.
  2. Oxley: n = 71 for each statement; Townsville: n = 37 for each statement.
  3. \* indicates responses between Oxley and Townsville recruits are statistically significant (p<.05).  
\*\* indicates responses between Oxley and Townsville recruits are statistically significant (p<.01).

***DRILL PRACTICE***

The recruits were also asked to rate the importance of drill practice. Of the two groups, Oxley recruits were more likely to support drill practice with 82 per cent rating it as extremely or moderately important compared to only 46 per cent of Townsville recruits.<sup>17</sup>

**NORTHERN REGION SERVICE**

Recruits training at the North Queensland campus were required to sign an agreement to complete their first four years of police service in the northern regions. The Townsville recruits in both the October 1996 intake and May 1997 intake were asked to report their views about the agreement. Four (10%) in the first Townsville intake reported they were not satisfied with the requirements of the agreement. However, in the May 1997 intake, there was only one recruit out of 40 who was not happy with the agreement.

The reasons given by those recruits who were unhappy with the agreement were that: they should have a choice as to where they served after training; the QPS should be more flexible particularly allowing for changes in personal circumstances; and the agreement should only be for three years of service in the north instead of four.

<sup>17</sup> Responses between Oxley and Townsville recruits are statistically significant (p<.001).

## SUMMARY OF PART B

At this stage, it is not possible to ascertain if the establishment of a second QPSA campus at Townsville has encouraged a greater number of people from the central and northern regions to apply to join the QPS. Recruits from the north appear to find the Townsville campus an attractive training option, but almost all would have been prepared to train at the Oxley campus if necessary. There is also, as yet, no evidence of any impact on indigenous recruitment. Further monitoring is required to ensure that the establishment of the Townsville campus does not have an adverse impact on the maintenance of consistency in recruitment standards.

Overall, the Townsville recruits rated the quality of their training equal to or higher than the ratings provided by Oxley recruits. In some areas, Townsville recruits were significantly more positive, particularly when assessing the performance of their teachers. Townsville recruits were also considerably more likely to agree that they were treated and respected as mature adults by Academy staff and less inclined to describe the culture of the Academy as 'strongly disciplinarian'. The more positive responses from Townsville recruits were probably influenced by the more intimate nature of the campus, the smaller size of the Townsville intake, and the newness of the program (hence, the enthusiasm of staff), all factors that have helped to create a more personalised teaching environment.

## REFERENCE

Queensland Police Service Review 1996, *Report on the Review of the Queensland Police Service*,  
(Chairperson: Sir Max Bingham, QC) Kingswood Press Pty Ltd, Brisbane.