



Premier Jay Weatherill backflips on police recruiting delay to thwart union campaign

PREMIER Jay Weatherill has reconsidered a budget policy to delay the recruiting of an extra 313 police for the third time, heading off a planned campaign by the Police Association targeting his "trustworthiness".

Nigel Hunt Exclusive

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Premier Jay Weatherill will provide SAPOL with an extra \$4.1 million in funding to ensure his promised 2018 delivery date of an extra 313 police is kept.

PREMIER Jay Weatherill has scrapped a budget policy that again delayed a key police recruiting target date — heading off a looming public brawl with the police union.

In a major development in the simmering recruiting row, Mr Weatherill will provide SAPOL with an extra \$4.1 million in funding to ensure his promised 2018 delivery date of an extra 313 police is kept.

And in a major concession, the Police Association has agreed to a new junior cadet wage for recruits aged under 21 to help ensure young South Australians are given the opportunity to become "career cops."

The Advertiser can reveal the policy backflip follows more than a week of secret negotiations between the Police Association, Mr Weatherill, Police Minister Peter Malinauskas and police commissioner Grant Stevens over the recruiting row.

It was sparked when the July 7 budget revealed a policy that extended by another two years to 2020 a bold 2010 election promise to recruit an additional 313 police officers — outraging the Police Association of SA.

Mr Malinauskas last night said the funding injection would facilitate the recruitment of the 313 officers locally by 2018.

A key part of the new policy will see the creation of a new junior cadet wage for recruits aged under 21 years of \$35,000 a year — compared with the existing \$53,808 a year for all cadets.

"The new money will help facilitate the accelerated ramp up of new cadets coming into the police academy," Mr Malinauskas said.

"This is in line with the government's stated commitment to increase the size of the sworn police force by 313 members."

"We were very surprised at the delay to the recruiting target again in the budget," he said.

"We subsequently advised the minister and the premier of that grave disappointment and have been involved in negotiations to ensure previous commitments made to the public are maintained."

Mr Carroll said the union also welcomed the commitment to hire "young South Australians who wanted to be career cops" and had agreed to the new junior cadet wage to help facilitate this.

Mr Stevens last night said he had provided ongoing advice to government on what was required to achieve the recruiting target and the additional funding would provide "an excellent opportunity to actively recruit for these additional police numbers."

"I strongly encourage any person considering a policing career to make that move now," he said.

The recruiting move follows the government's backtrack last November on the controversial Return To Work legislation that cut benefits to police injured in the line of duty.

After several weeks of public action, which included blunt adverts highlighting injured officers' financial plights and culminated in a rare protest march down King Williams St by angry police, the government relented and restored the benefits to police.

Police sources said PASA had planned similar protest action over the broken recruiting promises, with the "trustworthiness" of Mr Weatherill the focus of the campaign.

The first salvo in the campaign was fired on July 28 when the union sent an internal email to all members attacking Mr Weatherill over the broken recruiting promise.

The email, obtained by *The Advertiser*, states the union was "bitterly disappointed that Premier Weatherill's government has, yet again, reneged on its promise to fund the recruitment and training of an extra 313 police officers."

"It is a very bad situation when the people charged with the protection of our community cannot trust the people charged to lead it," the email states.

The initial promise to recruit an extra 313 police officers — by 2014 — was made by the government in 2010. In 2011 this was pushed back to 2016 and in 2013 the delivery date was pushed back to 2018.

Following the budget both Mr Stevens and Mr Malinauskas said the 2018 target could not be met without SAPOL recruiting police from overseas again and the new 2020 target would ensure South Australians were recruited.

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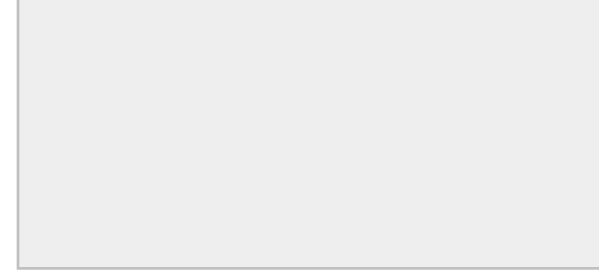
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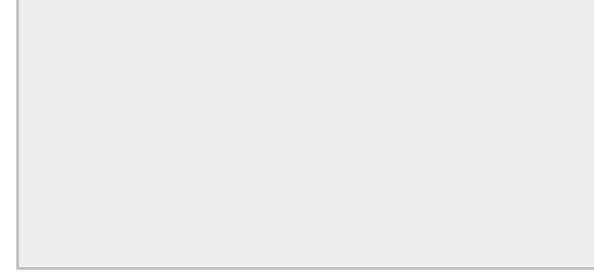
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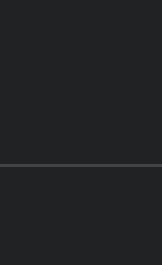
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