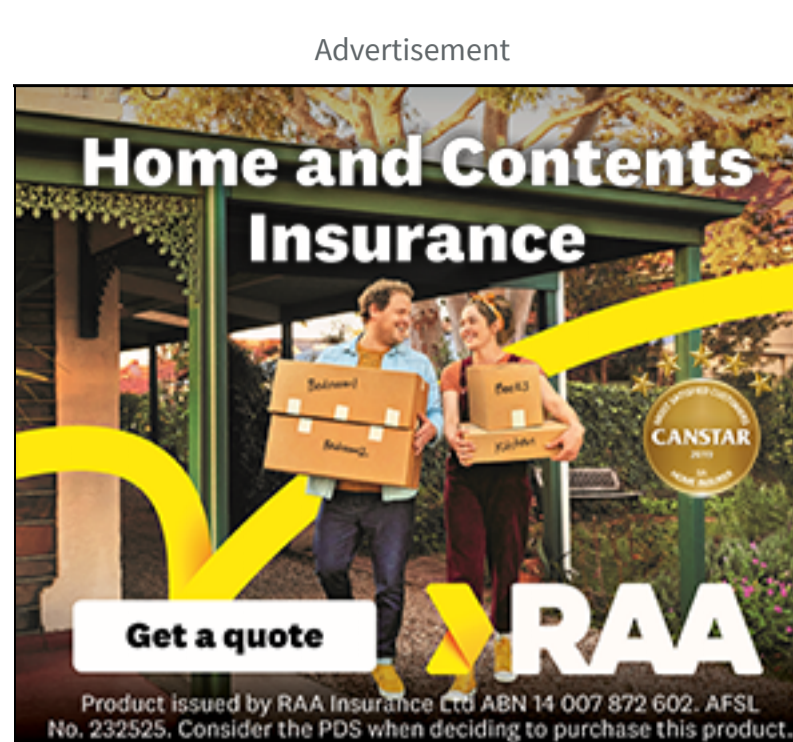
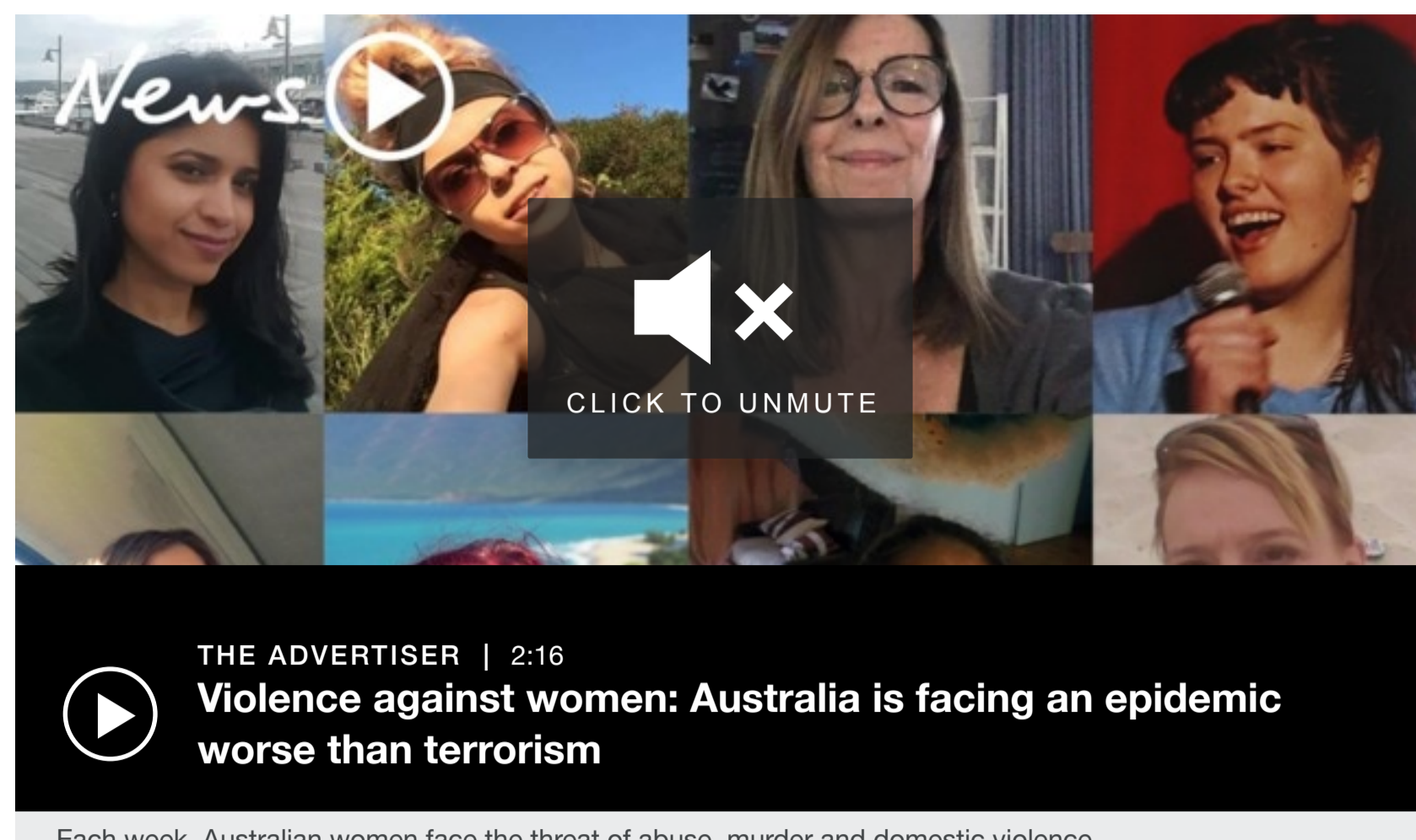


SA police officers struggling to cope with child abuse, family violence cases

Police officers dealing with child abuse and domestic violence are being swamped with an "insurmountable" workload that is affecting their welfare, prompting a dispute between the union and SA Police.

Elizabeth Henson

@Eliz_henson July 11, 2019 - 2:43PM The Advertiser



- **THIS SUNDAY: Our child protection system examined - Only in the Sunday Mail's Insight.**

Police officers in a specialised unit that deals with child abuse and high-risk domestic violence are struggling to cope with an "insurmountable" workload, sparking a dispute between the union and SA Police.

The Police Association of South Australia is locked in discussions with SA Police over workload and staffing issues within the Southern Child and Family Investigation Section, which covers suburbs south of Adelaide.

It says the new District Policing Model introduced in July last year has resulted in the section being swamped with extra duties, such as major indictable domestic violence and child abuse cases.

They have also become responsible for investigating child deaths.

The association says the workload has been described as "unsustainable and unrealistic" by members of the section and has "affected their health, safety and welfare".

PASA president Mark Carroll told *The Advertiser* the association took action after members of the unit approached the union with concerns about their workloads.

Police Association of SA (PASA) president Mark Carroll. Picture: AAP

"They allege that these workloads have become almost unsustainable and that staffing is insufficient," he said.

"We are currently in ongoing talks with (SA Police) to resolve the dispute."

Mr Carroll declined to answer questions about the impact of the staffing issues on cases, including whether investigations were being delayed or under-resourced.

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In the latest edition of the association's Police Journal, the union stated members of the unit had "submitted numerous hazard and incident reports which detail their disquiet about staffing and workload intensification".

"Too often, significant long-term investigations come up when staffing is low, or owing purely to the current inadequacy of staffing, the standard workload becomes insurmountable," it read.

A police spokeswoman confirmed SA Police had been involved in discussions with the association and the individual police officers in the unit about the matter.

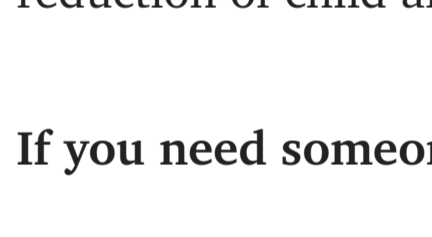
She said "areas for improvement" had been identified and solutions to problems were "being implemented".

"This includes the addition of two detectives and two general duties police officers to the unit," the spokeswoman said.

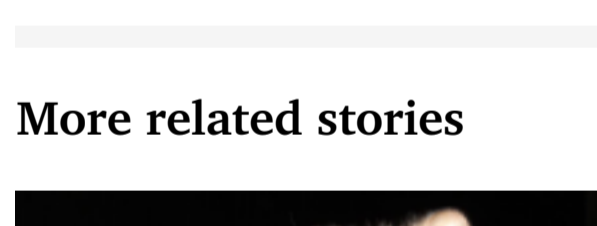
"A review of processes has also resulted in the reduction of double handling and identification of opportunities for earlier intervention to better protect vulnerable women and children."

The spokeswoman also said while the Child and Family Investigation sections co-ordinate and lead investigations in its field, "all South Australian police officers are capable of investigating family violence and are committed to the reduction of child and domestic abuse".

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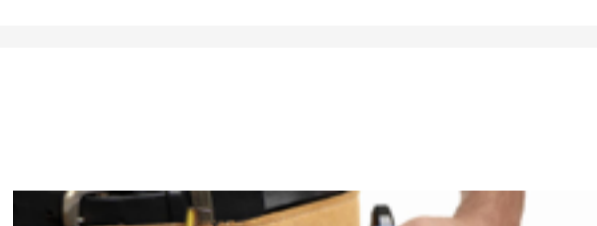


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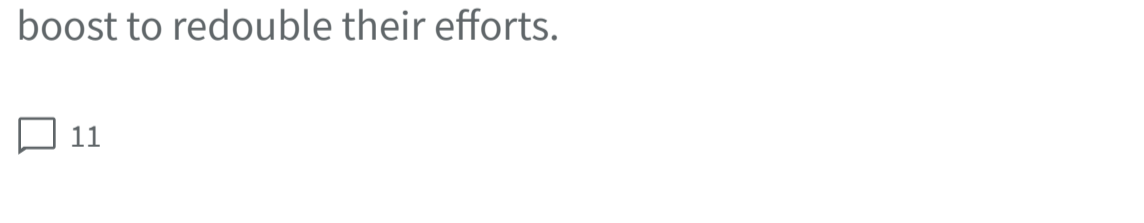
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