



BECOMING A **POLICE OFFICER**

YOUR GUIDE TO A
SUCCESSFUL
POLICE CAREER

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ARE YOU READY TO BECOME A POLICE OFFICER?

Right now, this week, today are you ready to become a police officer? You don't want to be considering this question for the first time during your psychological interview. The fact that you are reading this book already puts you leaps ahead of many police applicants who never ask themselves this question.

Consider how recruiting agencies are meant to answer this question if the applicant has not even considered it?

Recruiting don't know you. Only YOU can confidently answer this question.

This activity is designed to give you an opportunity to answer this question with certainty right now. After completing this activity you will be in great position to confidently articulate exactly why you're joining the police and why you are ready to do so today.

The question is not whether you have the specific skills to be a police officer, but whether you are ready to embark on a challenging adventure unlike anything else on offer in society. It comes down to having a good enough reason to do this. If you have clear and sound reasons for becoming a police officer then you are ready.

Whilst this is a career of service to the community, it is important that you have clarity on exactly what you want to gain personally from joining the police. There is nothing wrong with having clear reasons on what you want to get out of this.

Take out a piece of paper and write down everything you want to gain by joining the police. If you are struggling to do this, there are some example suggestions on the next page. Try to write down a few on your own first before looking at the example. It doesn't have to be based on any rules or written in any particular order. Just take out a pen and start writing! Spend at least ten minutes doing this.

EXAMPLE ACTIVITY

Why I want to be a police officer:

I want to work in a job that keeps me in the same State and where I can live in the same house for the next ten years at least.

I want to serve the community in a more tangible way than my current employment offers. I want to help and protect local Australians in the area where I live.

I want a reliable income.

I want an exciting job.

I want something to challenge me physically and mentally.

I want to feel good about what I do when I go to work.

I want my wife and children to be proud of my career choice.

I want a job that is important and makes a difference to something or someone.

I've always thought about doing it and am curious.

I want a job working with lots of different people where I will make new friends and meet interesting and different types of people.

I want to work as part of a team.

I want a job where I am doing the actual job most of the time and not training most of the time.

I want a job with some degree of risk, uncertainty and excitement.

I want a job where being physically fit is an important attribute.

I want to be respected by my friends and family.

I want to work with people with strong moral values.

I want a job where I will learn something new everyday.

I want a job where I am physically active and get out of the office on a regular basis.

I want a job that will help me keep fit.

I want a job with a degree of responsibility and decision-making.

I want to contribute to a safe community.

I want to catch bad guys.

So now you've got a list of reasons why you want to join the police. Have a look over the list and remove any that will not affect you constructively or provide some benefit to the community. If nobody gains anything from a reason, it is not going to be much use to you. If once you've done this, your list is very short or non-existent then you must seriously reconsider if being a police officer is for you or if you are ready to become a police officer.

Examples of reasons that serve neither you or the community are:

- I want to carry a gun.
- I want to have power over other people.
- I want to tell people what to do.

If you are happy with your list then continue on.

There is a very important reason we've done this activity and that is so you can select your best reasons. You must be satisfied with each reason and also clear on which are your most useful.

You need to work out the best reasons to help with the following three things:

Number One: If you do decide to go ahead with your application you are going to be in for a long and sometimes arduous process of selection and training before you can even make it to the police academy. You need to know your best reasons and keep them clear in your head on a daily basis so that you don't lose your personal drive for why you are putting yourself through the rigours of the selection process.

Number Two: When you make it to recruiting you will have a concise and confident list of reasons as to why you want to be a police officer.

Number Three: Everyone you know is going to ask, "What do you want to be a police officer for?"

So using my list as an example, here are some reasons I will NOT be counting as presentable reasons:

1. I want to be respected by my friends and family.
2. I want to work as part of a team.
3. I've always thought about doing it and am curious.

There is nothing wrong with having these sorts of reasons but they are weak in all three of the categories mentioned above. Primarily they are weak reasons to drive me to action and will not make me put effort into my preparation. Secondly they are very weak if presented to recruiting. Their response is likely to be, "Is that the best reasons you've got?" Thirdly, if you give these reasons to friends and family, it will sound like you are completely self-centred and just doing it on a whim. Which also presents poorly to recruiting officers for the same reasons.

But how can that be if there is nothing wrong with them as reasons? The reason is because nobody else knows about the rest of your list. You have to

consider why people are asking you and select appropriate responses to them. This is not being dishonest, it is communicating effectively and presenting yourself in a smart fashion. You should be sick of saying your three main reasons by the time you get to a recruiting interview because you know them so well!

Here is a more impressive way of promoting my reasons using three different reasons on my list:

1. I want to serve the community in a more tangible way than my current employment offers. I want to help and protect local Australians in the area where I live.
2. I want a job where I am physically active and get out of the office on a regular basis.
3. I want to catch bad guys.

I'm not proposing this becomes your list to tell people but I will explain why it is a more useful choice than the previous three. These reasons apply regardless of talking to myself to maintain my interest or talking to recruiting staff and friends and family.

The first reason states that I'm doing it for unselfish reasons and have strong community values. It gives me daily inspiration that it is a goal worth working towards. It gives specific reason as to why I'm joining this particular State police.

The second reason shows that I have done some research into what police do and that I am interested in the more active component of police work.

The third reason reminds me not to take it so seriously and that it doesn't have to be all about what helping victims all the time. It shows other people that I'm interested in the more exciting aspects of being a police officer and I'm not afraid to get physically involved when required.

I also like this reason because it sounds more 'real' than the first two which are both very 'principle' based and sound very formal.

These are my personal preferences only. They are not a magic template of reasons to join the police. The purpose of this activity is for you to get clear on your own reasons and start practising telling other people why you want to be a police officer. The great thing about writing this down is that it will be great inspiration for you to read further on in your career when you may be dealing with a longer list of why not to be a police officer.

Read out loud your three best reasons for becoming a police officer. Are you ready to become a police officer? If your answer is yes, that is great news and congratulations. The final chapter will now help you gain clarity in what you will specifically enjoy being a police officer and identifying what you personally have to offer the community.

**THIS IS THE END OF YOUR FREE PREVIEW OF
'BECOMING A POLICE OFFICER'**

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