

Megatrends Impacting Police

The 2019 ANZPAA Trends Analysis identifies seven interconnected megatrends and related challenges that are shaping policing's operational environment over the short, medium and long term. These megatrends are adding layers of complexity on existing core policing challenges like volume crime, road safety, alcohol and drugs, family and domestic violence, and others.

01

Growth, Diversity and Divides

Our populations are projected to grow significantly over the next 10 and 20 years, with much of that growth expected in our cities, and driven by overseas migration. Experiences of discrimination and the deepening of polarising views on both ends of the political spectrum are also increasing – providing strong evidence that significant social cohesion challenges continue to shape the community safety environment.

02

The Fourth Industrial Revolution

Rapid technological advancements continue to pose significant opportunities and risks for policing, with increasing potential for indirect impacts through broader societal change. Trust and confidence remain at the forefront of consideration in police's exploration of new technologies, such as artificial intelligence, facial recognition and others.

03

Shifting Economic Tides

Continued investment in current and future capabilities to match increasingly agile and tech-savvy criminal networks is essential, at a time when many police jurisdictions are facing budgets constraints. Sharing expertise and efficiencies across jurisdictional boundaries will be increasingly important, as will focusing on core policing functions in the face of expanding social remits.

04

Generation Next

Social justice remains a significant pressure point on the next generation of Australians and New Zealanders, with mental health at the forefront of young people's concern. Employment pressures are also a challenge, with significantly higher rates of unemployment for many young people from diverse backgrounds. Driving factors for work and changing attitudes around alcohol and drugs are also contributing to heightened public discourse.

05

The Partnership Imperative

The range of complex challenges that police face, many of which have causal factors beyond police control, means that partnerships with other agencies, government departments, academia and the private sector, are becoming increasingly important. Ongoing consideration as to when police-lead is best suited will be required, depending on the social issue presented, to best recognise the role of police and engender shared ownership of outcomes.

06

Changing Trust Landscape

While many measures continue to show high levels of trust and confidence in Australian and New Zealand police, trust in a number of institutions, particularly some of the major global technology companies, media and social media, continue to falter. People are increasingly sensitive to privacy of their personal information.

07

Climate Change

More severe and frequent extreme weather events are expected to pose a mounting challenge for public safety in the short and medium terms. The consequential resourcing pressures may also see some jurisdictions unable to share resources across borders, increasing the need for calls for international assistance - and the associated costs.

These interrelated megatrends are likely to continue to shape the context in which police operate into the future. Action in the short, medium and longer terms to prepare for the future is critical, balanced with the need to meet current day-to-day challenges. Continuing to explore different future possibilities will help to ensure that police continue to make resilient decisions today whilst positioning themselves for tomorrow - becoming a participant in change, rather than a spectator to it.