

Psychology expertise backs police investigating child abuse

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University of Queensland psychology experts will work with police to develop and upgrade training programs for police investigating child abuse.

The Queensland Police Service, in implementing recommendations of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, will collaborate on the three-year project with UQ's Professor Blake McKimmie and Professor Barbara Masser.

Professor McKimmie said the Royal Commission recommended changes and upgrades to a wide range of functions and practices across many institutions.

"We'll work with QPS trainers to develop an innovative, evidence-based, integrated curriculum and prototypes for further QPS [training](#) modules," Professor McKimmie said.

"We'll review existing programs and help build QPS capacity for delivering online and face-to-face training to [police](#) throughout the organization."

Professor McKimmie said the "exciting collaborative opportunity" would help ensure the Royal Commission recommendations had their intended impact.

"We need to take a flexible and evidence-informed approach to training officers, to ensure they are equipped to perform their policing duties," Professor McKimmie said.

"This is a wonderful opportunity for us and the QPS to combine our complementary expertise to meet the needs of [child abuse](#) investigators."

The QPS's Detective Senior Sergeant Kirsten Helton said the project would align QPS officer training at all levels with the relevant Royal Commission recommendations.

"Our aim is to develop the best possible training for Queensland Police

officers, training that is both engaging and effective," Detective Senior Sergeant Helton said.

"The training will help officers to understand how trauma can affect victims differently, underpinned by research and informed by innovative learning practices. This means taking a victim-focused approach to educating officers. It spans practices used in complex trauma cases to advanced victim responses for specialist investigators, all of which will ultimately result in better police work."

Professors McKimmie and Masser are the current AAUT University Teachers of the Year, and are recognized nationally and internationally for their expertise in online, blended, and face-to-face teaching in psychology and law.

Provided by University of Queensland

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