

Case Study 9

In 2019, a female officer contacted Juniper alleging inappropriate behaviours of a Senior Constable from her station in the South Brisbane District. Juniper commenced an investigation and identified a further three female officers within the same District who had been the subject of his harassment. In total 24 allegations were made. The behaviour was directed towards female junior officers and involved sexual harassment in the workplace. The conduct was not consensual nor was it encouraged by the officers involved.

The conduct included:

- Over a 1.5 year period in 2017-18, in relation to one junior female officer, the Senior Constable:
 - sent numerous messages to her over various platforms, attempting to pursue an intimate relationship, requesting sex from her, and declaring his love;
 - sent numerous unsolicited photos of himself in various stages of undress and with his penis exposed;
 - repeatedly sent her the same video of himself masturbating;
 - threatened her on numerous occasions, including threatening to break into her house and rape her or share an intimate photo of her to other persons if she tried to, “bring him down”, and to sabotage any future relationships she engaged in; and
 - on numerous occasions, touched her inappropriately. This included occasions where he touched and rubbed her vagina over her clothes without her consent and while they were in a police car alone or at the station together, and grabbing her bottom.
- Primarily in 2019, in relation to a second junior female officer, the Senior Constable:
 - sent her numerous messages over social media or other platforms of a sexual nature and requesting to perform oral sex on her;
 - made comments to her of a sexual nature in the workplace;
 - sent her an unsolicited photo of his penis to her; and
 - on a number of occasions, touched her leg and the inside of her thigh while they were alone together in a police car or at the station.
- Sending a series of messages of a sexual nature on one occasion to a third junior female officer, including a photo of himself holding his penis.
- Invading the personal space of a female recruit he was with at the Academy, attempting to touch her leg, hold her hand or hug her.
- Sending photographs of himself in his police shirt, with his penis exposed, to women he had met on dating sites.

The investigation identified that there had been a significant failure to report misconduct within the District. The Senior Constable’s behaviour was well known by other officers and management.

The officers who were harassed by the Senior Constable and who did not make a complaint reported not wanting to be perceived as a “dog”, were embarrassed to be associated with him, and believed that no action would be taken by management. The officers also feared professional retribution if they complained and feared they would be labelled as willing partners to his conduct.

The investigation substantiated all 24 allegations, and the matter was referred to a prescribed officer for a disciplinary hearing to take place. In 2020, the officer resigned prior to the hearing taking place and the matter was finalised.