

## ***Careers and Capabilities: Real Stories of Career Mobility in Victoria Police***

*Allowing people to move readily in and out of policing is a stated goal of Victoria Police<sup>1</sup> and enabling career mobility is one reason why the Police Profession Register was established by the Victorian Parliament<sup>1</sup>. The Police Registration and Services Board (PRSB) undertook a substantial research project<sup>1</sup> in 2017 to learn more about the career pathways of police officers who had left Victoria Police. When they leave 'the job' they take a package of competencies with them which is highly valued by other organisations. They mainly go on to work in the public safety and security sector, often in regulatory and investigation contexts or in education and training roles related to policing. They continue to acquire valuable and transferable capabilities and experience such as stakeholder engagement, problem-solving, people and resource management, policy development and dealing with the public in a corporate environment. These former police officers also hone their core policing skills used in investigations, crime prevention and prosecutions.*

***Careers and Capabilities: Real Stories of Career Mobility in Victoria Police*** is the outcome of our latest project seeking to understand the potential value to Victoria Police of re-employing people with work experience from other organisations and sectors. The Register has been operating now for 4 years with 127 registrations and 51 successful returns to Victoria Police through registration<sup>1</sup>. Exploring the lived-experience of some of this first tranche of people has helped understand how the registration system is working thus far. We also sought to understand the experience of those police officers who joined Victoria Police after first following other fascinating and diverse career paths. We wanted to know how to promote career mobility and address the barriers currently reported.

*Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 25 Victoria Police officers to explore their capabilities and networks and how they used these to benefit their work with Victoria Police. We asked how their careers had influenced their ideas about workplace cultures, systems and practices and about the experience of returning to Victoria Police. For each, a personalised case study was prepared telling the story in their words. Also, by drawing on our earlier research, their individual maps and one of some common career pathways into and out of Victoria Police were created. Thirteen generously agreed to share their stories publicly.*

*The PRSB will use these case studies to help guide development of the registration scheme and to work with Victoria Police to 'normalise coming and going' whereby skill and experience is recognised and valued. We trust that these stories will be of interest and value to Victoria Police and its current and former members, by showing the opportunities and benefits that support a more mobile police workforce.*

*The PRSB thanks all the Victoria Police members who gave generously of their time and in particular, Sharon Weiss (Senior Project and Policy Officer, PRSB) for her major contribution to this project.*

**Peter Bull**

**Deputy President, Registration**

<sup>1</sup> [http://intranet/files/documents/102507\\_Victoria-Police-Blue-Paper\\_web.pdf#search=blue%20paper](http://intranet/files/documents/102507_Victoria-Police-Blue-Paper_web.pdf#search=blue%20paper)

<sup>1</sup> Victoria Police Act 2013

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.prsb.vic.gov.au/careers-and-capabilities-survey-report>

<sup>1</sup> As at June 2018

## Anthony is Back on the Ground: A Victoria Police Mobility Story

Anthony joined Victoria Police straight after school, graduating from the academy at 19 years old. He worked in Victoria Police for 10 years, achieving Detective Senior Constable status within the Crime Squads. On leaving, he briefly ran a private investigation company, before working as an Air Security Officer (Air Marshal) with the Australian Federal Police. From there he operated a personal training and running business. After applying to be registered with the PRSB, with the intention of resuming his career with Victoria Police, Anthony trained as an Air Traffic Controller. On his return to VicPol as a senior constable he was placed at the Operations Response Unit, where, within 4 months, he was acting sergeant.

Having been in Victoria Police since he was 19 Anthony was ready to ... *explore some other stuff. I still loved it, I wasn't disgruntled ... I'd spent ten years in, it was just time to go and explore some other stuff.*

While leaving VicPol led to a period of ... *initial grief, mourning of not having that same contact that was nullified pretty quickly. My skills were developed in VicPol, but they were really refined in the AFP environment where I managed a large team, supervised missions, was in charge of the training syllabus, recruits coming in.*

As well as people management, Anthony credits his largest growth area as ... *the ability to communicate with internal and external customers, other agencies, stakeholders.*

He developed a higher level understanding ... *big picture items, developing strategy, training that went along with operating in a new environment. A broader sense of how the overall strategy is to be implemented, rather than just going out, catching a crook and taking them to court.*

As well as people management, Anthony credits his largest growth area as ... *The ability to communicate with internal and external customers, other agencies, stakeholders.*

In 2014 Anthony was one of the early participants in the registration process. While his return to Victoria police was being processed, he joined Air Services Australia, and trained as an air traffic controller.

Anthony felt that policing suited his personality better than air traffic control ... *dealing with people, problem solving on a face to face and physical basis as opposed to talking to aircraft over the air and looking at a screen.*

Anthony was upgraded to acting sergeant within seven months of returning – a significant achievement, and a reflection of his effective application of the capabilities he has developed, and brought back to Victoria Police.

The professional networks that Anthony built are still active and he ... *sees those networks as critical to the future and important to my development .... the future may be in strategy,*

*planning, counterterrorism [roles] The contacts that I've made outside VicPol will be pretty critical to that.*

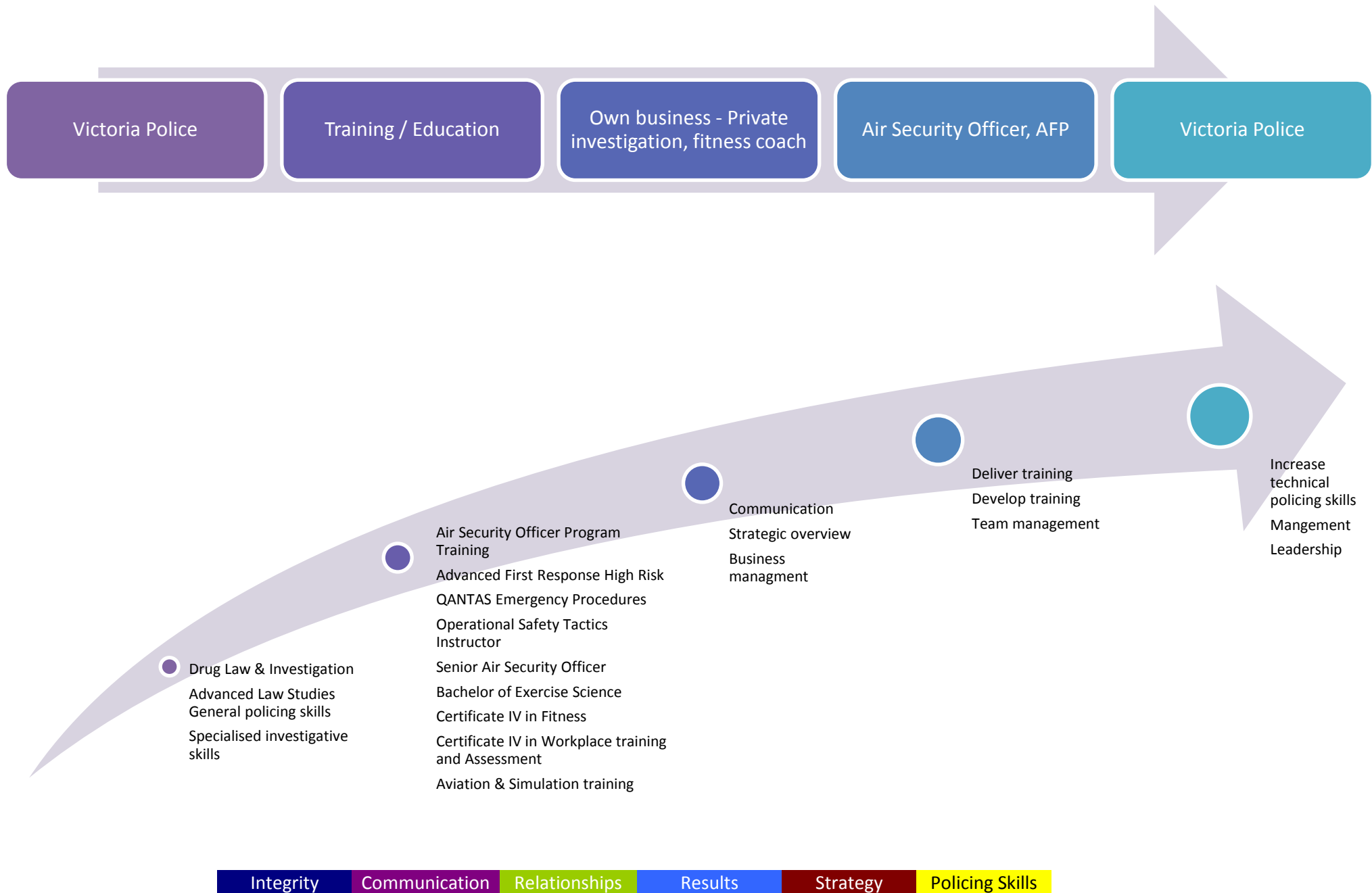
Anthony is positive about the benefits of moving around during his career ... *without knowing it at the time my learning, up until when I left, was pretty one dimensional.*

He sees his career as a continuum, growing towards the future ... *it's all good. Every single step has led to today. Where I am, what I'm doing today is the sum of everything I've achieved. I wouldn't be in this position, if not for taking every opportunity.*

**If you are not challenged, you are not growing.**

*See Anthony's Capability Map...*

## Anthony: A Victoria Police Mobility and Capability Map



## Belinda has Examined her Career: A Victoria Police Mobility Story

Belinda's career in Victoria Police has focussed on prosecutions. She has also spent time in a variety of specialist police environments, including media, corporate communications, people development and the Coroner's court. Belinda qualified as a lawyer and earned promotion to sergeant. Belinda then took 12 months leave without pay to work with Heritage Victoria. She returned and achieved the rank of senior sergeant. Then, Belinda took another year of leave without pay to work as a lawyer for the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency. She returned to Legal Services Division and has since been promoted to inspector.

Belinda believes in stepping outside the familiar ... *it's really healthy* ... and has done it twice. She was approached to apply for the position at Heritage Victoria and took the opportunity because she ... *wanted to step out and challenge myself*. Then, having qualified as a solicitor, she ... *wanted to get more exposure and post-admission experience. I'd had plenty of advocacy and so I applied for the position at AHPRA.*

*The prosecutor role in Victoria Police is very narrow. The experience is invaluable, that's where I saw the gap ... it's only a very small portion of what's out there in the legal environment. I wanted to step away outside my comfort zone and learn some greater skills as a solicitor, so I could potentially bring them back here.*

*From stepping out twice, I've come back with a new vigour, a new energy, I look at things differently, I take the blinkers off. I would highly recommend it, particularly at my level. It makes you think more broadly. You do bring back new skills to the role, even though some of them are hidden. It's quite remarkable really.*

*When you step outside and apply for another job and you get it, it's good for your confidence.*

Belinda found that she and her employer used the capabilities that she had acquired with Victoria Police. Originally she was not supervising anyone but ... *a few months in they said "we can see you have some natural management skills.*

**I think it would be very helpful for VicPol if we could send people out into other government areas. It's refreshing and the skillset you bring back just reinvigorates you.**

*They weren't my management skills, they were skills that Victoria police had instilled in me through all the courses and the training. I took my skillset from Victoria Police and injected it into another work environment. I've got Victoria Police to thank for that.*

Belinda links her skills gained on secondment directly to her promotion ... *I went up a rung as a direct result of this secondment. It was on my resume when I applied. Those two outside careers are the two things I always get*

*questioned about and it's an opportunity to say that this has really broadened my outlook.*

It's not just work related capabilities that Belinda has developed ... *both times I've come back with this philosophy and spread the word – the grass isn't always greener, we actually have a great organisation here, we train our people and constantly develop our people.*

*I think in a broader perspective. The cynicism that I see in some of my colleagues is not there in me. Someone phrased it as - you're lucky, you've had a breath of fresh air. It's really healthy.*

The support for her taking time away from Victoria Police came partly from self-interest.

*When I went to ask the Director for leave without pay he was more than encouraging, because he said that I'll go out and learn things as a solicitor and then come back and we'll all reap the rewards. He's seen I've come back with a different outlook.*

*See Belinda's Capability Map ...*

Belinda: A Victoria Police Mobility and Capability Map





## Chris Returned with Spark: A Victoria Police Career Mobility Story

Chris joined Victoria Police and undertook general duties, surveillance and intelligence work. Wanting to explore his options, he took leave without pay to set up and run an electrical contracting and LED lighting company working with various customers from private homes to aged care facilities. Achieving success, Chris resigned to continue in his business. A few years later, having achieved his goal, he returned as a senior constable and is now a sergeant.

Chris took a career break from Victoria Police to set-up and run his own electrical company and LED lighting company. The move from policing affected him, personally and professionally.

Before taking some time away, Chris was undecided about his career path within Victoria Police ... *I was thinking about either becoming a detective or a sergeant.* On his return however, he was more focussed and driven ... *I came back into the organisation knowing where I wanted to go and I put myself in a position to learn very quickly.*

Chris was strategic on his return seeking roles that would advantage his career plans. *The boss was very pro about leadership and getting people up and going. So I elected to go there.*

With this support and newly acquired capabilities, Chris achieved promotion to sergeant in just 2 years after returning. Although Chris was still enjoying policing when he left, he wanted to live a life without regrets.

*I didn't want to be a 20 year member, with the attitude of - I should have left, this job is [censored], I'd be better off running my own electrical business. But I've answered that question.*

*...I've come back with a new purpose, a brand new outlook on the organisation. I'm looking at the next 20 years...*

Chris did not see that going from policing into private business was a natural progression yet he identified a number of competencies that he developed by working in a different field. These skills became directly applicable within Victoria Police and included important capabilities like supervising people and managing projects. His perspective on Victoria Police was influenced by his experience working in a different industry. Chris identified specific ways in which Victoria Police could better approach its

relationship with customers, external clients and internal clients.

Chris also reflected on the Victoria Police 'brand' and how the organisation could take some knowledge and systems from the business world but he understood that the core of policing is providing a service to the community. He felt that because of his time running a business, he now had a greater appreciation of how the service industry works and the valuable opportunities available to Victoria Police.

Chris has applied what he learned ... *you advertise when business is up. This benefits you when it drops off. VicPol needs to promote themselves when times are good.*

Chris talked about how he has returned with a strong problem-solving focus and a willingness to take action. He feels better able to identify the problem and find the solution: This sharper focus comes from being in business for himself.

*See Chris' Capability Map...*

Victoria Police

CMD Electrical Contracting

Victoria Police

Communication and information management  
People Management  
Investigation  
Tactical intelligence

OH&S  
Accounting  
Compliance  
HR management  
Marketing and Promotion  
Corporate Regulation  
Training Opportunities / Scholarship  
Acquired through high quality application and information presentation  
Business Management  
Financial management  
Planning  
Brand/Marketing Awareness

Supervision  
Proactive brand management  
Ensuring VicPol is represented in a positive way  
People management  
Promoted to sergeant shortly after return  
IT / Systems Knowledge  
Applied learnings

Integrity

Communication

Relationships

Results

Strategy

Policing Skills

## David is Breaking Out: A Victoria Police Mobility Story

David completed a law degree in Canada and was deciding between law and a career in law enforcement. He immigrated to Australia and worked in hospitality jobs while finalising his residency status. While applying to join Victoria Police, David took on the role of prison officer with the Department of Justice and Regulation at the Melbourne Assessment Prison. After one year as a prison officer, David joined the prison's Emergency Response Group. After being accepted to join Victoria Police, David completed his foundation training and currently, undertakes general duties with Sunshine Uniform.

David is glad he had the opportunity to work in the prison service before joining Victoria Police ...*The prisons were a really, really good opportunity. I loved it.* And he developed skills that he brought into Victoria Police ... *a really strong sense of resilience, communication skills, conflict resolution.*

*You had to deal with regular setbacks. Dealing with those problems consistently, and approaching them as someone who has to be a role model solidified the need for being honest with people at all times, taking charge of difficult situation without losing your cool.*

*I'm really glad I did what I did prior to joining VicPol, just knowing how you are going to react to difficult situations, how resilient you really can be dealing with people face-to-face in difficult times, dealing with people who want to hurt you ... knowing how you are going to react, knowing how you deal with people. I'm glad I've done something that's quite intensive. I knew I could do this job coming in to. It makes a big difference.*

It was the opportunities that Victoria Police offered that helped David to make the change.

*It was the amount of opportunities I could see, as opposed to what I was doing. There were a lot more things I could do with myself and greater opportunity to learn and challenge myself and go to different areas. That's what I want in a long term career.*

***I expect to come into setbacks, to have those difficult times.***

David found that his experience ... *helped me out in the Academy, in a lot of ways ... the firearm we use is the same, having training with the firearms and tactical options, you stand out. It was good ... I felt like I had a head start. At the Academy, there is a lot to learn ... the quantity, I feel like that head start, knowing how to negotiate or communicate with people, just helps. I got through the Academy easier than others.*

The instructors were positive about his previous experience ... *you'd get asked things quite often. They'd want to hear stories ... they were quite interested.*

David notes that both the prison service and Victoria Police have ... *a big culture of comradery*

*and that comes with the type of work we do. It's very similar between the two. You are dealing with a lot of stress, difficult situations, shift work, and difficulties with work/life balance that you have to deal with on a daily basis. You need to rely on other people for your mental well-being and for your physical well-being. Work life balance is an issue I've seen across both. I see the value of rest, there is a stigma on taking mental health days and not showing up to work I'm putting a greater burden on my colleagues. There is an expectation you need to stay until the job is done, so you incur the overtime. It can take a toll.*

David is currently enjoying working general duties ... *the van, Sunshine is a difficult place to work. It's hectic. I enjoy the frontline response. I have a broad sense I'd like to get into CI work. More complex investigations and bigger files. That's the sort of thing I can see for my future.*

Whatever route his career takes him, one thing is certain: David's professional skills and will only continue to develop and strengthen.

*See David's Capability Map ...*



## David: A Victoria Police Mobility and Capability Map



## Helen is Freshening up at the Airport: A Victoria Police Mobility Story

After joining Victoria Police and undertaking training and general duties, Helen trained as a Tactical Intelligence Officer, and spent ten years in the intelligence stream of policing, coming in to Crime Command as an analyst / tactical intelligence officer. For approximately ten years Victoria Police had a program where detectives and analysts were seconded to the airport as part of AFP taskforces. Helen was the Victoria Police analyst seconded to the Joint Airport Intelligence Group (JAIG) at Melbourne airport. She spent two years working with the AFP, before returning to Crime Command.

Helen looked for different opportunities as she ... *was trying to get promoted and it wasn't working and looked at a sideways move to the AFP to broaden my options. I was at a point in my career, I think I needed a break from VicPol, just to get fresh eyes, fresh perspective.*

She hasn't given up on promotion as she is enjoying her role and feels she...*has so much knowledge to share with my colleagues.*

Successfully applying for a secondment with the AFP, Helen worked in a multi-agency team ... *the JAIGs were formulated as a commonwealth thing, every airport had a JAIG, we worked with Border Force, quarantine, transport safety people and DFAT.*

At JAIG Helen learned about ... *a different kind of crime, and a different perspective on national security things and immigration issues, I had never had any exposure to before with Victoria Police.*

Helen noticed some differences between employees of the two police organisations. She found the AFP employees were ... *many have come from an academic background and have not had exposure to the difficulties of street policing, how to deal with the public, with confrontation, had to negotiate with difficult*

*people. In fact most have not done any uniform police work at all, so they lack some experience with understanding the difference between intelligence and evidence which can be critical in prosecutions. On the whole most Vicpol members are far more operationally savvy and measured in our critical thinking. That comes from experience and all the little mistakes we make along the way.*

**I think it's a great opportunity,  
gives you a different  
perspective on things.**

Helen notes that some of the AFP systems were more developed than those of VicPol ... *they have a hub on the intranet, with a sheet with all the acronyms. There is nothing like that at VicPol. Throughout their organisation their structure is a little bit more uniform. In VicPol each region operates differently. I got an email from someone from the Wayward Taskforce, and thought "what is this"? The AFP is actually a lot more uniform about their structure.*

She says ... *they used to say AFP are a business trying to be a police force, VicPol is a police force trying to be a business. We are trying to get better at the business side in VicPol, and AFP are trying to get better at policing.*

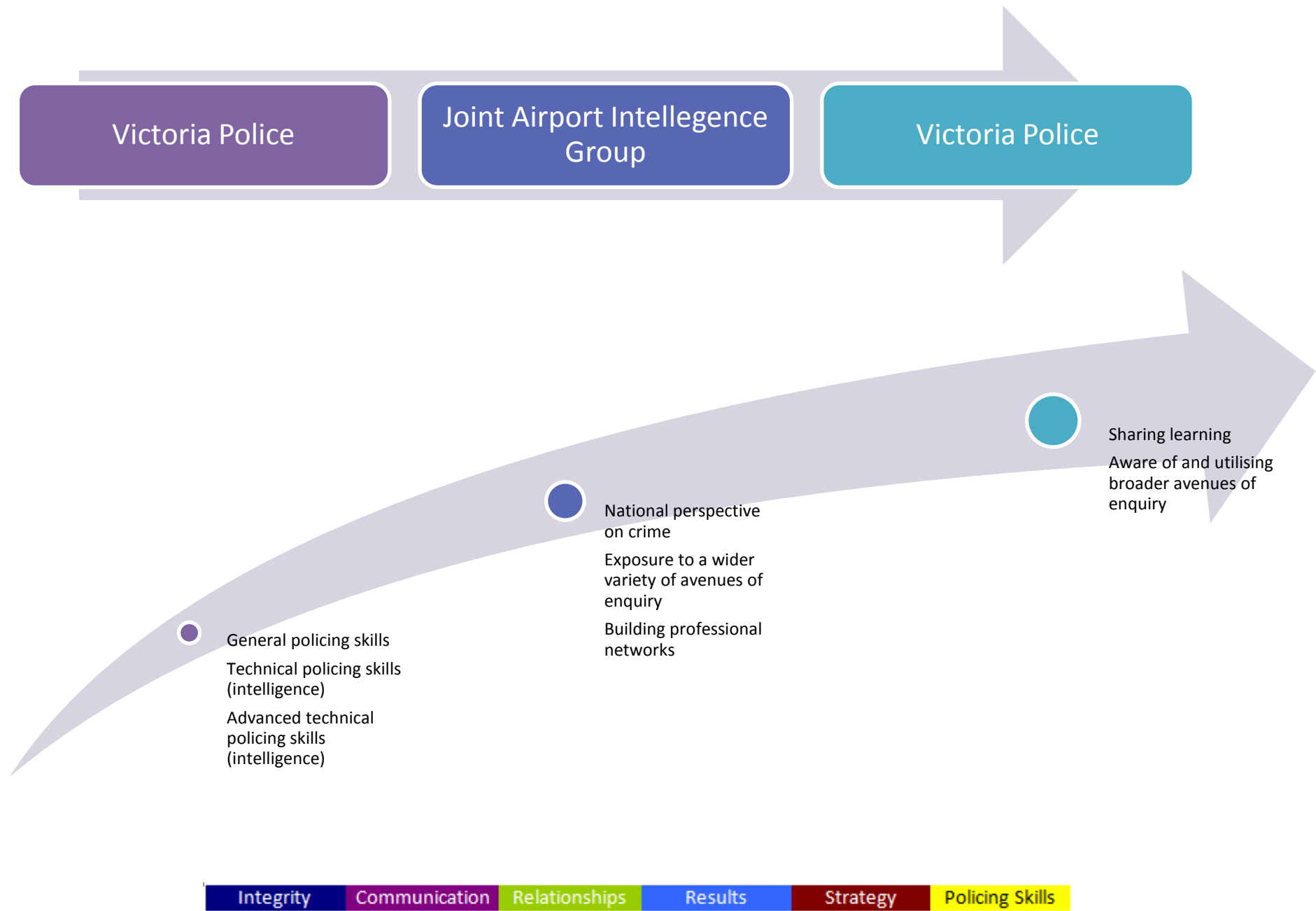
On her return to Victoria Police Helen found it easy to use her new skill ... *I knew what information was available ... I have utilised the contacts I've made and the avenues of enquiry I know I can now get. I can also point my colleagues in the right direction as well.*

For Helen, the biggest benefit was to ... *see and appreciate how another organisation works ... I learned about a whole different organisation. I've had an opportunity a lot of VicPol members don't. I've got that broad perspective and I know where I can get stuff. I feel like I've got a little bit of an edge.*

She is positive about her AFP airport experience and says she would go out again ... *in a heartbeat.* For anyone presented with the chance or thinking about it to gain a variety of experience, Helen advises ... *just do it, definitely do it.*

*See Helen's Capability Map...*

## Helen: A Victoria Police Mobility and Capability Map



## Joel is Teaching what he's Learned: A Victoria Police Mobility Story

Joel was a member of Victoria Police for three and a half years, doing general duties, before resigning and pursuing a variety of careers, including setting up a consultancy, and undertaking investigations for organisations including AFL Victoria, Essendon District Football Club, Traffic Accident Commission and Worksafe Victoria. He worked as a youth worker while obtaining teaching qualifications and then as a teacher and education coordinator, before returning to Victoria Police, and undertaking refresher training. This is his story.

Joel reflects on why he left VicPol ... *joining at 19 I was too young in terms of life experience and education. You may not necessarily need a degree, but it helps down the line to give you some credibility and backing. I'd say it would be very helpful to have, but I think life experience is the most important thing.*

Joel left and obtained both a degree and life experience, pursuing investigations before becoming a successful teacher ... *I was a high school teacher for three years and then moved into a leadership spot, in charge of student management, engagement with youth and keeping them out of trouble.*

Joel saw the transferability of his skills - both into and out of Victoria Police... *Now that I'm back in Victoria Police I use my teaching experiences to come up with better solutions. Having to work full-time and also study full-time, my time management got better.*

Joel is currently at the Victoria Police Academy, completing his refresher training and as squad leader, has found many opportunities to apply

the skills he acquired ... *I've had to use communication quite a bit, and time management to make sure everything is done by the time it needs getting done by, and also making sure everyone else has stuff done by the time they need to be done by.*

*The beauty of having that teaching background is that it doesn't just apply to youth. It can apply to older people, teaching people of the same age and in the same job can be helpful as well.*

Joel sees how existing skills can be used in a variety of roles ... *I haven't got any intentions to go into a youth resource role, but I think just going out to jobs that I'll be going out to, and interacting with the community, trying to build that rapport with young people so they feel comfortable speaking to police, that's something I would be doing.*

Ultimately, Joel would like to follow the detective stream into counterterrorism ... *coming*

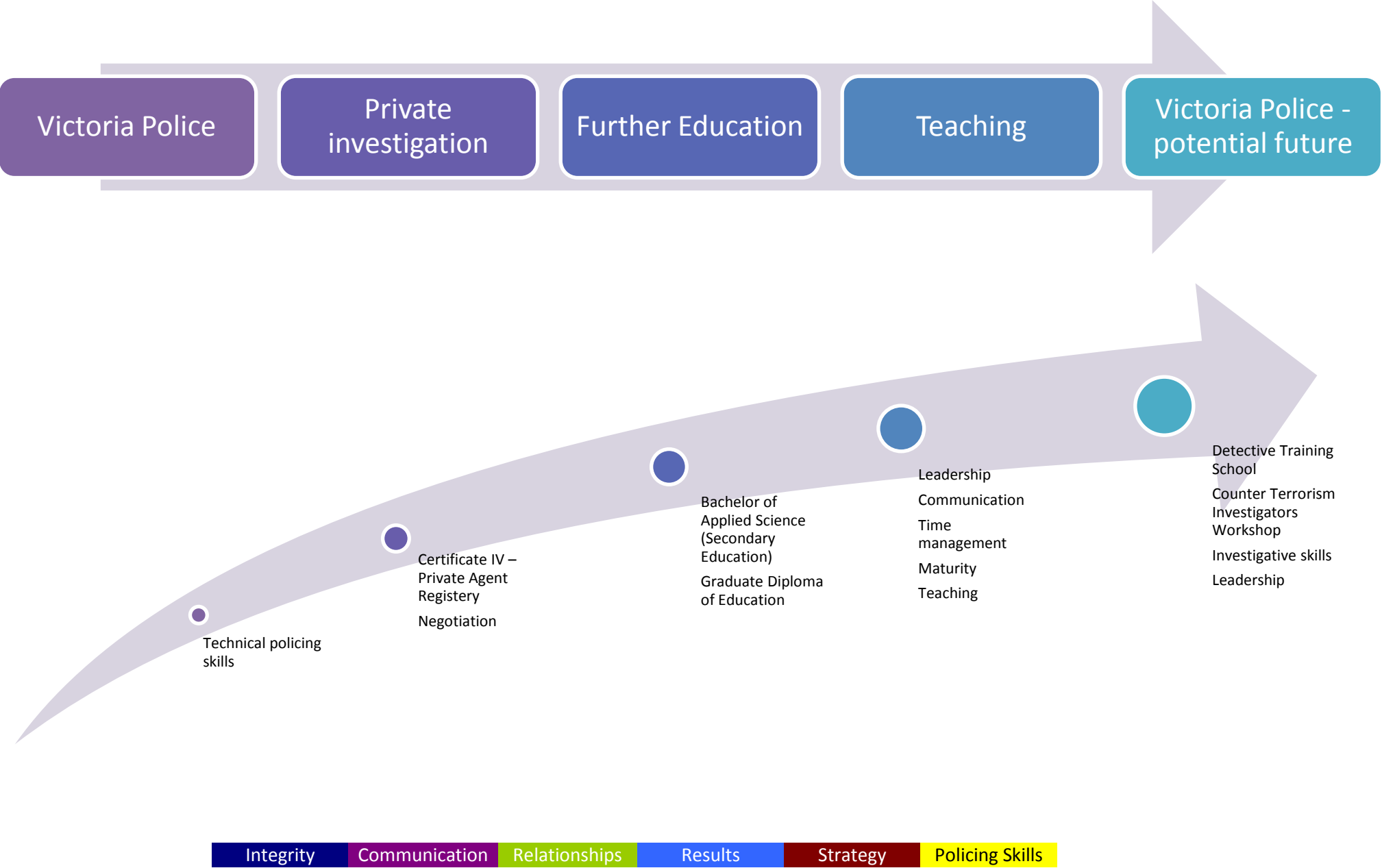
*in with those skills that I've learnt from teaching, and those skills that I learnt from investigating, I think that will help me, and what I've learnt here is more specific to what VicPol wants. So I think all three combined will help a lot.*

He sees changes in himself mirrored in changes in Victoria Police ... *The first time I was in VicPol I don't think it was as professional as what it is now, that might have been myself as well, I don't think I was as professional as I am now. Coming back to VicPol I think standards have changed again, which is really good, I think it's a lot more professional now. You can't get away with some of the stuff you used to get away with, which is a good thing.*

Joel found his networks useful ... *the people who were investigating were 90% ex VicPol with a lot of experience ... just discussing their background helped when I was investigating. With teaching, the connection with local providers, the council, knowing how they work and how they can help you, where to find help is the thing. I'll be able to use these networks, they will be a good resource.*

*See Joel's Capability Map...*

Joel: A Victoria Police Mobility and Capability Map





## Joey is not Joking Around: A Victoria Police Career Mobility Story

Joey has already had four careers - as a comedian, security guard, fitness coach and now a Victoria Police officer. His academic qualifications include a Bachelor of Arts with Honours in Criminology and Literature, with a focus on the rhetoric surrounding the process of radicalisation in insurgent groups. Joey had developed an interest in counterterrorism long before joining Victoria Police and currently, is a senior constable investigating crime in country Victoria.

The move from professional comedian to police officer is not a career transition seen every day. Joey spoke with the PRSB about what he had learned as a comedian and how he unexpectedly uses these skills while working with Victoria Police.

Joey's initial motivation for joining Victoria Police was pragmatic and focussed on financial security and somewhat to his surprise he ... *discovered you can help people in this job.*

He developed many skills before policing which he has applied in his current role: *Comedy is about cold reading, I was very good at reading people and that's translated very well into this job.* Joey explains how this skill has been recognised by offenders, who open up to him because ... *"you're not like the others".*

Joey's academic studies have also helped him in good stead, helping him with basic police work, such as writing-up remands. Due to his field of study, Joey understands ... *the process of radicalisation in groups ... helped immensely when I was in certain suburbs, I was able to point out things, about certain goings on.* He

used his knowledge, good natured approach and people skills to build relationships, assisting him in investigations and information gathering.

Having experienced a variety of different working environments, Joey identified that ... *Victoria Police is very risk adverse and has a culture of always wanting to be taken seriously in every respect....* He is working to challenge that culture, wondering during our conversation ... *why can't we take risks that make us look human?*

*We need to encourage out of the box thinking...ask people for ideas and then say YES!*

Another aspect of Joey's pre-policing life is that he finds his understanding of social media useful ... *VicPol doesn't understand social media, it doesn't understand what grabs people's attention. I understand what grabs*

*people's attention.* Because of this capability, Joey runs the very active Victoria Police LaTrobe EyeWatch page, which he manages with his signature humour.

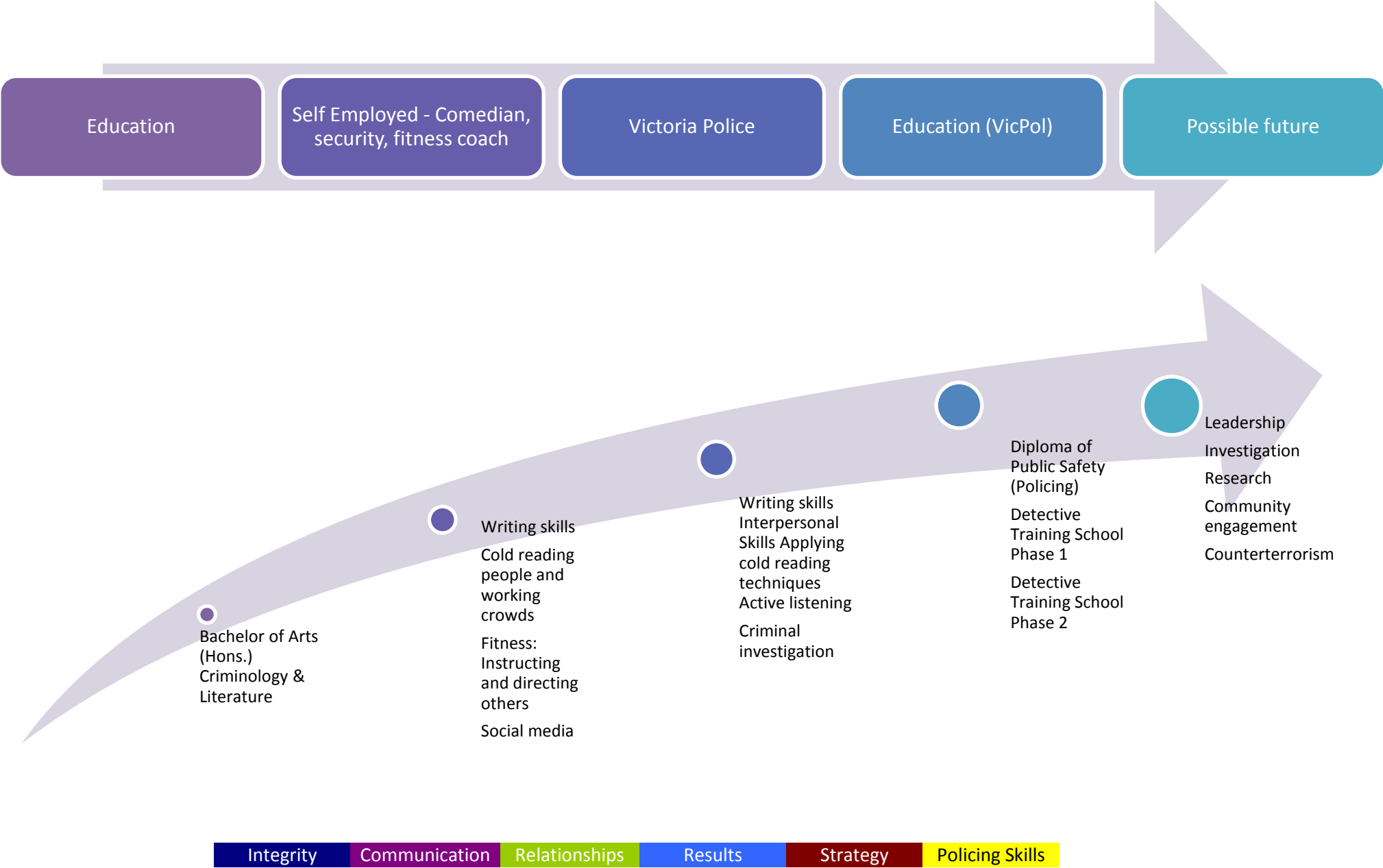
In his current role Joey is focussed on criminal investigation but when he has further developed his investigative experience, he plans to apply for more specialist roles that will better utilise his counter-terrorism expertise.

While Joey acknowledges that he is clearly already using many of the skills he acquired prior to joining Victoria Police, he identified a very simple way that previously acquired capabilities of all members could be better used.

*... you need to sit them down when they come to a station and say: 'what did you do and what can you do? What are your ideas? If you've got some ideas, put them out on the table.' And then we need to give the ideas a run.*

*See Joey's Capability Map ...*

Joey: A Victoria Police Mobility and Capability Map



## Lisa is Learning from Experience: A Victoria Police Mobility Story

Lisa always wanted to join Victoria Police. After finishing school at 17, Lisa took a job in a bank while waiting to turn 21, which at the time was the youngest age that women could join the force. After working her way up to the rank of inspector, Lisa was offered the opportunity to undertake a 12-month secondment with KPMG, part of a trial program run by Victoria Police. On her return she worked in various corporate and operational areas before achieving promotion to superintendent. This is Lisa's story.

Lisa's secondment had a specific focus in growing skills over 12 months, and then apply them at VicPol ... *I got an external secondment to KPMG for a year ... seen as an opportunity to learn from other organisations and bring skills back ... especially around project management and change management. I was still paid by VicPol. It was a secondment for me to learn new skills.*

Lisa found the transition to KPMG pretty difficult. ... *I'd been with Victoria Police for just on 30 years and going in to a completely different, very corporate environment and being alone and doing work that was quite foreign...*

She described the secondment as a valuable, though challenging experience ... *I did learn a lot around what I was sent there for (project management and change management). I thought I knew a bit about change management before I went there and learned that there is more to it. I did learn the skills I was sent there for, so that was good, but it was a long year.*

*One of the big things I picked up was when they are forming a team they look across their*

*organisation to see who would best fit in to this team to achieve the goal. In Victoria Police we still work in silos. I'd like to see a more flexible work environment so that if you want to work on a project that goes for six months and you don't want to create vacancies and transfer people, then you need to have more flexibility to identify skills sets that you need for a particular job.*

When Lisa considers the skills that she developed she says ... *I do use the skills in my day to day work, especially the change management stuff.*

*I learned what a great job policing is ...*

Of the KPMG experience, Lisa says that working in a different organisation ... *made me appreciate the culture that we have. The comradery is something I really came to appreciate and acknowledge when I didn't have it there - being removed from the police family was significant.*

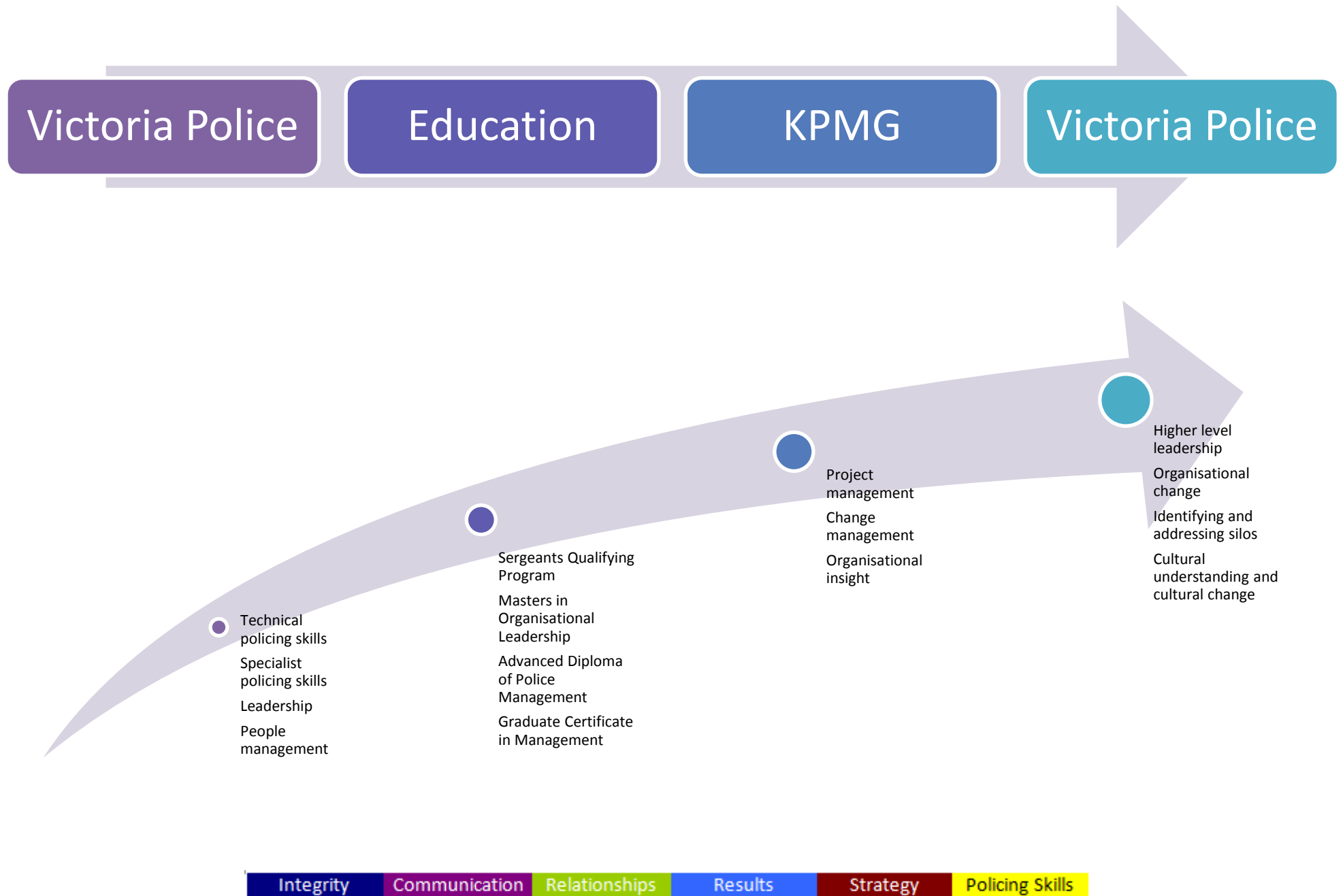
Reflecting on whether she would recommend an external secondment to others, Lisa says ...

*potentially, it is a really good thing to do, so long as it is structured with clear outcomes and expectations. I think it was a really good career break for me, having been in the organisation since 1983. I do encourage my people to continually develop and move about and seek different opportunities. I've been really successful around developing people, getting them jobs and getting them promoted.*

Lisa suggests that the first step to using people's capabilities is to ... *record what they are. Ask people to tell us. Quite often I find out things by having impromptu conversations. We don't have an understanding about the skills our people have and if we do ask questions anywhere, we don't share the answers. You're looking at a big cultural leap to say... you've got a Masters, you don't have to drive the van for five years, there's a fast path'. We're a long way from that.*

*See Lisa's Capability Map...*

## Lisa: A Victoria Police Mobility and Capability Map



## Paul Raced and Built his Way In: A Victoria Police Mobility Story

Paul left school at 17 to take-up an electronic mechanic apprenticeship with VicRoads. He stayed for 11 years. An opportunity arose and Paul moved into the building industry, where he worked his way up from labourer to project manager. The owner of the company owned a Porsche racing team and Paul spent his weekends travelling and running the team. After 20 years and a very successful career, he joined Victoria Police. Currently, Paul is a sergeant with Transit Safety.

As a 17 year old, Paul wanted to join Victoria Police but when applying for the police cadets, discovered he had a colour vision impairment and not eligible. Still being passionate years later, he investigated his options and after sitting in VCAT for three days, he won the right to apply!

*They allowed me to continue with my application process, 20 years after I first applied and I was successful. As a 41 year old I had to make the decision to walk away from the building industry, where I was earning a decent wage. I knew that ... if I don't do it now I'll never do it, and it's something I always wanted to do ... I went ahead and that was 16 years ago and here we are now.*

Paul had supervised large numbers of people on building sites, a skill that occasionally had its drawbacks in the early days ... *straight away I wasn't over-awed by giving direction and organising people – it was the awkward thing. Even as a probationary constable, we'd go to a job and people would look to me ... I'd take that on. That came very easy to me it was a day to day thing I used to do.*

The skills that Paul developed prior to joining Victoria Police gave him a running start ... my

*confidence and being able to talk to people ... I had the ability and I had the exposure talking to lots of people, lots of different genders, ages. That skill helped me.*

Paul used his building knowledge ... *when we did warrants for drug crops, I had the ability to look at a residence, know how the house would be set up, the structure of a house, where doors would be, how they would open. I found that very handy, to be able to give good information, intel on places before we went into them. I used the building side of it that way.*

***...would have been harder if it was been my first job ... having to learn people skills from scratch...***

Paul applied some useful, previously acquired processes to his VicPol work ... *scheduling, day by day you knew who should be doing what ... you had to think on your feet and be over the top of everything, so you knew as soon as an issue started to arise. Having a timely schedule and sticking to it. With VicPol it's very dynamic, you can be sitting in the office and think it's a quiet day today and all of a sudden it comes out of nowhere. In the building trade you don't have that,*

*you should be on top of everything, so you know what's going to happen on what day.*

Paul recognises the capabilities and passion of those around him ... *you see it with the PSOs they're frustrated too. A lot of them are very good, they want to transition into Victoria Police. You can see the ones that you think 'yep they're going to be a good copper.*

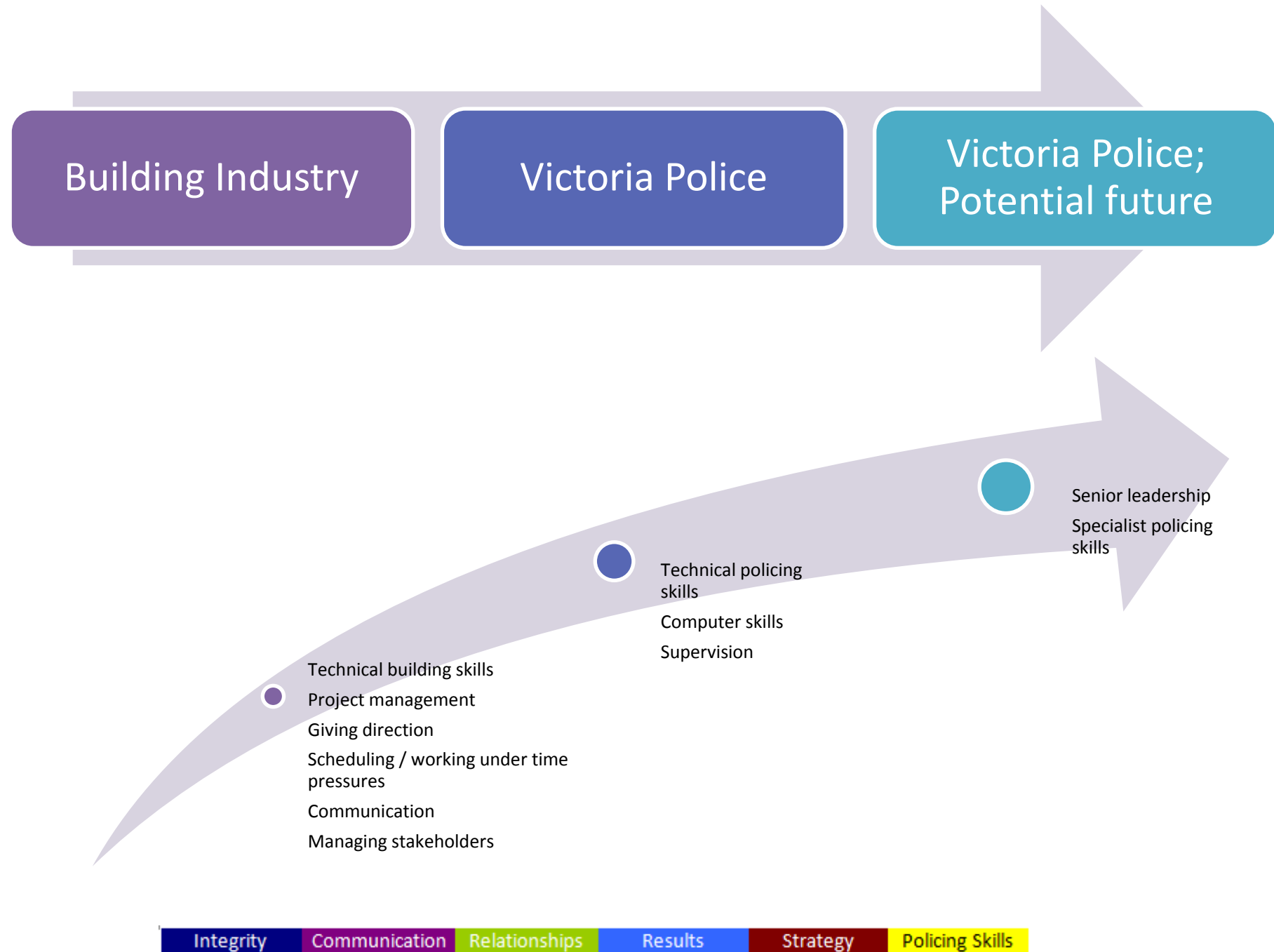
He suggests that ... *recognition of prior learning be considered and a detailed list produced of what VicPol members can be called on, for advice. There should be a database. I'm sure throughout the organisation, there would be a vast knowledge bank from people that have done so many different things before joining VicPol.*

Paul sees much benefit, to members and the organisation, of externally acquired capabilities ... *our member resources are underutilised. It will be of benefit for VicPol to utilise them. We're already a paid resource, so let's get the most out of everyone. That would generate a bit more member interest as well.*

*See Paul's Capability Map ...*



## Paul: A Victoria Police Mobility and Capability Map



## Rachael Needed a Break: A Victoria Police Mobility Story

Rachael worked for the Department of Environment when she finished school. After joining Victoria Police she worked in country policing for 12 years, undertaking roles with the District Tasking Unit, winter policing in alpine areas and crime duties and eventually, general duties at Myrtleford, a 16-hour station in the Wangaratta Police Service Area. Rachel resigned to take a career break and spent two years working as a teacher's aid in a secondary school before returning to Victoria Police through the re-appointee program. Starting with Wodonga Uniform, Rachael worked her way to Crime Scene Services at Wodonga, where she is enjoying policing.

Rachael says ... *I actually like my job, I like the people I work with, everyone is really good.* Rachael returned to Victoria Police after taking a break due to a combination of personal circumstances.

*My dad was sick, it all just got too hard, I was working at a 16-hour station with not a lot of roster flexibility.* She explored going part-time but at that time, it was not an option at her station.

**I didn't leave because I didn't like it, it was just I needed to get away and deal with my own stuff. At the time that's what I had to do for my own health...**

Rachael was self-reflective and stepped back from policing to protect her health and enthusiasm ... *at that time I just needed some normalcy ... I was getting to a point where I was snapping at people, I didn't want to go to work.*

After the death of both parents she said she was ... *getting a bit cranky with people. I'd had enough real life dramas. I just needed a break.*

So, when the opportunity for change presented itself she took it ... *I'd been doing voluntary work with a girl with an acquired brain injury, and the school offered me this job.* Rachael found working with children that other people had classified as "difficult" to be ...*quite rewarding ... I never had issues with any of these kids.*

Rachael attributed her success in education to her confidence developed as a police officer ... *you have more front than Myer, if you want to do something you just work out how to do it.*

Her previous experience gave Rachael a different perspective from her colleagues at the school ... *it comes down to what you've been exposed to, their idea of a naughty kid is nothing like a naughty kid.*

She found that teachers differed from police officers in some important ways ... *the police force is like a big family, you have a bit of a warped sense of humour and teachers are just the complete opposite.* In policing, Rachael values ... *the comradery; everyone gets in and helps each other.*

A break from Victoria Police allowed Rachel to view police work differently ... *we don't give ourselves enough credit for what we do...I see and do a lot of things that "normal" people wouldn't ... You don't stop and think about that, 'til someone says "I don't know how you do that". It's just what you do...you get used to it.*

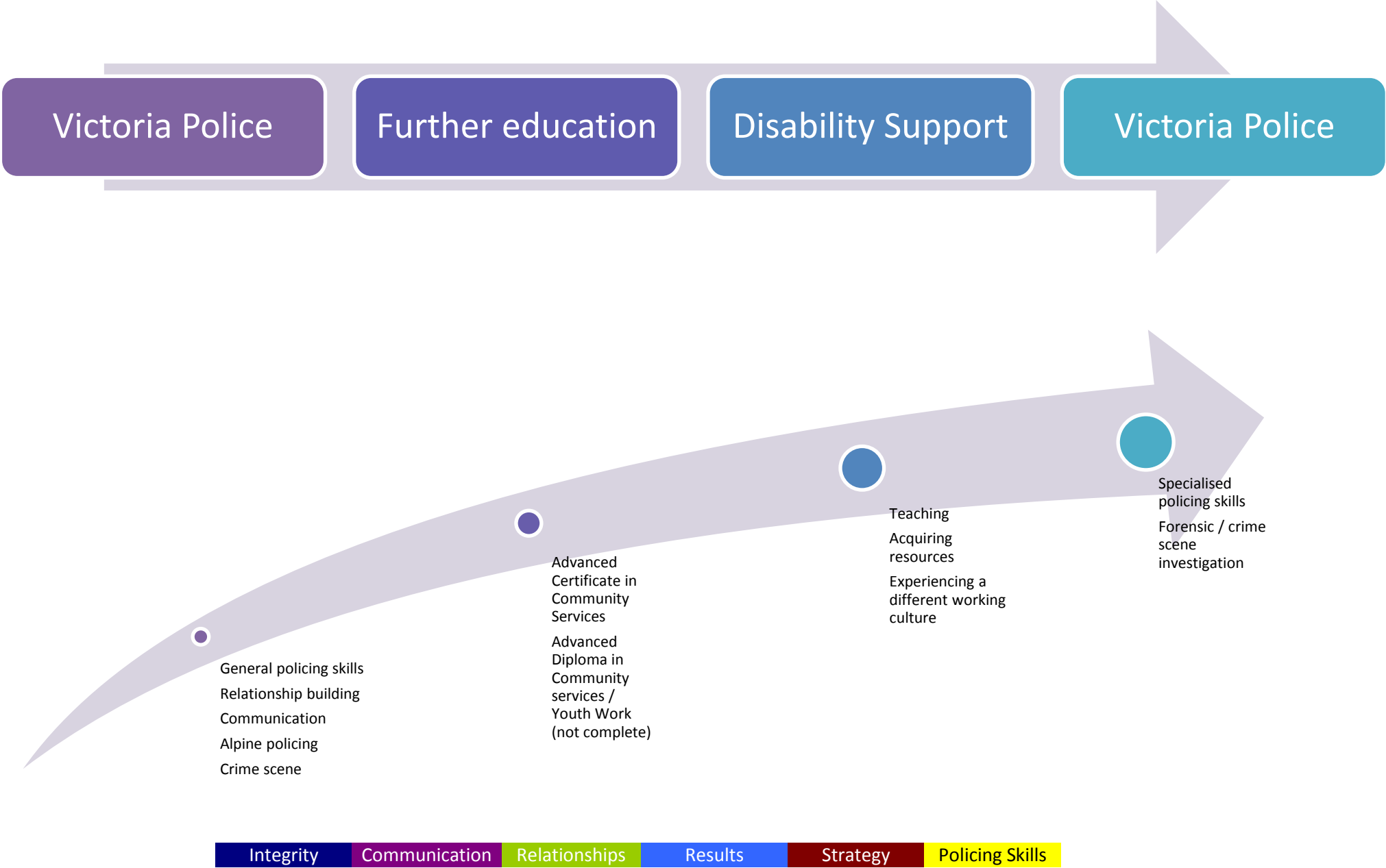
**You have to look after yourself. If you are not in a good headspace, you are no good to anybody.**

Rachael's mental health and renewed enthusiasm were the big winners from working away from Victoria Police ... *if only they had the whole career break thing [then] where you can work four years and have one off ... you've got to give people a break from what we deal with.*

Her decision to leave and return had a positive impact on her career and emotional strength ... *I got myself in a good spot ... it worked out well for me, I'm glad I came back. I'm not going anywhere now, I'm happy where I am.*

*See Rachael's Capability Map ...*

Rachael: A Victoria Police Mobility and Capability Map



## Rhonda Has Policing In Her Blood: A Victoria Police Mobility Story

Rhonda joined Victoria Police after beginning a university degree in biological sciences. Eleven years later she resigned due to difficulties with organising care for her two children. While her children were small, Rhonda worked part-time in hospital administration and then ran a business providing specialised quilting services to the patchwork community. Seventeen years after she left Victoria Police, Rhonda re-joined as a senior constable and currently, has been upgraded the rank of sergeant.

Rhonda talked about her life experiences that initially took her away from Victoria Police and brought her back again.

She started by describing her family connection with the organisation ... *as corny as it sounds to say, policing is in my blood. Between my husband and me we have 18 family members, past and present. That's where my mindset is.*

In her first stint with Victoria Police, Rhonda became a mother to two children. Her husband was also in the job ... *we just sort of worked opposite shifts and took separate holidays. At the time there was no formal workplace flexibility. The bosses were as accommodating as possible and said I could work in the warrant and files office but there was a shortage of manpower. I knew that when they were short on the night shifts they would be calling on me.*

Leaving was a hard decision ... *I didn't want to [leave], I cried for two years on and off. It was in the best interests of my children. There was just no part time policing then.*

Although sad to go, Rhonda found the transition to her next role easy ... *my last day at*

*work finished at 3 o'clock and I started a part-time admin job at 3.30 that afternoon. She attributes the ease to ... the skills that I learned at VicPol. As far as time management goes [that] transferred across beautifully ... I could manage the stresses of being busy, phones going, people at the counter. I was familiar with working with people in stressful situations.*

*I didn't ever want to leave. I'm grateful being back here, it's not a perfect organisation to work for but no organisation is, we make of it what we do.*

When trying to get changes made in her new work environment, Rhonda *chipped away at it, discussed it, got changes made, and again that's a skill that I learnt while I was in VicPol.*

She then developed a ... *successful home-based business, gave me the freedom to get to the kids school, do reading, be there for the kids.*

Being in business taught Rhonda a range of skills including project and financial management and networking but she brings

those skills back to ... *the VicPol skills when I was very young, working and talking to people.*

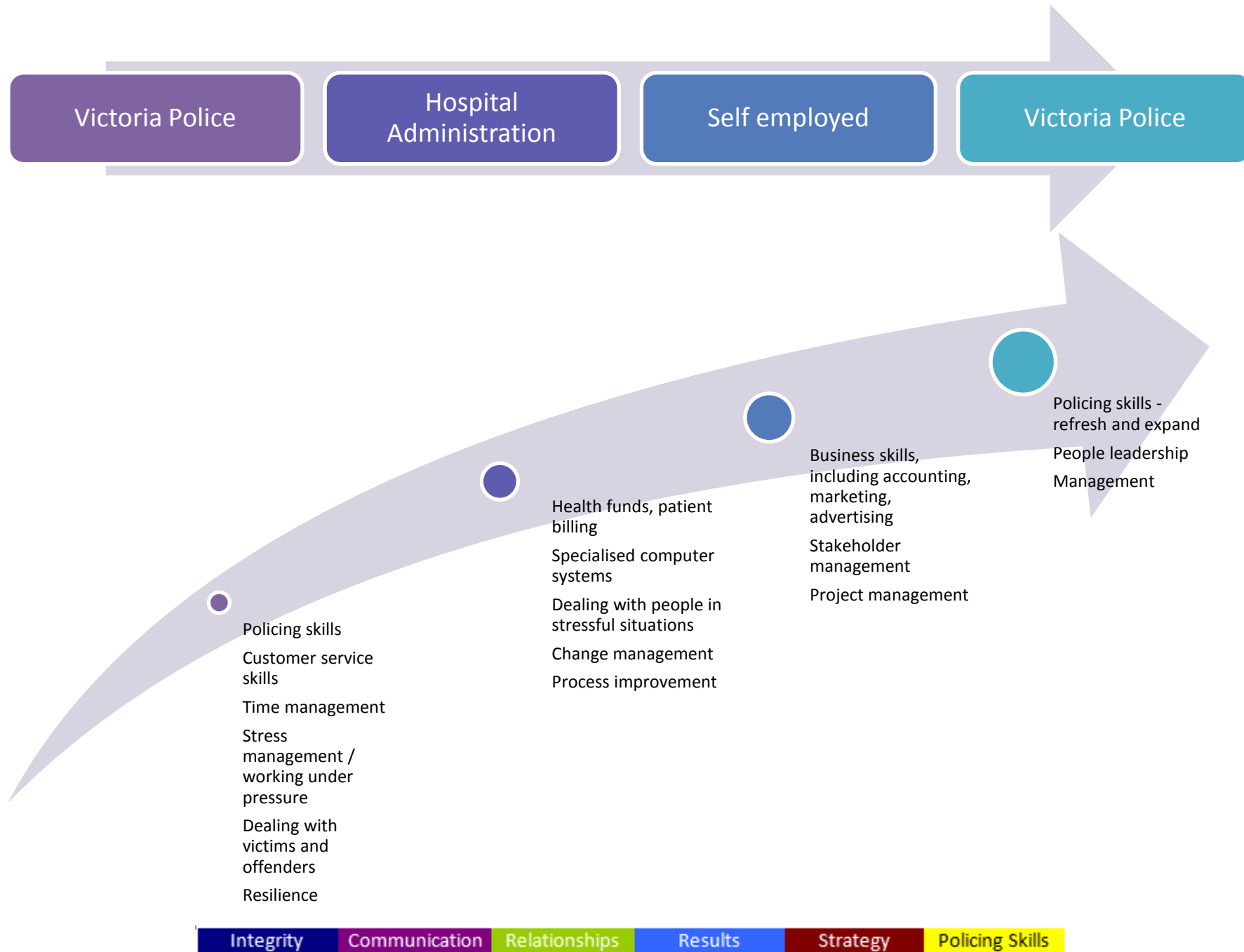
Rhonda's decision to re-join came from coinciding events ... *My father died and I had a friend in his 40s die. I knew of another woman who joined for the first time at 42 so I thought it's now or never. I have unfinished business.*

She was quick to note the welcome changes in the culture ... *VicPol are trying to be better in the way they treat their people, with things like the mental health review.*

She has a realistic view of the organisation and is ... *Very passionate about working for Vic Pol but realise my position is but a number and is replaceable but I hope that I will leave a positive legacy with my colleagues for years to come. And while we are all replaceable, Rhonda's blend of passion, experience and pragmatism provides her with unique skills, views and capabilities, which she continues to use for the benefit of Victoria Police.*

*See Rhonda's Capability Map ...*

## Rhonda: A Victoria Police Career Mobility and Capability Map





## Sharon is Achieving her Goals: A Victoria Police Mobility Story

Sharon worked as a Victoria Police officer for 21 years, undertaking duties in a range of specialisations before taking on the role of Youth Resource Officer (YRO). Family responsibilities led to her resignation. Sharon then worked in human resource management in the disability sector, gaining knowledge, experience and qualification before re-joining Victoria Police six years later. She is currently undertaking refresher training at the Victoria Police Academy and will then resume duties at Transit Safety Division. This is her story.

Sharon resigned from Victoria Police because ... *I was a police widow ... my kids were in that category when they are most at risk – between 10 and 14. I just couldn't juggle anymore, especially being on my own. I just got frustrated. Something had to give. Some people choose the job over their family, I chose the kids.*

Because of her responsibilities outside work, Sharon felt trapped ... *I was pretty much pigeon holed into the YRO role. No flexibility to move any shifts, I couldn't do weekends or afternoons, I couldn't get tied up. There was a lot of frustration that was building up.*

Sharon's career change was a shift in direction ... *I went into disability in HR. I pretty much learned everything from scratch. I knew nothing about disability, except what I'd picked-up on the job.*

She found that her time in Victoria Police influenced everything she did afterwards, including the way she wrote file notes and how she talked to people ... *my boss noted that my*

*communication skills were vastly superior to other people he had worked with. People with disabilities can often lose it, I just knew how to deal with it.*

Sharon decided to come back to Victoria Police because ... *I really missed it. As much as I liked my new job, I didn't love it the same way. Reflecting on where I'd been, where I was and where I wanted to go, none of which I could achieve where I was but all of which I could if I went back.*

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***Having left and come back gives you a different perspective and that is positive.  
I think those sorts of things keep you fresh.***

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Regarding the skills she learned and about her return ... *when it comes to people management I feel a lot more prepared for managing people than if I had gone through the departmental ranks.*

*I think you view things very differently having left. You get a different side of things; you get a view of the corporate world and different organisations. Sometimes you think the grass might be greener but not necessarily.*

*You don't have that tunnel vision. When people have been there for a long time they don't know what the options are when they leave. They've got nothing to compare it with. When you've got something to compare you don't have that closed perspective. You've seen the outside world.*

Sharon sees all options open to her and has a broad view of what her future could hold: *In an ideal world I'd like to work my way up a little. I wouldn't mind being a boss one day. I don't want to rehash what I had, I don't want to go back to being a YRO ... I'd like to do keep my options open. I've always wanted to go to the Highway Patrol. Ultimately I'd like to go somewhere like Major Collisions. It becomes a lot more holistic. A bit of a finger in a lot of pies.*

*See Sharon's Capability Map...*

Integrity

Communication

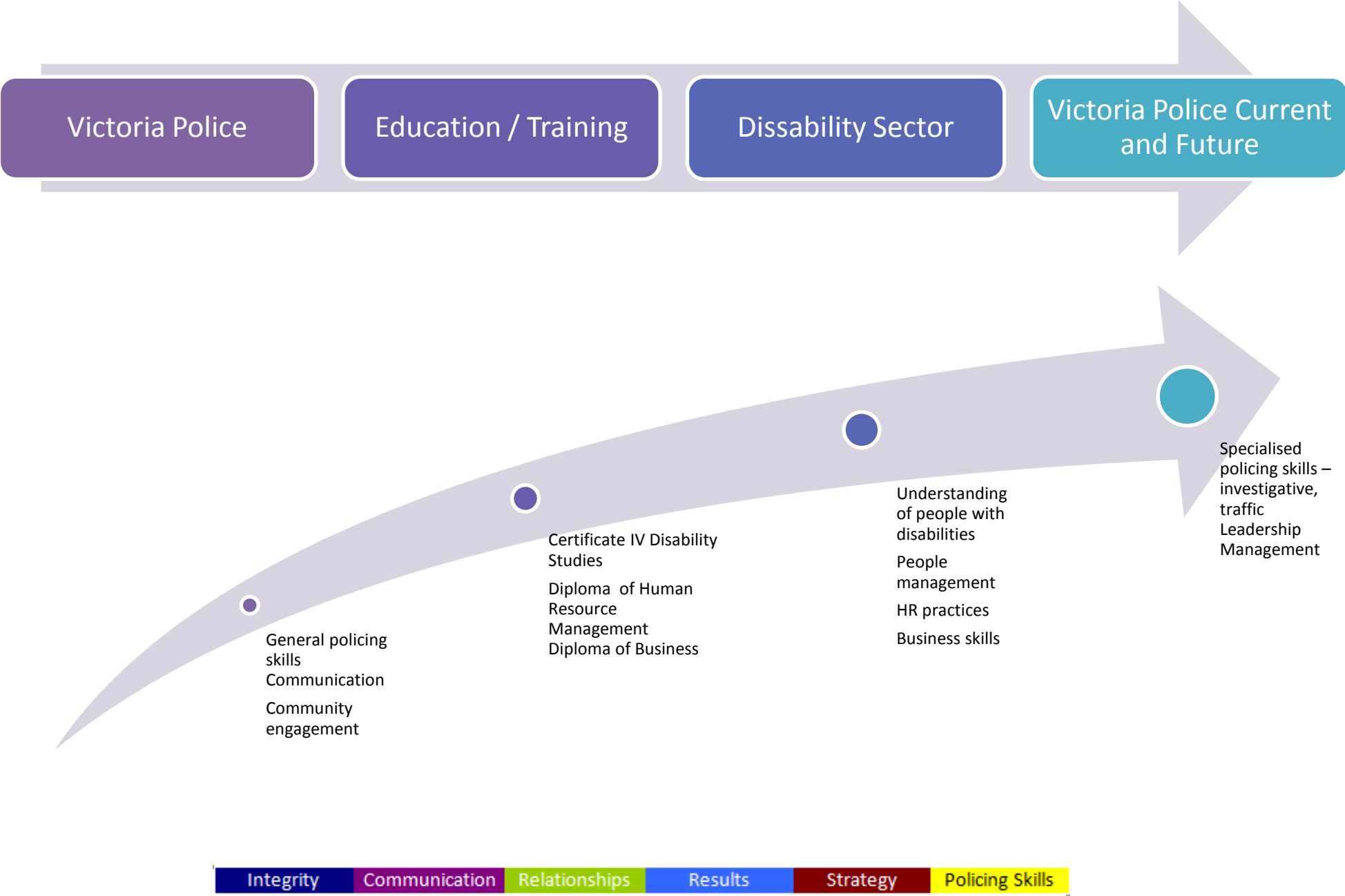
Relationships

Results

Strategy

Policing Skills

Sharon: A Victoria Police Mobility and Capability Map



## Warren is flying high: A Victoria Police Mobility Story

Twice Warren has left and resumed his career at Victoria Police. Initially taking a year off to join Ambulance Victoria, he returned to Victoria Police through the reappointment system as a senior constable. Two years later, Warren resigned and joined the army, where he spent 10 years flying helicopters and training others. This time, through the registration process, Warren returned to Victoria Police, again as a senior constable. Currently he is undertaking refresher training at the Victoria Police Academy and has big plans for his future in the organisation.

Warren explained that when he first left Victoria Police, his unit was closing down. He wanted a year of leave without pay but it was not approved so ... *when the opportunity with Ambulance Victoria came up ... he resigned. One year later he decided he had... given Ambulance Victoria a crack but it wasn't for him ... so he came back.*

He left the second time to pursue specific goals ... *I was trying to get to the Air Wing, I couldn't get a job there, VicPol didn't offer any opportunities so I joined the army and became a helicopter pilot.*

Moving into a different environment provided Warren with the opportunity to thrive ... *the military is a lot more disciplined. It gave me the opportunity to find my full potential. I wasn't doing that in VicPol.*

After 10 years in the army he returned to VicPol for ... *personal reasons, my family is back here and professional ones. Warren aimed ... to join the Air Wing. I want to apply the technical skill set I learnt in the army within VicPol.*

As well as equipping him with relevant skills, the army encouraged career breaks and mobility ... *After ten years you get long service leave. They advise you to take some time off. Warren sees the skills he has developed as very transferable ... people skills, management, specialist technical ....what I've learnt in the army I could use anywhere.*

*There's a whole resource of highly qualified people that could be used in plenty of areas. They just have to be found out...*

Warren found that his perspective on Victoria Police had broadened by some distance ... *I think leaving the organisation, being exposed to different work environments and cultures has been good for me.*

While he sees some contrasts between the two cultures, he also observes the changes in the VicPol operating environment. *The environment in the army was all SOPs ... it is pretty black and white, you don't deviate. It's engrained in the*

*culture. People don't fudge it or bend the rules, a lot of the time they are written in blood. VicPol is now more rigid about operating by the rules, maybe in the past it used to be accepted that there was this way, and the way we do it out here. Accountability is better these days.*

Working in different organisations helped Warren to build his professional networks which he continues to draw on ... *helicopters are a small world, it's a small industry, very interconnected – VicPol, Army, Air Ambulance Victoria. Everyone knows everyone. If you need to find information, it's not advertised, it's word of mouth, you've got to keep your networks to know what's going on. I see a lot of my contacts in the helicopter industry have worked in the Air Wing... I've got contacts back in the army and I still maintain them, you don't want to fade off in to the ether and become an unknown.*

Warren humbly sums up his experience ... *I'm nothing special, I just had a go and I left and I wanted a skill set and I went out and got it, I've come back and I want to use it within the organisation. That's my plan.*

*See Warren's Capability Map*

Warren: A Victoria Police Mobility and Capability Map

