A COMMUNITY IN TRANSITION:
VICTORIA POLICE-MINORITY RELATIONS
IN THE NEW MILLENEUM

FINAL REPORT
OF NEEDS ASSESSMENT
DIVERSITY UNIT PROJECT

SUBMITTED TO:
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SUBMITTED BY:
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April, 2000
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Background

The Victoria Police Diversity Unit was developed in 1996 under Chief Richardson, its mission statement being, “to exert a positive influence on the level of mutual understanding occurring among police officers and members of our diverse community. This will demonstrate our commitment to the fair and unbiased application of our policing responsibilities, stimulate the recruiting of First Nations, visible minorities, and women, and enhance community confidence in the Police Department.” In the absence of a strategic plan around diversity issues faced by the police and the community, random training, outreach, and recruiting activities have been carried out since that time by the Unit, whose membership presently numbers ten, all of whom are also working on primary assignments elsewhere within the department. In spite of the lack of full-time appointments, the Diversity Unit has successfully launched a number of incentives, and has made lasting connections with members of Victoria’s diverse communities.

In January, 2000, a needs assessment was funded in order to provide strategic direction for the Diversity Unit on managing diversity issues internally and externally. The research for this report was carried out between January and April, 2000. The primary aims of this research project were essentially threefold, including:

1. To ascertain the current expectations of the multicultural community in terms of Victoria Police Department service;
2. To determine how these expectations could be met by members of the Victoria Police Department;
3. To prioritize, given the current resources available within the Victoria Police Department and the level of support for the Diversity Unit by Victoria Police Department members, what measures should be undertaken in order to achieve the greatest progress in terms of meeting the expectations of the multicultural community.

Twenty-nine members of the Victoria Police Department were interviewed, and twenty-four community interviews were carried out. Community interviews included members and representatives of ethnic and racial, gay and lesbian, and disabled communities, government and non-government service organizations. This paper highlights some of the findings and recommendations from the needs assessment. It is not meant to replace
the sixty page report which contains more extensive data and justification for the recommendations.

**Findings & Recommendations**

In general the response of external stakeholders was very positive, and may best be summed up by the following quote:

> "There is the feeling it's a good department, there aren't any major conflicts with the community, although there are certainly issues that might need improvement"

Service providers, as well as designated minorities, pointed out the following as evidence of discriminatory treatment resulting from systemic and individual racism:

- that they are under-represented within the police department
- that their communities are over-policing
- that the complaints process is inadequate
- that the police fail to recognize the diversity of their community
- that police services are inadequately explained to ‘new’ Canadians
- that police services are inadequately available

Police generally evinced a positive response when asked to describe the relationship between police and ethnic and visible minorities. The same can be said of their response when queried about the gay and lesbian community, and women. Neither recruitment of designated minorities nor diversity management training were seen as a priority. Likewise, incidents of workplace harassment were generally not recognized to be sufficiently problematic as to warrant addressing. With reference to youth there was a recognition that friction does exist, including with ethnic and visible minority youth, and that although to some extent an inevitable reality between teens and adults, they felt that some improvement could be made with increased non-crisis contacts. With reference to Hate Crimes, most officers did not recognize the frequency of such acts and were unfamiliar with Hate Crimes Unit Policy on investigating such incidents.

Both the community and police agree that interaction is key to improving relationships and reducing stereotypes. From the perspective of community organizations and members, significant emphasis was placed on recruitment of ethnic and visible minorities as a means to deliver improved service to the culturally diverse community. From the police perspective, improving relations was seen as best achieved through an emphasis on recruiting non-biased individuals and increasing school liaison. Both the police and the communities agreed that increased mutual knowledge is crucial and not the sole responsibility of the police department – new residents need to
understand their rights and responsibilities with reference to police practice in Victoria, and the police should play an active role in this. There is a need within the Victoria Police Department to improve both internal and external management of diversity. However, diversity management training is not the most effective means of addressing such needs. My research suggest that the following recommendations, given in order of priority, would address some of the most pressing concerns, as well as provide direction for future action. The order was determined by the informants themselves. Those issues which were most frequently and/or strongly referred to are addressed first, as are those recommendations upon which the addressing of such issues rely.

1  Create a Diversity Management Section

A separate Diversity Management Section is necessary to maintain the significant administrative and liaison duties presented in the following recommendations, and as such is an immediate requirement. The function of the Diversity Management Section will be primarily to act as a resource for members of the Victoria Police Department, members of Victoria’s diverse communities, and other service organizations. The Section will also be responsible for liaison with other police/diversity related organizations in order to provide support, training, and material resources to Department and community members.

2  Create a Diversity Management Advisory Board

Although an Advisory Board itself was not often referred to as a priority issue, the inability of a largely white male institution to be aware of and respond to community needs was. As such a means of providing direction from the outset needs to be provided to the new Section. Both common sense and demographic changes dictate that the Department cannot be expected to make changes in the absence of close cooperation with stakeholders. The Advisory Board’s mandate would be to bring that about that close cooperation. Community involvement is pivotal if there is to be mitigation of the “us versus them” mentality which is currently pervasive among some segments of the population. The ad hoc use of key stakeholders should be abandoned in favour of including them on a regular basis. Stakeholders are also distrustful of endless surveys and opinion polls, and unless the Advisory Board can work and recommend without becoming a bureaucratic monster it will fail. This must be recognized at the outset, and a minimum of time and energy input expected from those individuals who take part in the Advisory Board, coupled with the flexibility to respond in a timely fashion to their recommendations.
3  Provide Ongoing Liaison Between Communities &
the Police Department

Increased visibility of, and accessibility to, members of the Victoria Police Department will counteract stereotypes on both sides. The immediate goal of the Diversity Management Section should be to develop a network of contacts throughout the Victoria population. In creating this network it is important to utilize existing community networks to reach diverse sections of the population in an expeditious and effective matter. Such contacts would include: newspapers/bulletins; storefronts; restaurants; religious or cultural events; community contacts and service organizations; television and radio programs. It is through contacts such as those listed above that opportunities present themselves to the police to actively participate in the communities they serve. It is also through the establishment and maintenance of such networks between police and communities that when race-related incidents or issues arise, the police have a meaningful partnership to respond to such incidents in an appropriate and effective manner.

4  Provide ‘Non-Crisis’ Dialogue Opportunities

More opportunities for dialogue between the police and ethnic/visible minority communities are needed in a non-threatening atmosphere in order to assist community members to overcome their fear of the police, and to dispel their concerns, based on anecdotal evidence, that the police are unfair in their handling of minority community concerns. By the same token, increased contact between the police and the law-abiding majority of ethnic and visible minority groups should counter some of the stereotypes currently held by police officers. Recent immigrants and youth in particular were identified as groups which would benefit from increased interaction with the police. As such the Diversity Management Section should first focus on these two. Community members and representatives stressed that participation should be encouraged by officers from all sections of the department, rather than only Diversity Management Section members. The Section can ensure this occurs by distributing responsibility for these duties widely within the department.

5  Increase Recruitment of Designated Minorities

Although high on the list of community stakeholder priorities, recruitment ranks fifth in the order of recommendations because its success depends upon well established police-community interaction. Recruiting activities need to be redesigned to attract minorities.
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INTRODUCTION:

1.1 Context for Managing Diversity Issues

There are approximately sixty thousand police officers in Canada today, working in a great variety of environments, both culturally and geographically. All are mandated to enforce the federal and provincial laws as well as municipal by-laws. In Victoria the following principles have been identified:

"The Victoria Police Department, in accordance with the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and in partnership with the community is dedicated to maintaining peace, order and public security and for preventing crime, thereby promoting a safe and harmonious community."

With such concepts as the maintenance of peace, and promoting a harmonious community, it is understandable that a certain amount of ambiguity and uncertainty exists regarding the sometimes conflicting roles that members of the police force are expected to play. This is particularly the case in the context of policing and socio-cultural diversity. And Victoria’s Police Department must contend not only with its own, local, issues, but with police-community problems which occur across the nation, and even the continent.

The incidence of police use of force against members of visible minority groups has long been a subject of debate, controversy, and study in Canada. Reports in the early 1980’s pointed out that, “Currently one of the results of the latent and overt racism in Canada is a distrust on the part of visible minorities regarding the legal apparatus”. Public opinion on a national scale has changed little in the ensuing years. The situation is exacerbated by frequent and prominent media commentary about relations between the police and members of ethnic and visible minorities. A recent (March 6, 2000) cover of Time magazine was emblazoned with the words “COPS BRUTALITY & RACE”, and covered the shooting death of an unarmed man by four police officers in New York and scandals within the Los Angeles Police Department. Closer to home, national newspapers have been covering investigation of police officers in Saskatoon and Winnipeg. This commentary is often accepted by the public as applicable to all police rather than only those directly involved. In addition, Victoria’s population is influenced not only by
the media, but by their direct and indirect experiences with police in other parts of Canada and the world.

Within the context of (presumed) distrust of police officers, the Victoria Police Department is faced with the problems of how to police its changing community. There is little doubt that the forces of continued immigration will continue to affect the nature of policing in British Columbia. This constant change has significant implications in terms of the personnel and methods Victoria Police Department needs to carry out its mission. Efforts must be made to ensure that, as the community changes, communication lines are maintained or established with all segments of the population. In order to start on this task the Victoria Police Department has to have some idea of the problems it currently faces in terms of diversity management – is there significant distrust on the part of visible minorities of the Victoria Police Department in particular? Is racism a problem within the Victoria Police Department? What are the most appropriate means to address any such issues? Only if these questions are addressed can the goals of crime prevention, solving community problems, and effective problem solving techniques be achieved.

1.2 The Victoria Police Diversity Unit

The Victoria Police Diversity Unit was developed in 1996 under Chief Richardson, its mission statement being,

"to exert a positive influence on the level of mutual understanding occurring among police officers and members of our diverse community. This will demonstrate our commitment to the fair and unbiased application of our policing responsibilities, stimulate the recruiting of First Nations, visible minorities, and women, and enhance community confidence in the Police Department."

In the absence of a strategic plan around diversity issues faced by the police and the community, random training, outreach, and recruiting activities have been carried out since that time by the Unit, whose membership presently numbers ten, all of whom are also working on primary assignments elsewhere within the department. In spite of the lack of full-time appointments, the Diversity Unit has successfully launched a number of incentives, and has made lasting connections with members of Victoria’s diverse communities. In recognition for their work Staff Sergeant Kevin Worth received a Certificate of Merit,
and Sergeant Gary Green earned one of only five Awards of Excellence granted country-wide for enhancing police-community relations from the Canadian Centre for Police-Race Relations. The Diversity Unit has had a strong start, and the commissioning of this report is indicative of their willingness to continue the substantial progress already made.

1.3 Scope of the Research Project

In January, 2000, a needs assessment was funded in order to provide strategic direction for the Diversity Unit on managing diversity issues internally and externally. The research for this report was carried out between January and April, 2000. The primary aims of this research project were essentially threefold, including:

1. To ascertain the current expectations of the multicultural community in terms of Victoria Police Department service;

2. To determine how these expectations could be met by members of the Victoria Police Department;

3. To prioritize, given the current resources available within the Victoria Police Department and the level of support for the Diversity Unit by Victoria Police Department members, what measures should be undertaken in order to achieve the greatest progress in terms of meeting the expectations of the multicultural community.

The study also examined the current system of recording Hate Crimes utilized by the Victoria Police Department, and this report includes recommendations to ensure that Hate Crimes will be more accurately recognized and acted upon by police officers, as well as more consistently reported by victims. Finally, evaluation tools to measure the progress of the Victoria Police Department in the above mentioned areas are considered, although until such time as the recommendations are implemented, it is impossible to design a means of measuring their effectiveness.
1.4 Methodology

Research was carried out in three principal ways:

1. A review of recent literature included materials on race relations and policing, community policing, and police training programs. Information was gathered from government publications, the records of the Victoria Diversity Unit, and videotape/written materials provided by the Capital Region Race Relations Association, Victoria Immigrant and Refugee Centre Society, Inter-cultural Association of Greater Victoria, Canadian Centre for Police-Race Relations, Ministry of Attorney General Hate Crime Unit, as well as articles and books on related topics. A search of the Internet located several relevant on-line articles, race relations, and police department websites.

2. Personal interviews with civilian and sworn members of the Victoria Police Department. A total of twenty-nine interviews were carried out. The interviews were based on a set of specific questions included in Appendix A, although some individuals who had specific knowledge relating to the Diversity Unit, as well as Senior Management, were questioned in a more open format. Of the twenty-nine officers interviewed, the number of years of service ranged from one and twenty-two. Some had transferred to Victoria with prior experience in the R.C.M.P. or other Police Departments, others had gone through the recruitment process in Victoria. An effort was made by Staff Development to ensure that officers chosen for interviews were not concentrated in one watch or division.

3. Telephone and personal interviews, as well as focus groups, were carried out with members of the Iranian, East Asian, Chinese, Hispanic, First Nations, and gay and lesbian communities, as well as with representatives from the following organizations:
   - Capital Region Race Relations Association
   - Human Rights Coalition
   - Victoria Native Friendship Centre
• Hastings Institute
• Victoria Police Victims Services
• Victoria Immigrant and Refugee Centre Society
• Intercultural Association of Greater Victoria
• Canadian Centre for Police-Race Relations
• Office of the Police Complaint Commissioner
• Youth Empowerment Society
• Vancouver Police Department Diversity Relations Unit
• Victoria Police Board
• Hate Crime Unit, Ministry of Attorney General
• Equal Employment Opportunity Office
• African Cultural Association
• Office for Disability Issues
• Resource Centre for Independent Living

These interviews were conducted informally, and based in whole or in part on a set of specific questions included in Appendix B. A total of twenty-four interviews were carried out.

1.5 Limitations of the Study

There are two significant limitations with this study. The first relates to the interviews carried out with representatives or members of ethnic and visible minority communities within Victoria. In any research project of a selected ‘community’ there are problems of representativeness. Even cohesive communities have schisms, subgroups, and any number of divisions based on history, socio-economic status, and the like. As such to carry out research with a number of individuals, whether they are chosen at random, through ‘snowballing’ (choosing one community member or organization who then connects the researcher with further community contacts), or some combination
of techniques, there is no possibility of achieving an ‘unbiased’ survey sample. Those individuals chosen may have little or no contact with the police, nor with members of their community who do interact frequently with the police. In the case of this particular research project, the time and resource allocation was insufficient to allow for more than cursory contact with members of Victoria’s multi-cultural and racial communities. Given this limitation, greater weight was placed on interviews with ‘umbrella’ organizations, such as the Inter-Cultural Association of Greater Victoria and Victoria Immigrant and Refugee Centre Society, Capital Region Race Relations Association, and Victoria Native Friendship Centre. Because some have dealings with members of various communities, it was hoped that they would be able to provide a fairly broad perspective on community-police relations. It must be remembered however, that at least some of these organizations also deal with only a small segment of each community. I also referred to the Police Perceptions Project Report for data on Victoria’s ethnic community relations with the police.

The other significant limitation of this study concerns the police sample. The sample of police chosen for interviews was only partially random. Shift schedule played some role in who was available to be interviewed, some interviewees were chosen through snowball techniques, and some were chosen specifically for their specialized roles in or knowledge of diversity issues. Among patrol officers not involved with the Diversity Unit, there was not uncommonly a sense that they were giving me the ‘right’ answers. This is not to suggest any lack of willingness to participate on the part of these officers. In fact complete cooperation was given to the project by all officers who participated. However, within the patrol officer section the impression was received that responses were often cautious rather than comprehensive. This was likely due to a combination of factors: their attitude towards the Diversity Unit, their attitude to yet another assessment of police ‘inadequacies’, and my background as yet another ‘researcher’, with no prior knowledge of the police subculture.

Finally, note should be made about the limitations of the terminology used in this report. Definitions of words such as race, ethnicity, visible minority, community are often vague or conflicting. This is perhaps inevitable as our understandings and interpretations of racism, discrimination, and equality are varied and constantly evolving. For continuity I have chosen to use the definitions of Henry et al (see Appendix D).
1.6 Report Components

The remainder of this report is divided into two parts. The first part contains the results of the interviews, together with information, based on a literature review, on multicultural/anti-racism training and education programs. Part two provides a discussion of recommendations for improving internal and external diversity management. It also considers some possible future directions of the Diversity Unit, including the creation of evaluation instruments once the recommendations have been implemented. Additional material is provided in several appendices.
RESEARCH FINDINGS:

The data collected was of a qualitative rather than quantitative nature. Once interviews were transcribed and compared a set of recurring themes emerged from both the community stakeholders and the police. Although often focusing on the same topic, perceptions clearly differed and depended upon which side of the ‘blue line’ one stood.

2.1 Community Members & Representatives

In general the response of external stakeholders was very positive, and may best be summed up by the following quote:

"There is the feeling it's a good department, there aren’t any major conflicts with the community, although there are certainly issues that might need improvement"

The primary research questions for community members were: does their community feel it is well served by the police; and what do the police need to do in order to improve their service to your community. Service providers, as well as designated minorities, pointed out the following as evidence of discriminatory treatment resulting from systemic and individual racism:

- that they are under-represented within the police department
- that their communities are over-policed
- that the complaints process is inadequate
- that the police fail to recognize the diversity of their community
- that police services are inadequately explained to ‘new’ Canadians
- that police services are inadequately available
2.1.1 Under-Representation

Virtually all respondents referred to under-representation of ethnic and visible minorities within the Victoria Police Department as a significant problem:

"Recruiting and senior management should reflect minority groups"  
"Diversity representation in the police force is very important"  
"They need to emphasize recruiting, not just make connections with communities"

That there is under-representation is indisputable. The Employment Equity Act requires that federally regulated employers with over one hundred employees identify and eliminate employment barriers and implement employment equity programs. It focuses on four ‘designated’ groups: women, aboriginal peoples, persons with disabilities, and members of visible minorities. Public opinion and good intentions are expected to be the driving force for change, but these alone have been patently ineffective to date. In 1996, ten years after the passing of the original Act, and one year after it was adapted and ‘strengthened’, visible minorities made up only 4.5% of government employees, while their percentage of the population was 13. Furthermore, minorities held only 2.3% of the executive positions in the public service^4. The Victoria Police Department is slightly ahead of national statistics in terms of visible minorities as sworn employees, and slightly behind in terms of visible minorities holding (sworn) executive positions.

The Victoria Police Department Research Audit and Analysis Division notes the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Victoria Police Department</th>
<th>Visible Minority</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sworn</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>187</td>
<td>7.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civilian</td>
<td>1^1</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strength</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>262</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Table. Percentage of Visible Minorities employed in Victoria Police Department.

^1 Statistics are not kept on visible minority numbers of the civilian staff. Informants could recollect only one visible minority civilian employee.
Of those thirteen sworn officers, five have been recruited since the Victoria Police Department began actively recruiting visible minorities six years ago, three of those officers were recruited via transfer from other police forces. Almost half (46.2%) of the visible minority members are South Asian, while only 1.1% of Victoria’s population is of that ethnic background.

According to the 1996 Census Victoria had a visible minority population of 7,835, 10.65% of its total population, while the national average was 12%. Given the now well established pattern of visible minorities immigrating more rapidly than those of white, western European background (only approximately ¼ of immigrants are currently from Europe or the United States)⁶, it is likely that this percentage has climbed since 1996 and will continue to do so. Projections for the year 2005 include a 25% increase in the Aboriginal population nationwide, with the proportion of ‘visible minorities’ rising to 16% of the national population, and to 20% by 2016⁷ (this represents an increase of roughly 4% a decade nationwide).

In terms of the availability of officers who can serve citizens in a language other than English, only twenty-two officers (11.8%) speak a second language, with a total of eleven second languages spoken according to the 1999 Environmental Assessment. In addition, five of those officers speak German as a second language, and given the current and projected source of migrants to Victoria it is unlikely that speakers of that language are not also fluent in English. The trend of urban dwellers whose mother tongue is neither English nor French is steadily climbing, according to Statistics Canada 34% of Vancouver dwellers have a first language other than English or French, urban centres such as Calgary and Edmonton fall around 20%⁷, and Victoria is likely somewhere in between. An informant at the Inter-Cultural Association of Victoria pointed out that their translation services are under-utilized by the police, they suggested this was due to a lack of communication between the two organizations. Reliance on police employees and/or translation services needs to be increased, since the current alternative is lack of communication or over-reliance on family members, which is a problematic practice.

Women make up only 16% of the sworn members of the police department, and none have achieved senior officer level. There are no disabled sworn members within the Department, and records are not kept regarding gay and lesbian members. Related to the issue of under-representation, numerous informants pointed out that the Victoria Police Department, as constituted, is unlikely to be aware of issues which designated minorities want addressed. The Victoria Police Department is clearly a white male dominated one, and
informants, while cognizant that there can be no short term solutions, were concerned that this be dealt with proactively in terms of both recruiting and promotion:

"The process of promotion needs to be more transparent, consistent, and accessible, this has been identified as a critical point for review"

"The internal process of recruitment, screening, and once you’re hired needs to be clear and fair regarding expectations, criteria, and moving up"

"We need an ongoing meeting with community leaders, recruiting, and the Diversity Unit"

"Are the physical limitations based on real needs?"

"Any suggestion we increase the numbers suggests affirmative action, there can’t be any suggestion of preferential treatment"

"Policing is not comfortable with it yet, it’s going to have to happen as a shift in the next generation"

In addition to reviewing the current recruitment process, informants recommended: increased recruitment drives within designated minority communities; increased education on the role of the police (to dispel stereotypes held by minority community members and thereby make policing a career option); and interaction with community members, also with an aim to reducing stereotypes and encouraging applying. Ongoing police-community communication was stated as necessary throughout the process to ensure success.

Although not employees of the Department, volunteers do have significant contact with the public through their work at the front desk on Caledonia, as well as the North and South Stations and crime prevention programs. Specific records are not kept as to the percentage of ethnic and visible minorities, but verbal estimates were low in number. Currently there is little active recruiting of volunteers. Most recruits apply through word of mouth, there is some advertising in Volunteer Victoria, and occasional presentations have been given to Seniors groups and Criminology program students at Camosun College. Although not directly related to the Victoria Police Department, membership at Victim Services follows similar pattern, and this does reflect well on the department, in spite of not being under its control.
2.1.2 Over-Policing/Stereotyping

Falling behind under-representation as an issue of concern was the subject of stereotyping of designated minority communities. Comments on this subject relate specifically to ethnic and visible minority communities. There is frustration with the tendency by police officers to make assumptions of ethnic group membership based on presumed racial similarity, for example stereotyping of black youth was mentioned anecdotally during five interviews. The African community in general was mentioned as a main target, in part because of their 'newness' on the Victoria scene:

“African-Americans are maybe involved in crime, but they look very different from African immigrants, the police should be able to recognize this”

“The Latino community is not so different, just an accent. East Indians they’re used to because they’ve been here a while”

On the other hand, the Police Perceptions Project Report stated that none of their informants referred to the police as being "racist" (it did not ask if people had experienced racism at the hands of police). That report concluded that, “... some segments of the communities, particularly youth and First Nations people, feel targeted by the police in general and believe that the police operate, perhaps unconsciously on the stereotypes they hold in their actions towards them”9. The segment on ‘Racial Climate and Hate Crimes in Victoria’ reported that much of the frustration regarding stereotyping was based on dealings with non-police employees - teachers, white youth, security guards and store clerks. Apart from specific examples provided by Inter-Cultural Association and Capital Region Race Relations Association, informants interviews for this assessment reported ‘perceptions’ of police stereotyping, anecdotal stories they had heard, rather than first hand experiences. Henry concurs,

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9 The Office for Disabled Issues is a cross-government policy branch which advises government on policy direction. The representative spoken to was unaware of any specific issues or problems in Victoria. An example of problems noted elsewhere were Brain injury victims mistaken for being inebriated. Their office offers workshops on various types of disabilities (psychiatric, generic eg. wheelchair, asthma), and has worked at the Justice Institute in a training capacity. They have expressed a willingness to discuss training options with the Victoria Police Department.
"Although extensive racism among the police is often alleged and anecdotal evidence of significant incidents has been offered, documented research evidence for this assertion is relatively slim... This kind of anecdotal evidence... make it abundantly clear that people of colour believe they are treated quite differently from the majority community by police".¹⁰

However, it must be noted that the complaint procedure is generally seen as being severely biased, as it involves police investigating their own conduct. Informants consistently report an unwillingness to register complaints against the police (see below). For this reason the nature and extent of over-policing and discriminatory acts against minority groups is difficult to quantify, and information must at this point rely, at least in part, on anecdotal evidence.

Given the concerns of stereotyping by Victoria Police Department members, one would expect that cultural training of officers would have been given higher priority by key informants than it actually was. Opinions varied as to whether police members should be provided with cultural knowledge of the various ethnic groups which make up the larger community. There were concerns that small amounts of information about a culture, taught out of context in a classroom environment, might exacerbate police-minority relation problems by encouraging stereotyping. Rather than a need to understand the values and practices of particular cultural groups, informants tended to support an emphasis on communication skills. The Police Perceptions Project Report likewise reported that,

"Many of the members of the visible minority communities expressed a feeling of lack of respect from local police... a "rudeness" that police had projected in their interactions with them... Police in one sense need two very different modes of interaction – one for the criminal element and one for the "victim" or law abiding citizen who may feel very powerless or compromised".¹¹

Rather than training itself, informants emphasized the recruitment process, arguing that equal representation on the police force would go a long way towards dispelling stereotypes. They also emphasized (again) increased interaction between police members and minorities, and an improved complaints process such that discriminatory behaviors are more likely to be reported and disciplined:
"It will be tricky avoiding stereotypical stuff, so you have to be careful, don’t just give information out, but you need direct discussion between immigrant communities and the police, facilitated perhaps by settlement workers and so on”

“You need to keep racists out in the first place, so the recruiting process is important”

“You need a culturally-sensitized approach, cross-cultural interpersonal skills will help the complaints problem”

“The average person doesn’t even know how to access the complaints process”

There are some concerns that the Complaint Process of the Office of the Police Complaint Commissioner is not accessible enough, however this is not within the control of the Victoria Police Department. What is a concern is that the avenues for internal complaint resolution is commented upon by some community members as ineffective:

“The complaints process is too one sided, complaints can be viewed by officers but the defense can’t be seen by the complainant”

“Complaints against police should be handled by another agency”

“The complaints process isn’t transparent enough, so nobody trusts it”

“Clients don’t always want to go to the police, because they don’t feel comfortable with it”

The Victoria Police Department does not at this time track complaints based on ethnic or racial basis, and the Complaints Officer could only recall one (unsubstantiated) claim of racism since early 1998. Since an advertising campaign by the Office of the Police Complaint Commission in the late 1990’s, the number of complaints has increased, but the number of claims for which discipline or corrective measures proposed were for a police force member has not.

The Capital Region Race Relations Association reported that 14% of the racism reported as experienced by their clients was within the context of policing over a one year period (December 1996-November 1997)12. Interviews with numerous individuals from the ethnic or visible minority communities, or representatives of the same, stated that complaints are very rarely made because of an ingrained expectation that “it won’t achieve anything anyway”. The Office of
the Police Complaint Commissioner admits there are problems in the complaint process:

- the complaint must be made in writing
- people are unaware of the Commissioner’s Office
- the process must be carried out in English writing (although they provide translation services). There is a support network available in Vancouver, but no formal protocol in Victoria. Information brochures are available in at least eight major languages, but assistance in going through the process remains problematic

Action is required by the Victoria Police Department to improve accessibility and trust in the complaint process. Until this is done no effective means of tracking discrimination based on stereotyping exists, and the problem cannot be addressed.

2.1.3 Lack of ‘Non-Crisis’ Dialogue Between Police & Communities

Lack of adequate opportunities for dialogue between the police and Victoria’s diverse communities was a third factor indicated as cause for concern. This was referred to as due to both lack of willingness on the part of the police and community members to interact. Cultural and historical factors have made members of some of Victoria’s communities reluctant to access available police services. This may stem from experience of violence at the hands of law enforcement officers in their country of birth; anecdotal information within the community; and media representation of police activities elsewhere in Canada or the United States:

“Cops must recognize refugees’ attitude to them, they wouldn’t ever call them for help, it’s unheard of”

“Police need to recognize that they embody power and authority”

“[The police] need to know about diversity in Victoria, about refugee trauma and the influence of their uniform and so on”

“Police need an understanding of the violation of racism, when they get confrontation of their authority they need to recognize what it’s based on... humiliation, the police bring an audience, it’s taken as a message about race by a person of colour”
Police need to recognize that they are a visible embodiment of the dominant group's power and that members of disadvantaged groups often come from countries where such an embodiment means enmity.

Inadequate access to information and assistance was also commented upon as a hindrance to positive police-community relations. Two informants referred to the Diversity Unit specifically as an asset in this regard, but one pointed out that in the absence of full time staff, it was difficult to establish contact. When issues arise, such as the Dawson incident, community members are left for months on end with no information on how the investigation is proceeding. Informants complained of the lack of speed in resolutions, and the lack of dialogue when incidents occur. Both parties need to participate in the communication process, and several suggestions were offered as to how it could be achieved:

“Police could be working with ESL classes doing orientation stuff, or in schools, especially where there are problems with racism, to tell kids to call the police”

“We need some mechanism for dialogue that is constantly available to people of colour”

“Consistent information and sessions are needed to be effective, like one given once at I.C.A. by a female officer and one in plain clothes... There is a general misunderstanding of police, it would be helped to do information in a neutral way, with non-uniform officers to reduce concerns about the police force”

“We need more open communication – they can call us, we can call them, to be a two way street”

“The Police need to do three things: identify the racial component, document it, and refer on – be a link”

“They [Victoria Police Department] need to get a general idea of what's out there”

“Police need to take the initiative in establishing connections, then communities could interchange ideas with police on these matters”

The 1999 Victoria Police Department Environmental Assessment also notes that,
"... a common theme echoed by the stakeholders is the need to develop and maintain strong partnerships with organizations that face similar challenges. Several stakeholders expressed their desire to have a stronger relationship with the Victoria Police Department. Specifically, the stakeholders seek an improved consultation - communication process with the police, to aid in their strategic planning processes.

In addition, the stakeholders recognize the need to have strong relationships with other stakeholder groups in order to effectively share relevant information collected and stored by each organization."\(^{13}\)

In its ‘Recommendations for Interaction’ the Police Perceptions Project Report states, "If police are going to develop initiatives aimed at one specific part of a community, our recommendation is for them to focus on visible minority youths"\(^{14}\). Informants referred to for this report recommended: an ongoing advisory committee; youth outreach; educating minority communities on the role of the police; and increased non-crisis interaction between minority communities and the police.

### 2.2 Police Department Members

The primary research questions for the police were: do they feel Victoria’s communities are well served at present by the police, and how could their service be improved; what is their understanding of the Diversity Unit, and their support of its objectives; and what is their perception of the environment within the police department towards diversity issues. Police generally evinced a positive response when asked to describe the relationship between police and ethnic and visible minorities. The same can be said of their response when queried about the gay and lesbian community, and women. Neither recruitment of designated minorities nor diversity management training were seen as a priority. Likewise, incidents of workplace harassment were generally not recognized to be sufficiently problematic as to warrant addressing. With reference to youth there was a recognition that friction does exist, including with ethnic and visible minority youth, and that although to some extent an inevitable reality between teens and adults, they felt that some improvement could be made with increased non-crisis contacts. With reference to
Hate Crimes, most officers did not recognize the frequency of such acts and were unfamiliar with Hate Crimes Unit Policy on investigating such incidents.

2.2.1 Recruitment of Ethnic & Visible Minorities

It is clear that most patrol members do not share the attitude of senior members and the public that the ability of the police department to carry out its mandate can in any way be improved by greater numbers of ethnic minority members. Those who recognized a need for greater diversity on the police force were either minority members themselves or directly related to the Diversity Unit and/or senior management. In general patrol officers felt that hiring officers who fulfilled the recruiting criteria would ensure a good police force, and that minority membership was of little or no relevance:

"Get the right people, colour doesn’t matter"

"Just get officers who aren’t biased in the first place"

"It doesn’t matter what their background is if they’re the best person for the job”

Staff Development has recognized the need to recruit ethnic and visible minorities, and has taken steps to address the issue. Currently the recruitment strategies of ethnic and visible minorities include three information sessions held in 1999, for Blacks, Sikhs, and Chinese. One is planned for the First Nations Community, as well as a general session at a Multi-Cultural Society. Advertisements encouraging ‘men and women from all cultural groups’ with a minimum of three years policing experience are placed in the Times-Colonist, the Province, the local Community Paper, and the Western Native News. Recruitment sessions have also been carried out at the University of Victoria and Camosun College Career Fairs, and a Criminology class at Camosun College.

In spite of the above strategies, Staff Development has had limited success increasing the number of designated minority officers within the police force. One barrier reported is the length between an applicant passing the initial screening process in both Victoria the Justice Institute Assessment with acceptable ‘Dimensions’ marks, and the point at which an employment opportunity becomes available in
Victoria. During such time good recruits risk being ‘picked up’ elsewhere. This practice was identified as problematic because it lacks the flexibility to acquire good recruits when they are available, rather than risk losing them to other police departments. Suggestions for consideration which might rectify this problem included:

- secure such individuals as non-certified staff in the short term;
- over-hire such candidates to avoid losing them;
- guarantee to the top recruit candidates that they will be accepted next in line;
- helping candidates who are weak in one area in the assessment process in order to improve their standing.

Given the recognition that ethnic and visible minority recruitment is a goal of the Victoria Police Department, patrol officers pointed out that the recruitment process must clearly avoid any hint of affirmative action:

“It’s becoming a bit of an issue, the perception is that if all else is equal or minority applicant is a bit more poor then they’ll get the job... Minorities feel that they get this attitude by others and it makes it harder for them to do their job, they have to prove more”

“Concerns of community representation are valid, it can improve the ability of the Victoria Police Department to do their job, and it does bridge gaps, but you must maintain the standard, not like in the U.S.”

“There is a perception that Staff Development is under pressure to hire visible minorities and this has negative connotations, they have to be really transparent, and make sure they don’t have quotas”

“There should be more peer input on hiring. The peer panel rank recruits on whether we’d like to work with them, but then senior management hires someone else for whatever reason, and that’s not acceptable”

“The Diversity Unit needs to emphasize recruiting, not just make connections with communities... should target minorities, from an early age, like in schools as role models”
Junior officers almost unanimously reject the notion of changing recruitment standards in order to admit more visible minorities. There was no question that any attempt to ‘lower the bar’ was an unacceptable practice. Instead they recommend attracting minority members by improving relations with youth:

“A school liaison officer could have an influence, it could be increased to include career counseling and other things, not just D.A.R.E. We need that bridge there at elementary or middle school, we don’t have one now per se, just the D.A.R.E. officers. Good rapport with students would plant a seed in the child’s mind later on”

“We should concentrate on recruiting, getting into high schools, work on targeting people and getting them towards policing as a career”

It is clear that both the short term strategies of Staff Development and the long term strategies of patrol officers in order to improve representation by minorities on the police force are appropriate. It is also clear that greater communication of information needs to exist between junior and senior management on the issue of recruitment procedure.

### 2.2.2 Diversity Management Training/Education

Apart from the “Broken Circle” presentation and “Culture Camp”, few officers had any diversity training experience, and more negative comments than positive were evinced when the subject of ‘training’ was broached. When compared to the 1996 Police Perceptions Project Report, there appears to have been a decrease in support for training since the introduction of the Diversity Unit. This may be due to the changes made to diversity training in the department throughout the 1990’s. The Police Perceptions Project Report states that training carried out in cooperation with the Inter-Cultural Association in the early 1990’s was singled out as a positive experience. This training has since been stopped.

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iii Other research (Abella, 1984; Henry et al, 2000; has suggested that employment equity measures generate such a backlash that members of minority groups so hired suffer even greater discrimination after their introduction.

iv The difference is unlikely to be due to sample size, since approximately the same number of interviews were carried out in both projects.
When asked to describe the nature and usefulness of their diversity training, reactions were mixed. The “Broken Circle” presentation and the “Culture Camp” were both well received, but few examples were given as to how this training had been helpful in terms of improved policing ability. The weakness identified by officers was that it did not directly relate to their work or personal contexts.:

“I didn’t like having to sit through ‘Broken Circle’, I didn’t like it’s focus on the past, the communications skills was more helpful”

“I would prefer Culture Camp type vs. Diversity education, hopefully recruiting brings in those with communication skills and promotions weed out bad apples, because their attitude influences those under them. Upper echelons are very important, because people in Patrol only behave as they’re allowed”

“The Culture camp had a ripple effect, it’s a good tool. The Unity Feast wasn’t as effective, it turned into a clique-y thing to do”

“we need the tools (emphasis added) to deal with these people so we can help them”

“Should be more interactive”

“Would like to see this in a workshop setting”

“Could be used as preparation for other courses”

A 1997 Evaluation Report on the “Broken Circle” presentation of Sergeant Gary Green, carried out by Inspector Terry Friday of the Canadian Centre for Police-Race Relations, recommended the following:

- That the “Broken Circle” be utilized as a module within a workshop model for police-race relations training, or
- If used as a stand-alone, then some interactive opportunities be built in to aid the learning process
- This type of training should be mandatory for all police and civilian employees

Possessing cultural knowledge of the various ethnic groups that make up the larger community was not considered a requirement of good policing by most of those interviewed. Even those who did believe cultural knowledge would improve their ability to carry out their duties felt that it would be best provided in the context of non-
crisis interaction rather than training. Some officers also expressed resentment at having the training ‘forced’ upon them. Others expressed concerns that cultural knowledge education provided little or no benefit, and could lead to an increase in stereotyping. Greater support was given to the suggestion of ‘communication’ skills, but this was concentrated among senior management and Diversity Unit members. Secondary literature supports the emphasis by patrol officers on ‘real’ police work as opposed to service-related roles. As with cultural knowledge training, most respondents felt that communications training was not a priority, would not improve the ability of patrol officers to carry out their duties, and would not improve police-community relations:

“Cops joined to enforce the law, centurion stuff, they’re tired of being expected to shoulder all the ‘helping’ issues”

“The place is so top heavy with training, it will tarnish the image of the Diversity Unit if you have more”

“Senior management has to be buying into [diversity management training], so maybe they should be a priority… one snide comment from them and you’ve lost a shift”

“The perception is that it’s a good thing to learn about other cultures, but it has to be timely, useful for Patrol. One idea would be contacts within communities to deal with those people, like translators, ICA. The Diversity Unit should maintain a list of people who understand what police do as well as each community type and language”

“I can’t think of anything that should be added or changed [with training], it’s OK as it is”

“If you had a little understanding of other cultures it would help, for example the right way to enter their house, shake their hand or something… it works both ways, if they understand the law, how the police work too”

“We receive ongoing training but it’s a lot of control vs. communication skills… I think a lot of police don’t know how to deal with people who don’t speak English well and they have to learn the dynamics of what’s happening in our country. And we have to take our culture out and explain why we’re making arrests”

“Presentations are too temporary and too political”

Responses were uniform in that officers had little confidence in ‘inter-cultural’ training. Recruiting the ‘right’ officers in the first place, and
increasing contact with minority community members were considered more effective means of managing diversity.

Patrol officers were receptive to receiving ‘updates’ on the changing demographics of Victoria, and felt that this might improve their ability to carry out their duties. Those who recommended the provision of this information felt it could be adequately provided during patrol, or in written format:

“One day a year would be good... update on who’s here, where they’re going, if they have issues with the way the police do their job could be addressed then... for [the Victoria Police Department] to know their community, which groups there are in Victoria, an update on numbers and so on”

“I’ve had personal experiences [of difficulty carrying out my duties] from lack of information on cultural data, but it’s not a priority. A couple of sheets of paper with information might help if they want, but don’t provide more training, it wouldn’t be well accepted, there is too much now”

“Ongoing training could include landmark cases on discrimination and Hate Crime, communication, policies”

“The training should be to keep policies in the forefront, if you can’t change attitudes, you can be clear on enforcing behaviors – do’s and don’ts”

Officers also expressed a clear desire to be involved in the process, to be informed and given the opportunity to express their opinion, at such time as diversity management training was implemented.

A recent study of Police Race Relations/Diversity Management Activities across Canada noted a variety of programming, ranging from occasional satellite programs or video’s available to department members on demand (Moose Jaw and Esquimalt, respectively), to a mandatory six day course on diversity issues (Toronto). Victoria falls somewhere between these two extremes. One of the approaches to improved police-ethnic community relations which has been viewed as a primary remedy is inter-cultural training. However, there is currently little evidence supporting a positive effect on police officers who take such training\textsuperscript{16}. Numerous publications point to the fact that effective cross-cultural training implementation is both long and complex, and one “…where the degree of change and success is often measured in millimeters”\textsuperscript{17}. In a meta-analysis of inter-cultural and anti-racism training interventions, two ‘disturbing discoveries’ were found:
"a. That despite the gains made by some participants in any training program, there will be a sizable proportion (usually between 25 and 35%) which become more negative as a consequence of the training. If the participants were school children in mathematics classes, we would find such a decline in performance as a result of instruction as abhorrent.

b. Given the time, energy and resources devoted to training, the results are rather meager."^{18}

Reasons for their lack of success include low levels of support within the organization, inadequate reinforcement, inadequate training of the ‘trainers’, unclear objectives, and confusion as to whether behavior or attitude change is the goal.

Educational approaches, which attempt to change behavior through changing beliefs, have been shown to have limited effectiveness^{19}. Although providing ‘cultural profiles’ may be useful to begin building information about the individual, there is a danger of stereotyping when assumptions are made that the profile relates to every person of that background. For this reason the Justice Institute has moved away from the cultural information approach, "The old process of putting members of each minority group wasn’t working any more, and it was getting to point where there was some negative feedback. What we started doing that worked like a charm was assigning a research project. It’s assigned in Block II while they’re out on the road, and the results have been really insightful. I’m learning a lot from the projects, and recruits are getting hands on involved, instead of sitting back with their arms crossed”

In spite of a significant investment by the Canadian government to police-minority relations in the form of intercultural training programs, the question of whether or not Canadian police officers actually display significant discriminatory behaviors towards visible minorities has not been satisfactorily answered. In a study of 251 randomly chosen police officers below the rank of inspector from Vancouver and Ottawa, Ungerleider found that only 25% made rational judgments about the members of the ethno-cultural groups mentioned in the
questionnaire. Of the remainder: 52% were ‘irrationally positive’ (individuals who make irrational positive judgments about the members of the groups mentioned); 13% were ‘irrationally negative’ (individuals who make irrational negative judgments about the members of the groups mentioned); and 11% were confused, making irrational judgments which were not consistently biased one way or another. He concluded that, if his exploratory study should be borne out on a larger scale, two clear policy implications exist for Canada’s police agencies:

"The first is that agencies ought to recruit and employ only those individuals who are capable of responding rationally to situations involving judgments about others. The second is that agencies ought to engage in education designed to increase their employees' capacities for, and dispositions toward, making rational judgments about others."29

In another article, Ungerleider points out that issues of police intercultural and race relations training must be sensitive to what he refers to as the ‘corporate culture of policing’, the beliefs, values, and practices which shape their outlook toward the conduct of their work. He outlines the following:

- A general belief that the press is unfair in its coverage of police matters
- A strong action orientation
- A belief in the mutual support and backup accompanied by non-interference and secrecy as far as the actions of other line officers are concerned
- A general trust in the validity or appropriateness of police action accompanied by a limited concern for the abuse of authority
- A general distrust of top management’s understanding of the complexities and priorities of the operational role
- A limited tolerance for defiance from broadly accepted social values and beliefs
- A tendency to stereotype as hostile those people who question police authority
• A tendency to simplify social events and to fit people and incidents into categories which can be dealt with through police action

Clearly some of the above beliefs and values present an obstacle to improving relations between the police and Victoria’s diverse communities as outlined in the ‘Research Findings’ section of this report.

The provision of diversity training is a complex issue. Mandatory training is likely to meet resistance, and training of any sort is not considered a high priority by Victoria Police Department patrol members. Given the constraints of Staff Development in terms of the number of days available for continuing education, the only diversity training that could be presently incorporated would follow the pattern of overgeneralizations and classroom instruction which has been shown to provide few if any benefits. Future planning of intercultural training must consider policing culture, and must include the perspective of participants in determining the programs, such that the content is recognized by the participants as directly relating to their work requirements. Diversity training must not be implemented without clear identification of competencies expected.

2.2.3 Stereotyping & the ‘Race Card’

Police were very clear that they did not consider racism to be a problem within the Victoria Police Department, that if there were an occasional ‘bad apple’ they were in the minority, and that in general racism was not an acceptable form of behavior in dealings with the public. They further commented that any racist attitudes held were on the decrease as older members retire and new recruiting processes weed out racist attitudes. Likewise, discrimination based on gender and sexual orientation were not considered to be a problem between department members and the public. Patrol members sometimes appeared skeptical that any proposed changes brought about through the needs assessment, and the Diversity Unit in general, were based on genuine need rather than being a response to ‘political pressures’:

“There are no problems with stereotyping, the only barrier has been with communication problems, like East Indian men speak for women”

“I don’t think we have an ethnic issue here”
“This is a good department, I don’t think there are any negative attitudes”

In contrast to a marked lack of firsthand experience of racism directed towards the public, numerous officers noted firsthand experience of racism at the hands of the public, in the form of being dealt the ‘race card’. They argued that when dealing with racial minorities it was not uncommon that they be unfairly accused of racist actions. There was variation in whether officers believed the accusations to be a strategy to avoid further police involvement, or a genuine belief on the part of the individual:

“Police generalize, but on the flip side so do others, even when dealing with victims police get stereotyped, it’s exactly the same. Both sides have preconceived notions”

“What’s worst of all is people who hide behind their ethnicity, and when police try to do things there are a portion of people who are breaking the law, and we have to work harder to explain that”

“The race card gets played with us more than vice versa, they’re the ones with bigoted attitudes, they make judgments about white cops”

“Part of the responsibility should lie with communities to adapt and be aware what Canada is, what the police are like here. Those groups, or representatives of those groups, need to educate their members, or someone should be”

They also expressed dismay about the tendency of the public to judge members of the Victoria Police Department based on the actions of police elsewhere in Canada or even the United States.

Police did acknowledge that ‘generalizing’ and/or stereotyping occurs, but denied that this type of behavior was limited to ethnic and racial minorities:

“We don’t have enough manpower to deal with the general public, we only deal with crises in the core of town, so you become cynical because it’s all the drug and alcohol group… Recent immigrants are not in the picture either, except for occasional problems”

“Emphasis should be prior to becoming a cop, get the right people. Testing would weed out those who can’t get past stereotypes”
"We need to know our community, and the community know the police better and what the law is about, and that there's someone they can come and talk to that speaks their language and can help them."

The consensus was that increased interaction between the police and ethnic minorities in non-crisis situations, particularly with youth, would reduce the negative stereotype held of police by the public:

"You can't change adults, and it passes on to their kids so easily. But if more kids had dealings with the police on a non-confrontation manner it might change stereotypes, like the Unity Feast, or a non-call type basis... You have to focus on children."

"The Diversity Unit needs to give tools to make a job easier for cops, and to extend community connections, be a liaison, and hit the schools, not just D.A.R.E."

"Focus on children, as they grow up in our society it can dispel the notion of the a negative image of police."

"We're at the point where we should always have someone in the schools full time and working with the youth, and monitoring what's going on, because we don't really know, and to let them know we're not just out there to kick ass all the time."

"Police talking in schools about diversity, done like the D.A.R.E. program, through the Community Police section. It's good for both kids and police's image, and in the community as kids tell their parents."

Patrol members felt that greater attention to appropriate recruiting, and greater opportunities for non-crisis police-minority interaction, would between them reduce the already small number of officers who exhibit discriminatory behavior.

2.2.4 *Workplace Harassment*

Internal acceptance of racist and sexist behavior was seen in a significantly different light to that of external. Racist comments in particular were recognized as being fairly common. Sexism was recognized by female, rather than male, informants:
"It’s a really positive environment... black humour exists, maybe some might find it offensive, but people are more cautious now about who they tell off colour jokes to”

"The general attitude is cops should be thick skinned, if you can’t take it get out. But it’s never accepted in dealings with the community”

"Strangers and new people might be awed by what they hear, but I’ve never known anyone to leave because of it... It might be harder for gays and lesbians, but not for ethnic minorities though”

"Ten years ago there was a problem within the department for minorities and women. It’s still there but it’s not an enormous problem”

"It’s a complex environment around sexual orientation, there have been incidents of harassment”

"The biggest target for comments and stuff is gay men... there will always be ‘old boys’”

"The Police Department is a culture all on its own, when the chips are down and everybody’s working everybody’s ‘blue’, there’s lots of support and good relationships within the department”

With reference to racist behavior, fellow officers are expected to accept a certain level of ‘black humour’ and recognize that the stresses of working in law enforcement are to some extent mitigated by derogatory comments. The attitude of both sworn and civilian staff is generally one of, “... it’s just humour, it’s not meant to offend”, and colleagues should be cognizant of that and not complain.

Officers who are particularly vocal in their objection to such behavior, and in particular those who make formal complaints about it, are likely, “...to be left alone... very alone”. Those who complain are labeled as trouble-makers. Other officers would be less likely to socialize with them, less willing to work with them, and they would have decreased chance of promotion:

"[Making complaints within] the hierarchy is a career risk. Until women are in senior management it won’t change”

"There’s a fear within the department that if you make waves, say something, will be an outcast, and that’s a bad thing, it would be better if repercussions could be limited, but that’s a problem with a militaristic system”

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"Those cops who are touchy or upset about comments, they don’t know what their options are, and there is a fear of speaking out”

"If anything emphasize an informal means of dealing with issues, remove barriers to feeling free to do that... the paramilitary system empowers some people to be very unfair”

"You need a continual reminder of the policy, but not a mandated response... a clear vs. an obligatory process”

In fact formal complaint processes were rejected by most officers, including members of the designated groups in question, as compounding the problem rather than solving it. The preferred process of dealing with workplace harassment was to first deal directly with the individual, and if that proved unsuccessful to bring it to the attention of their supervisor. Awareness of the complaint process was stated in vague terms,

"I know they [workplace harassment policies] are there, but I don’t know anything about them”

The issue of workplace harassment needs to be addressed. There is little recognition of either racist or sexist behavior as inappropriate to the point of being dealt with formally or informally. For those individuals who might wish to take action, there are perceived negative repercussions on both a personal and professional level. Awareness of the policy and complaint process was poorly recognized within the department, and perceived as ineffective/detrimental. This environment is not conducive to increasing the internal diversity of the Victoria Police Department, nor improving its relations with minority communities.

2.2.5 Diversity Unit Perceptions

Familiarity with the activities of the Diversity Unit was low, among both sworn and civilian staff, but particularly the latter. The low level of understanding and support was on several occasions accounted for by a lack of communication between Patrol and senior management. The Diversity Unit has fallen victim to a perception, on the part of patrol officers, that the work of the unit is considered by senior management to be reactive rather than proactive. Patrol officers, on the other hand, see the activities of the Diversity Unit as either proactive or unnecessary. Activities of the Unit are perceived as being forced upon officers without appropriate justification or
explanation. Finally, members of designated minorities pointed to pressures emanating from the Unit that they act as ‘role models’. Minority officers consider this to be inappropriate. Coupled with the perception that the Diversity Unit takes away officers from patrol duty, support for the Unit is not strong:

“Members have to feel they can have input in the decisions that are made, they aren’t made to understand how the decisions are made”

“Need an emphasis on how it’s going to help both sides to increase support for it”

“It [the Diversity Unit] only deals with the upper echelons of communities, it doesn’t filter down to regulars on the street, so when something bad happens police still get nailed, so patrol says ‘what’s the point’”

“The Riot Act needs to be read to senior management to make it clear it has to be promoted. Target them and take them aside prior to taking action”

“Most of patrol feels there’s already not enough resources, not enough training time set aside, there are other priorities [than the Diversity Unit]”

“The Diversity Mandate is unclear, and Diversity personnel takes away from regular roles, people see it as not as important as getting out on the street”

“I don’t think they’ve been very effective on the day to day basis. They don’t come to us and say, ‘this is a problem, let’s work together on this’, I think this is where they fall down. I think they focus too much on the education and I think they need to be more part of us on a day to day working basis”

“I think the police are viewed positively in the communities, but we need to sell the Diversity Unit concept to police, vs. vice versa”

The Diversity Unit was created in an environment not conducive to its support. There has been neither clear not consistent support for the unit members or its mandate from senior management, as evidenced by the lack of personnel/resources. Visible support is required in order for the Diversity Unit to achieve success in its mandate. The Unit cannot be expected to stand alone in this regard. Its mandate requires that it act in connection with other Divisions within the department. This is recognized by senior management, as evidenced by comments about the future of the Diversity Unit:
“The Diversity unit should act as a liaison to Community Policing, patrol, and so on, vs. [the Diversity Unit] go out and solve that problem alone... They should serve as a focal point to send it off to whoever needs to deal with it as a problem”

“Support for the Diversity Unit will depend on where its members are working and interaction with street patrols”

“We don’t need a large separate unit, it’s unnecessary... [we] need a contact, a conduit that allows the police to come in and deal with the situation”

“The Diversity Unit has first hand knowledge of the community we need, and the Diversity Unit needs to know Staff Development process”

“The Diversity Unit should be a communication link between this organization and the community, and a lot of their work can be done through recruiting and training”

“The Diversity Unit needs more communication, to be physically within the Department”

It is clear that the need for close cooperation must be communicated throughout the department. The Diversity Unit needs to be interactive, with officers flowing through it, using it, and having an impact on its activities, rather than simply being impacted by it.

2.3 Hate Crimes

The Hate Crime Unit was established by the Ministry of Attorney General in 1997, with a mandate of ensuring effective identification, investigation, and prosecution of crimes motivated by hate. The team provides training for police and other justice personnel, and also liaises with communities to assist them in identifying criminal hate activity. The Hate Crime Team is interested not only in identifying and tracking details of hate crimes across British Columbia, but also in prevention of these activities. Some disturbing trends on hate crime provided by the Unit include the estimation that only about 5-10% of such crimes, particularly instances of graffiti, are reported to the police. The tendency not to report these types of crimes in the Victoria area, particularly incidents of “gay bashing”, was confirmed through interviews with employees of the University of Victoria and Victoria High School.
Recent research indicates that hate crimes committed against racial and other minorities have increased in Canada in the past decade. Certainly the killing of Reena Virk and the recent outcry against Gay Support Clubs in schools suggest that British Columbia does not vary significantly from that pattern. According to the Police Perceptions Project Report,

"Community and police responses to the incidence of hate crimes or the climate of racism in Victoria were markedly different. For communities, especially the Indo-Canadian community, harassment, racial incidents and hate crimes were a frequent and painful reality of life in Victoria. For police, these kinds of incidents were rare and inconsequential... Coupled with these accounts, people expressed the perception that the police are slow to respond to complaints of this nature and that their complaints were not being taken seriously."

The current process of identifying Hate Crimes by the Victoria Police Department is that it is left to the officer’s discretion whether to ascertain the victim’s opinion. Several commented that they would avoid direct questions regarding motive, “It prompts them, people claim hate when it’s not, so you concentrate more on clues than the claimant”. This is recognized as a problem by designated minority service organizations, but not by patrol officers:

“The problem is [the police] decide what’s real or not real, then often it goes to Victims Services, who ... have no specialty in this area... [The police] need to encourage the race card be raised, not ignore it”

“Another reason why it’s so important to have representation in the police force... minority people are not comfortable bringing up a racial act by a white neighbour to a white cop. If the white cop questioned them it might help, and even if there was no response they should give them the information so they can think it over and maybe act later”

“Race Relations is available, but it’s not well advertised”

“Complaints aren’t even being forwarded to the police, so they need to check up at schools and other institutes where it might occur, stores etc.”

Police did recognize that there is a need to educate within schools on issues of Hate Crime, to act on instances and press charges. The Hate Crime Unit carried out a police training session in December, 1997,
and is currently arranging to schedule a further training session through Staff Development. Records have not been kept as to how many members of the Victoria Police Department participated in the 1997 event. Such training is required in order to increase Victoria Police Department members' awareness of the frequency of Hate Crimes and the need to more actively seek out victim perceptions. This encouragement of the public to report incidents as Hate Crimes should also extend to approaching businesses and institutions with information on the Hate Crimes Unit and its mandate.