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Top cop backs single patrols

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TASMANIA'S top police officer has defended the use of single-officer patrols, labelling two-person patrols a "waste of resources".

Police Minister Lin Thorp and Acting Commissioner Darren Hine yesterday defended the use of single-officer patrols around the state despite calls from the Police Association of Tasmania to ensure at least two officers were on every patrol to quell safety concerns.

The debate has been going on in Tasmania since the near-fatal shooting of Sgt Les Cooper on a single patrol on the Midland Highway in 2006.

Last week the Tasmanian Greens called on Ms Thorp to review the practice of single police officer patrols after a Victorian coroner recommended single-officer patrols be abolished because they placed officers' safety at risk.

Ms Thorp said Tasmania Police ensured all single-officer patrols were "risk assessed" before an officer was deployed.

"Of course we do not have a crystal ball and it is impossible to predict what is going to happen in every situation but the risk management plans are in place," she said.

Mr Hine said two-person patrols were a "waste of resources".

"It would be fair to say that the majority of police services around the world have single-officer responses," Mr Hine told a Budget Estimates Committee hearing yesterday.

"The question is whether you want two officers tied up on routine matters like the serving of warrants, delivering summons, taking witness statements.

"Single officers ensure a greater presence on our streets."