



# Commissioner's Message

The theme of this issue of *Platypus* is Police professionalism.

Thinking back over the years, I can recall many occasions when police professionalism, either as an objective or as an accomplishment, has been discussed. However it is obvious that the term has almost invariably been misused. What people were usually talking about was increasing efficiency, competence or effectiveness. In recent times these discussions have been confined almost entirely to the notion of better education of the individual and the cost effectiveness of the organisations.

Although all these benefits may be seen as the qualities attributable to a professional body or organisation, the reality is that they are the by-products of professionalism rather than its substance.

In the past year or so decisions have been taken which in the fullness of time will result in the police in this country achieving full professional status. Perhaps the most important achievements along the way will be firstly the creation of an identifiable and portable police

tertiary qualification which will afford its holders a degree of mobility between police forces. Secondly, and of equal importance, will be the achievement of a code of ethics which puts loyalty to one's profession above other forms of loyalty.

I have been particularly impressed by the degree of commitment shown by all the police associations to the attainment of this goal and to that extent the various administrations have been pleased to pledge their support. However, I am not convinced totally that everyone has really recognised the amount of individual effort that has to be put into the project if it is to be successful. As in all other ventures requiring a large degree of individual effort, there are bound to be many casualties along the way as inevitably the personal sacrifice will not be palatable to all. However at the end of the day the personal satisfaction and pride which we will all feel will make it worthwhile.

I hope that the information supplied in this issue will give you all a better understanding of what is involved.

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The *Platypus* has been adopted by the Australian Federal Police as a symbol representing the diverse requirements placed upon members in the execution of their duty. This unique and tenacious Australian mammal is a survivor against increasing pressure from today's environment. It leaves no stone unturned in its daily pursuits and has equipped itself with a range of features to adapt to changes over many years. It is capable of passing unnoticed, if required, yet demonstrates an unfailing dedication to explore all possibilities in an effort to maintain its special place in Australia's wildlife, at times against large and more powerful opponents — a quality admired and respected by members of the Australian Federal Police.

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