

training and assessment.

On completion of the course, Horswell and Petterd believe, students could be expected to have a thorough knowledge of and expertise in the process of crime scene interpretation, reconstruction, searching and recording. They should be able to determine which scientific discipline to employ to obtain the most appropriate information from physical evidence and be competent in presenting forensic evidence to courts of law.

Improved quality

In their report, they point out that at present the AFP has limited in-house resources and capability to carry out its own scientific examinations with the exception of the more traditional police science subjects of ballistics, documents and fingerprints.

"It is important that the physical evidence technician can determine the presence and nature of material of potential evidential value in order that the exhibit or recovered material is forwarded to the most appropriate specialist scientist," they say.

"Establishing an Associate Diploma should not be seen as a backdoor mechanism to create second-class scientists or pseudo scientists as the purpose is to improve the quality and professional status of the key person in forensic investigation, the collector of items.

"A better knowledge of the analysis to follow must lead to an enhanced capability to make the correct decisions in the initial identification and processing of exhibits," they say.

The course will be available to members of the Forensic Services Division of the AFP, or those in a similar position with other police forces, and who have Matriculation, ACT Year 12 Certificate, or equivalent.

Each course will accommodate 15 students and involve 1278 hours of study, both full-time and part-time, over a four-year period.

"Crime scene examiners are at the sharp end of forensic science," Horswell and Petterd argue. "They are in a prime position to provide a communication bridge between the investigator and scientist and, once trained, have a broader perspective of all of the sciences involved in their work.

"We are acutely aware that if a scene examination is not properly undertaken, all the laboratory examiners in the world are not going to repair the damage caused or replace the evidence overlooked during any scene examination."

Undergraduates visit Canberra

IN December 1989 and January 1990, 15 young Victorians who had successfully completed Year 12 studies, or Higher School Certificate in Victoria, undertook entrance examinations for the AFP.

Although the examinations and tests were of the same level as those which all applicants for the AFP are expected to pass, in this case success allowed entrance to the AFP only after completion of tertiary studies at either of two Melbourne Centres of Advanced Education.

Eleven of the 15 applicants completed all tests successfully, and of these, three are now studying for Bachelor of Arts (Criminal Justice Administration) at Philip Institute of Technology, and the other eight are attending Chisholm Institute of Technology where they are studying for an Associate Diploma (Police Studies) or a Bachelor of Arts.

The 11 comprise a pilot group in the AFP's Undergraduate Sponsorship Program, which is expected to get under way fully next year. They recently paid their own way to Canberra where they spent nearly two weeks on work experience with the AFP.

Study at both institutes is full-time, however the Associate Diploma takes two years to complete compared with three years for the Bachelor of Arts course.

The Associate Diploma also is capable of being upgraded to Bachelor of Arts level after a further year's study.

Students' progress

The scheme will be of considerable benefit to the AFP in providing the opportunity to recruit new members with an education discipline that is relevant to work expectations and knowledge base.

AFP supervisors will have the chance to watch the students' progress to determine their suitability before they actually begin employment.

Eventually, it is hoped consideration will be given to determining which aspects of the tertiary study are dupli-

cated at the AFP training level, so the overall time span for current AFP training may be reduced.

The main benefit in the scheme for applicants is that after successful completion of tertiary study they are guaranteed a job in the AFP, provided medical and fitness criteria have been met.

Other direct benefits to the student are an undertaking by the AFP that it will provide work experience during semester breaks and an opportunity to take part in an investigative study in the AFP work environment, with the completion of study units oversighted by an AFP member.

Summer school

The possibility also exists that some form of AFP training will be provided in Summer Schools jointly by the AFP and the Tertiary institutes concerned.

It is a decided advantage for entrants to see at first hand, the workings of the organisation before actually commencing employment.

The AFP studies co-ordinator in Southern Region and the AFP Librarian will be available to the students to assist with material and information concerning units of study they elect to undertake.

Participants in the tertiary scheme are expected to remain in the State in which they undertook their studies before joining the AFP.

They may, however, transfer if they wish and if they are deemed suitable for an advertised vacancy.

The AFP currently has a representative on the Course Advisory Committee of both institutes and although not intending to directly influence either academic body, it does ensure that the material presented reflects the interests of the organisation. The representative in Southern Region is Superintendent John Silver.

Ultimately the scheme is expected to extend to other regions and involve other tertiary institutions.

Story by Keith Livingston.