



Blast from the past: September 1986

In the first instalment of a new series in *Platypus Magazine*, we take a look at excerpts of stories making AFP headlines 20 years ago.

Commissioner's Message

THE community policing function of the AFP is the lead topic in this issue of *Platypus*. The allocation of over 25 per cent of AFP resources to community policing is just one indication of the relative importance of this function. In this message I wish to discuss the measure of success of the AFP particularly as perceived by members of the Canberra community.

The term 'public safety' has been applied to the concept of measuring the success of a community police force.

The police officer of today works in a restless society beset with social problems and an ever changing pattern of crime. There are different standards now expected from a police officer to that required by the community five or ten years ago. He or she is called upon to perform a multitude of community services far removed from thief catching. Police business is people business.

The police officer of today spends a vast amount of time attending to incidents involving the public, where diplomacy and tact are required to maintain the peace and good order of the community. The police often come into personal contact with the public when they, the public, are frightened, threatening, abusive, desperate, violent or ashamed. The action taken by police under those circumstances markedly affects the dignity or self-respect of the members of the public involved, and influences their views of the role police play.

RESCUE RIFT SMOULDER

- Relations between the AFP and the A.C.T. Fire Brigade are at an all-time low following a Brigade move to expand its role to include responsibility for roadside rescues in the A.C.T. Here, Chief Superintendent ALAN BIRD, A.C.T. Regional Commander, puts the AFP's views on the matter.

RECENTLY the Independent Committee of Inquiry set up to inquire into the A.C.T. Fire Brigade issued a discussion paper recommending that the Brigade be given road rescue responsibilities in the A.C.T. Until the Brigade has sufficient trained staff and equipment, the AFP is to continue its present role.

TOP APPRENTICE

A 21-year-old OAFP communications trainee has been named as A.C.T. Apprentice of the Year for radio mechanics.

He is Bob Rose, who is based at the Electronics Services Section at Weston.

Bob also has been nominated for a national apprenticeship award.

His success has focussed attention on a little-known area of AFP operations — the communications technical services area which has the job of installing, maintaining and developing radio communications throughout the force.



• Bob Rose... nominated for national award.

GOOD SPORTS

SEVEN-DAY-A-WEEK shifts are not conducive to participation in sporting activities. But despite the restrictions imposed by their work, many AFP members manage to 'turn out' quite regularly to enjoy their game and play a part in community sporting activities.

Some choose to play in local teams. Others are members of police sporting clubs that either take part in local competitions or conduct individual activities for the benefit of members.

In many cases, local charities receive financial assistance as a result.

Probably the oldest sporting group in the AFP is the A.C.T. Region's Golf Club. Established in 1962 by three members of the former A.C.T. Police, Ron Dillon, Tim Cooper and Don Le Lievre, it now has a membership of about 80.

The club's first tournament was held in 1962 as a nine-hole competition, won by Tom Cooper with Rod Ridgeway runner-up.

THE PEOPLE versus CRIME

• By R.J. CAHILL, Chief Magistrate of the A.C.T.

THE Australian community in the past has laboured under a false ideology that it was not the people's role to assist police; rather, that crimes were committed against authority, not against society. Although a misguided ideology, it permeated community perception of the role of the police in the prevention and detection of crime. Consequently, while police in Australia acknowledged the fact that community support was necessary, they did not seek it, nor did the public accept that the police force was the community.

Snapshot 1986

The police staffing level was around 2570, with 520 staff members.

The aim of the AFP was set down in the Government's *Charter of Objectives and Priorities*, and was to "detect and prosecute the principal offenders involved in drug importations and trafficking".

Significant operations included:

The late-1986 arrest of five people after the seizure of 3kg of heroin.

The first Australian seizure of cocaine base in late 1986. The seizure was feared to be the first of many from the Americas although no further seizures occurred that year.

A major Customs operation in London led to the arrest of syndicate members with links to Sydney.

Investigation of fraud against the Commonwealth was coordinated by the Fraud and General Crime Division. Some major investigations included the theft and fraudulent receiving of unused stamps belonging to Australia Post valued at more than \$600,000; and a taxation scheme involving \$2 million.

The Organised Crime Branch conducted a 12 month investigation from March 1986, leading to the arrest of five people who were charged with importing 5kg of high quality heroin.

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