

AFP Former Members Network gains pace

A December mail-out resulted in a surge of interest in the AFP Former Members' Network, according to the project's coordinator Terry Browne of Recognition and Ceremonial.

Just before Christmas, Mr Browne sought information from former and current members of the AFP in the first phase of a campaign to promote the new Network.

"I returned from leave to a stack of envelopes and emails from the people I had contacted," Mr Browne said.

The Network is being set up to provide two-way communication between the AFP and former members. The aim is to include as many former sworn and unsworn members as possible.

"Members of the organisations that led to the AFP's creation are also very welcome to contact us too," Mr Browne said.

The idea for the network grew from a couple of unrelated sources. While Recognition and Ceremonial was contemplating how to get a former members' group started, Federal Agent Phil Hunter was developing a plan for starting a similar group as a major project for the Team Leader Development Course 1/2006.

A number of retired officers had also identified the need for former members to keep in contact, and once the threads were connected, the idea kicked off late in 2006. Retired Assistant Commissioner Denis McDermott volunteered to chair a working party to create the Network.

Former members, including Ian Broomby, Derek Sharp, Barry Boyce, Peter McDonald, Max Bradley, Alan Jones, Graeme Keed,



Above: former AFP members Derek Sharp, Ian Broomby, Allan Jones and the liaison officer for the Network, Terry Browne.

Photo: Terry Browne

and Peter McEwan, came forward to join the working party with administrative support provided by Recognition and Ceremonial.

Since then, the group has been working through a range of issues related to supporting the social, professional and welfare needs of former members.

In early 2007, Denis McDermott and Ian Broomby met Commissioner Mick Keelty to provide a progress briefing on the Network. In a surprising outcome for Mr McDermott, the Commissioner asked him to come out of retirement and command the Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands, an offer which he accepted.

Mr Browne said this was a classic example of how former members and their talents were drawn on from time to time to assist the AFP.

Mr Broomby, now Chair of the working group, said that the idea of a network was gaining momentum, especially with the AFP approaching its 30th anniversary in October 2009,

"There are people close to retirement whose entire policing career has been

with the AFP and who wish to maintain a relationship when they leave," Mr Broomby said.

"As a model for the Network we are looking at the best aspects of similar organisations that have sprung from other police services. However, before we institute formal policies and procedures we need to assemble a list of those interested in being part of the Network – that's why we are putting the word out.

"In the absence of a specific AFP network, many former members have joined State police groups or have created their own informal groups. I think we can do better than that – the AFP now has its own heritage."

Direct mail-outs to former members will continue as addresses are confirmed. But as Mr Browne explained there is no need to wait. Enquiries about the network are welcome at:

Former-Members@afp.gov.au,
by post:

AFP Former Members' Network
Recognition and Ceremonial
PO Box 401

Canberra ACT 2601

or contact Mr Browne on 02 6293 7861