

# Protecting our interests

## In Commonwealth-owned buildings or at large public events, the AFP Protection portfolio provides dedicated teams of professional, highly-trained men and women to keep these areas safe.

Protection has been an essential function of the AFP since the organisation was formed in 1979. From the beginning, the AFP has had responsibility for protecting Australia's high profile people and places. It has provided personal protection to every Australian prime minister, to members of Parliament and to visiting dignitaries from overseas.

The AFP has also had responsibility for guarding premises ranging from the Governor-General's residences in Canberra and Sydney to strategic Defence installations. Some of these establishments are in remote areas of Australia, such as the Defence facilities at Geraldton in Western Australia, and Pine Gap in the Northern Territory.

National Manager Protection Leanne Close recently visited all of the remote Protection stations and sites and was impressed by the dedication, enthusiasm and professionalism of the Protection teams.

"Living and working in such small country towns means that the AFP has a big impact on the community," Assistant Commissioner Close said.

"It is pleasing to see the interaction and respect that our officers have within their respective communities."

The positive relationships developed by AFP members are an important part of their contribution to the community. They interact with the

community in sporting events, career expos and in local shows, and promote the AFP whenever possible at these events.

They also participate in charity fund-raising events, sometimes in challenging conditions. Members from Pine Gap recently participated in the annual Henley on Todd charity boat race in Alice Springs, and were victorious although slightly sunburned after a 36-degree August day.

In 1984 the federal government made a decision to separate the guarding of establishments from the AFP, and the Australian Protective Service (APS) was created under the Department of Administration Services to take over this role.



// The Protection portfolio, which incorporates the Uniformed Protection, Witness Protection and Close Personal Protection functions, is now a major part of AFP business. //



**01:** Protective Service Officers during World Youth Day in Sydney **02:** Winners at the Henley on Todd charity boat race in Alice Springs **03:** Protective Service Officers search the cargo hold of a plane at Sydney Airport **04:** Superintendent Don Crotty

Acting Manager Operations Protection Don Crotty recalls when the APS was brought back into the AFP.

“After the September 11 terrorist attacks in the US in 2001, the APS was incorporated into the AFP in 2002 as a counter-terrorism measure, and was fully integrated back into the AFP in July 2004,” Superintendent Crotty said.

“Since then, with improved training and equipment, Uniform Protection has evolved into a professional, well-run and sought-after resource.”

The Protection portfolio, which incorporates the Uniformed Protection, Witness Protection and Close Personal Protection functions, is now a major part of AFP business. It provides protection for Commonwealth assets, critical infrastructure, diplomatic missions

and high office holders. Close personal protection is provided to high office holders and their families and to visiting dignitaries. Witness Protection safeguards witnesses who may be at risk because of giving evidence or otherwise helping police with inquiries into criminal matters.

Protection also provides personnel to support peacekeeping missions overseas. Fifty members are deployed to the Solomon Islands, five to Jakarta and one to Papua New Guinea.

The security of major events such as the 2000 Sydney Olympics, the 2006 Melbourne Commonwealth Games, Papal visits and APEC is another important role carried out by the portfolio. Protection personnel work collaboratively with other areas of the AFP and other State and Territory police forces to undertake significant planning and provide counter-terrorism capabilities to ensure the safety of dignitaries and the public at these events.

The threat of terrorism has increased significantly since the AFP was formed following the bombing of the Hilton Hotel in Sydney in 1978. This has reinforced the continuing vital need for the AFP to protect Australian people and places now and into the future.

One key new project for the AFP is the provision of uniformed protection at the new operational headquarters of the Australian Defence Force, Headquarters Joint Operations Command (HQJOC), from November 2009. The high-technology HQJOC is located between Queanbeyan and Bungendore in rural NSW, and became operational earlier this year.

The AFP will provide armed protective security at HQJOC, including bomb appraisal officers, and firearms and explosives detection dogs. A private security company will be responsible for access control, bag searches, detection patrols and closed-circuit television monitoring, with AFP support as required.

As well as this highly visible protective service role, AFP Protection also provides significant support for public order management during demonstrations at the places they protect, such as Parliament House.

The AFP’s Protection portfolio has an ongoing commitment to protect the lives and property of Australians from criminal activity, including terrorism. Its ability to respond to incidents rapidly and the high level of expertise demonstrated by Protection members has firmly cemented its future in Australian law enforcement.

