

Celebrating community relations



From fund-raisers to football games, AFP staff around Australia engage with their local communities in many ways.

On 30 October, Cairns International Airport was transformed into a sea of pink for the annual 'Girls Night In', a nationally recognised event to raise money and awareness for breast cancer research. Around 500 Cairns women arrived at the airport for a fun night of raffles, auctions and fashion parades. The event was a joint initiative of the AFP, Cairns Airports Pty Ltd, Qantas, Australian Customs and Border Protection and the Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service.

Male colleagues from the AFP Cairns Office and Cairns Airport showed their support by joining the girls and modelling in a fashion parade and also by volunteering as waiters and cleaners for the night. The men left their uniforms and business suits at home, exchanging them for bright pink Cancer Council shirts for the occasion.

The night was an outstanding success, as well as a valuable networking opportunity for Cairns businesswomen, with representatives from the AFP, Cairns Airport, government agencies and private enterprise all coming together for a common purpose. Prizes were donated by airlines and Cairns businesses and the event raised \$18,500 for the Cancer Council.

Down in Tasmania, AFP members were celebrating their relationships with the community of law enforcement when members from the Hobart Office and the Hobart International Airport joined forces with their colleagues from Tasmania Police and other agencies to celebrate the AFP's 30th Anniversary.

To mark three decades of law enforcement, the AFP hosted a barbecue with key stakeholders,

former members and members of Tasmania Police as their guests in the courtyard garden of AFP Hobart Airport office. Acting Commissioner of Tasmania Police Darren Hine attended the barbecue to show unity between the two police forces and was pleased to be invited to cut the anniversary cake.

Officer in Charge of Hobart Airport Uniform Policing Ken Fletcher welcomed the guests to the event and reminded those in attendance of the importance of collaboration among police, government agencies and the private sector.

"The AFP at Hobart Office and Hobart Airport have a very good working relationship with all the stakeholders here today," Sergeant Fletcher said.

"The level of cooperation between Tasmania Police and the AFP is, in my opinion, one of if not the best between police forces in Australia."

In Alice Springs, AFP members enjoy some of the more unusual sporting events on the Australian calendar. Sailing races on a dry river bed, camel races and ten-pin bowling are among the events AFP members and their families have taken part in.

The Camel Cup is a charity event to raise money for the Lions Club and relies on volunteers and the generosity of local camel owners to provide the camels. These camel races start with the camels in the seated position and riders have to maintain a good grip as the camels lurch to their feet and start moving, some moving to a full gallop in a few strides. The jockeys could do little with camels that walked or refused to race. Five thousand spectators created an enthusiastic atmosphere for the event, which also included novelty races for children.

Alice Springs Airport Police Commander Tony Stafford rode in four of the nine camel races. He hopes that more AFP members will participate next year, and is keen to promote the advantages of the lifestyle and community engagement in remote locations.

"Working in remote environments offers many opportunities, both professionally and socially," Superintendent Stafford said.

The AFP's 30th anniversary provided an opportunity for several AFP offices to open up to their communities. In Canberra, the AFP opened its International Training Complex at Majura to the public for the first time. A crowd of around 15,000 took advantage of a perfect spring day to enjoy the displays, meet police and their canine detectives and enjoy activities such as making police badges and having their fingerprints taken.

The AFP Pipes and Drums gave those attending the event a rousing welcome, and the AFP horses were also a popular attraction as they mingled with the crowd.

ACT Policing put on a huge display of vehicles and boats, including patrol cars, all-terrain vehicles, motorcycles, a police launch and a





01: The crowd waiting to see the precision motorcycle team at the AFP open day **02:** Tasmania Police Commissioner Darren Hine **03:** The barbecue at Hobart Office **04:** The Camel Cup in Alice Springs **05:** Federal Agent Michael Holmesby **06:** Cairns Airport transformed into a sea of pink for the Girls Night In charity event **07:** Sergeant Murray Ferguson

rigid hull inflatable boat. Children and adults alike had a great time inspecting the vehicles and turning on the lights and sirens. ACT Policing's motorcycle team members showed off their skills in a precision riding display.

The AFP Operational Response Group had the crowd enthralled with its helicopter fast-roping displays. Four members rappelled rapidly from the helicopter to the ground from a height of around 36 metres, and then discharged flash-bang grenades and smoke bombs at a safe distance from the crowd.

Large marquees housed displays from all areas of the AFP, from Recruitment to High Tech Crime. Visitors left at the end of the day with showbags crammed full of information.

AFP state and regional offices also held a variety of 30th anniversary events and invited present and past AFP members to help celebrate the milestone. Brisbane Office held a happy-hour reunion event, Perth Office and Sydney Airport AFP members both held functions with key stakeholders as special guests, and Melbourne Office hosted a family day.

AFP Sydney and Melbourne Offices take part in many events in their local communities throughout the year. For example, Sydney Office runs a trivia night as its signature charity event, which this year raised \$17000 for St Vincent's Hospital Renal and Oncology Units.

The AFP hosts Iftar dinners in both Sydney and Melbourne each year to celebrate the breaking of the fast during the Islamic month of Ramadan. The Sydney Office Iftar was awarded the Australian Muslim Association Achievement Award 2009 under the category 'Event of the Year'.

Manager Sydney Office David Stewart said the Community Liaison team's work for events such as the Harmony Cup, the Harris Park Community Cricket Day and the Haldon Street festival were highlights of a busy calendar.

"The opportunity to engage communities on a variety of levels through community liaison projects like these enrich the AFP's appreciation of the cultural diversity that exists in Sydney and its surrounding regions," Commander Stewart said.

"The award Sydney Office received from the Muslim community is evidence that law enforcement is respected and appreciated by the diverse Muslim community."

The AFP/Essendon Football Club Unity Cup Family Day is a big event which the Melbourne Office has been helping to run for the past two years. In football-mad Melbourne, competition for the Cup is hard-fought, but when participants are taking a break they can chat with AFP members about the organisation, its activities and as a career option for people from all backgrounds.

Manager Melbourne Office Alan Scott said the Unity Cup event helps to reinforce the relationship between the community and the AFP.

"This event is about fostering a mutual understanding and respect, and demonstrating the positive ways police and culturally diverse communities are working together," Commander Scott said.

No matter where they are based, AFP members are keen to be involved with their local communities, both inside and outside the law enforcement profession.

