

TASK COMPLETED

by Mr John Johnson,
Assistant Commissioner (Personnel)

The Task Force on the Australian Federal Police completed its work on August 31, 1979. The Task Force was a tool of Government set up to give effect to the Government's in-principle decision, made on July 10, 1978, to create a single Federal Police Force incorporating the existing A.C.T. and Commonwealth Police Forces.

The establishment of the Task Force was the last in the chain of events commencing with a letter from Mr P. J. Lawler, OBE, Secretary of the Department of Administrative Service, on behalf of the Government, to Sir Robert Mark, GBR, QPM, setting out the terms of reference for Sir Robert's inquiry into the organisation of police resources in the Commonwealth area and other related matters. Sir Robert's report was tabled in the Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia by the Minister for Administrative Services on April 13, 1978.

Following the tabling of the report in Parliament, the Government established an Inter-Departmental Committee (IDC), chaired by Mr Lawler, and including Commissioners Kennedy and Davis as well as representatives of other Government Departments and agencies with a direct interest in the provision of police services in the Commonwealth area. The main task of the IDC in the first instance was to advise the Government on the matters included in Sir Robert Mark's report so that an early in-principle decision could be made by the Government on the creation of the Australian Federal Police. The advice tendered to the Government by the IDC after detailed study of the Mark Report resulted in the announcement in Canberra on July 28, 1978, by the Minister for Administrative Services, Senator the Rt Hon. R. G. Withers and the Minister for the Capital Territory, the Hon. R. G. Ellicott, that an in-principle decision had been made to accept the major recommendations of the Mark Report and create the Australian Federal Police.

The Inter-Departmental Committee was then given the responsibility by the Government to put into effect the decision to create the new organisation, including preparation of drafting instructions for Parliamentary Council for the production of a Bill to be presented to the Parliament as expeditiously as possible.

The Inter-Departmental Committee, in order to give effect to the Government's wishes, formed the Task Force on the Australian Federal Police to work on a full-time basis under the chairmanship of Mr G. B. Halliday, a Senior Assistant Secretary in the Attorney-General's Department, with senior representatives of the two Police Forces, the Department of Administrative Services, the Department of the Capital Territory, the Public Service Board, the Department of Industrial Relations and other

Government Departments and agencies as required. The major work of the Task Force being the development of drafting instructions for the Police Bill.

During the initial stages of the work of the Task Force, consultative Working Groups were established, in many cases involving representatives of the Police Associations, to assist in the development of policies that were to be later promulgated in the Police Bill. The work of the Task Force in respect to the Bill was completed when the Act received Royal Assent on June 15, 1979.

While the principal responsibility of the Task Force was the preparation of drafting instructions for legislation, the Task Force also developed options for the Commissioner in respect to the organisation and development of personnel and other related matters. The Task Force documents in respect to these matters were referred to the Commissioner on his appointment in September this year.

Following the passing of the Australian Federal Police Bill into law in June 1979, the Task Force moved to its next most important mission — the preparation of drafting instructions for the Regulations to the Act. The drafting instructions were completed before the Task Force completed its work on August 31, 1979.

From the outset, it was the requirement of the IDC that the Task Force involve itself entirely in the development of the draft legislation for the Government, taking into account broad Government policy in respect to law enforcement and other related matters and to not in any way involve itself in the making of managerial decisions in respect to the AFP or to develop managerial philosophies, both of which would be the responsibility of the Commissioner of Police when appointed following the passing of the necessary legislation.

WHO'S WHO IN A.F.P.

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In 1978, he was appointed Acting Commissioner (Crime Intelligence) prior to being seconded to the AFP Task Force, then to the AFP Planning Staff in September 1979.

Mr Farmer was awarded the Queen's Police Medal in 1977 and holds the Police Long Service and Good Conduct Medal.

Mr Farmer is a Fellow of the Australian Institute of Management and was a Consultant to the Australian Law Reform Commission on Criminal Investigation Bill.

Married with three daughters, Mr Farmer is a gardening enthusiast and an ardent follower of the Sydney Rugby League competition.