



**"The institutional relationship between the Command and the Association is of a high order and industrial relations are good." — Disc International Pty Ltd., consultants, Final Report February 1986.**

**T**HE Australian Federal Police has achieved a new first in the growing area of industrial democracy by establishing its own Industrial Relations Division.

It is the first police force in Australia to create a dedicated IR unit responsible directly to the Commissioner.

The establishment of the new Division was the idea of Commissioner Ronald Grey, who gave his final approval last December after months of background work and appointed Consultants Disc International Pty Ltd.

The decision to set up the Division places the responsibility for industrial relations with the AFP, the organisation that has the most to gain and lose from relationships in the workplace.

The new Division comprises police and public servants and will handle both police and Public Service industrial matters. It is headed by Chief Superintendent Ian Broomby, with a staff of five Office of the AFP personnel. An inspector is to be appointed shortly to provide an added police personnel and management perspective.

The new arrangement brings the AFP into line with established practices in both the Commonwealth and the private sectors.

In setting up the Industrial Relations Division, the Commissioner said he recognised that high quality industrial relations were vital for interpersonal relationships within the AFP.

Effective communication between parties was ensured during early work on the new Division with the inclusion of the Australian Federal Police Association on an executive level industrial democracy steering committee.

Before the establishment of the new group, AFP industrial relations matters were handled by the Department of the Special Minister of State, which provided advice to the Government on behalf of the AFP and represented the Government before the Police Arbitral Tribunal. Advice was sought by DOSMOS both from the AFP and the Department of Employment and Industrial Relations on operational and Government wages policies. This meant that, unlike in the case of most other Commonwealth authorities, what could be described as the management party was spread across several organisations. The arrangement did not always contribute to

## AFP's UNIT SHOWS THE WAY

speedy resolution of disputed matters or harmonious industrial relations.

The installation of the industrial relations function within the AFP provides for a more effective industrial relationship, and the encouragement of better management of financial and human resources, as set down in recent Public Service reform initiatives.

The IR Division faces a big task in completing the groundwork to fulfil its function as set down by the Commissioner.

Its major responsibility is the development and subsequent administration of appropriate industrial relations and democracy procedures and consultative processes within the AFP.

It also looks after the administration of disputes avoidance procedures, undertakes negotiations with representatives of staff associations and co-ordinating authorities, and provides the advocates to represent the Government before the Federal Police Arbitral Tribunal.

The new Division's head briefs the Commissioner on industrial relations aspects and provides information and advice on such matters for the AFP generally.

The Division will also develop effective communication lines on industrial matters and provide lecturers or assistance in training staff in industrial relations.

In its information and liaison role, the Division will research, collect, collate and disseminate information on industrial relations and will develop and maintain liaison with industrial relations units of other police forces, staff associations and official bodies in the industrial relations field.

Chief Superintendent Broomby said the Division would provide a focal point for all communication between the associations and the AFP on industrial matters.

"Speedy and effective access to the Commissioner is vital, as

it is his views and policies that must be presented to the associations," he said.

"The Division has sole responsibility for negotiation with the associations on all working conditions and to help maintain consistency in the application or review of terms and conditions of employment. This responsibility will require close liaison with other areas within the AFP."

He said that since its formation, the Division had been very active in initiating consultation on a number of industrial and personnel management issues.

"The Division, in consultation with our staff associations, has, I believe, made significant progress towards providing the AFP with an effective and harmonious working environment," he added.

One of the first tasks that staff of the new Division faced was the negotiation of a new Determination T3, in consultation with the AFPA. The previous determination, which relates to working conditions, expired on 2 May. The new determination was placed before Mr Justice Coldham the same day.

All areas of the AFP have now been briefed on all aspects of its application.

New areas covered by it include adoption and parenting leave; new rest period provisions; close call allowance; call back, instead of emergency, duty; and option for payment of plain clothes allowance six monthly or fortnightly.

Key projects that the Division is currently working on include:

#### **Superannuation**

A joint working party, formed by agreement between the Minister responsible for the AFP, Mr Mick Young, and the Minister for Finance, Senator Walsh, and consisting of representatives of the Departments of Finance and Special Minister of State, the AFP and the AFPA, has been established to examine and report on adequacy or otherwise of the current Commonwealth Superannuation Scheme. The Commissioner and the AFPA agree that the present scheme is inadequate for AFP members.

Considerable research has been completed, including an examination of some overseas police superannuation arrangements. The working party expects to report to the Ministers in July.

#### **Industrial Democracy**

The Commissioner received the final report of the consultants Disc International Pty Ltd in February. The report has been extensively circulated throughout the AFP and to staff associations for information and comment.

## **DEIR GIVES ITS BACKING**

**T**HE Commissioner's decision to create an Industrial Relations function within the AFP has been endorsed by the Department of Employment and Industrial Relations, the Government's guiding department on such matters.

The Department considers that the move by the AFP provides for a potentially more effective industrial relationship.

A spokesman for DEIR said the Department played an important role in AFP industrial relations through the administration of the Government's industrial relations co-ordination arrangements.

The basic purpose of these arrangements was to ensure that Australian Government departments and authorities acted in a manner consistent with Government policies. The arrangements were initiated by the Chifley Government in the 1940s and had been re-endorsed by successive Governments since then.



• Chief Superintendent  
Ian Broomby

The Division is consulting with interested parties on options available to the Commissioner for the implementation of industrial democracy practices within the AFP.

#### **Occupational Health and Safety**

The Division is currently preparing advice to the Commissioner on how imminent Commonwealth Government legislation on occupational health and safety may affect the AFP. Advice has been sought from a wide range of AFP and OAFP personnel to help in formulating an AFP policy in the light of the impending legislation.

The proposed Commonwealth legislation is likely to be similar to existing State legislation in New South Wales and Victoria. Objectives are the reasonable care of all workers, including office staff, through the provision of a safe and healthy working environment.

Chief Superintendent Broomby said the Division had been able to gain the services of two very experienced industrial officers, Mr Mike Garrett, who is Executive Officer, and Mr Bob Bashfield, Industrial Officer.

Mr Garrett was formerly with the Industrial Relations (Commonwealth Employment) Division of DEIR and had at one time been a union official with two major unions.

Mr Bashfield was with Mr Young's Department and transferred with the industrial relations policy function to the AFP. He had been involved in AFP industrial issues for the past three years and had represented the Minister before the Federal Police Arbitral Tribunal.

They join Russell Carey and Lorraine Trivett in the Division.

Chief Superintendent Broomby said that the process of developing and consolidating the Division's role and function would take some little time but the results should place the AFP in the forefront of police industrial relations, both in Australia and overseas.

In practice, these arrangements placed certain obligations upon Commonwealth statutory authorities, such as the AFP, to consult with, and be guided by, the advice of the Department on industrial relations matters.

The arrangements were designed to achieve an effective balance between the management autonomy of authorities and the requirements that Government policy be adhered to and applied in a cohesive manner. They were not intended to intrude unnecessarily into the detail of the conduct of industrial relations by the management of authorities.

The spokesman said the AFP had been subject to the industrial relations co-ordination arrangements since its inception, when consultation was then between the Department of the Special Minister of State and the AFP, and between DOSMOS and DEIR.