

# Commissioner's Message



I believe it is worth, as a follow-up to my views expressed in the last issue of 'Platypus' and which have drawn much comment, including direct criticism from some long retired ex-members, to share some further views with all members:

## On Drugs

To win we need more powers and particularly harsher sentences. Drugs tear away the stable values of society... if we continue the drug use or abuse in society, one fears for the Australians of the 21st Century, especially for young people. It is less than 15 years away. Inherent in the world of drugs are other violent crimes — assault and robbery, even murder. While humanity is full of greed for money and power, supply and demand will always end up in a balance — no matter how successful we are at stopping importations and charging traffickers. I applaud the recent sentence in NSW of 24 years gaol for heroin offences of a senior customs officer occupying a position of responsibility and privilege. It would be good for society if we could expect that he would literally serve that sentence.

## On the South Pacific

The South Pacific is an area that deserves our interest; in policing matters we have, for too long, almost ignored it. Some parts have already drawn the attention of organised crime — as transit areas and places for international money laundering. Criminals are always on the lookout for 'new' places from, and through which, to operate. We are in a position to help the South Pacific in policing matters by expertise, training programs and material, and in some areas by accepting a co-ordinating role. The time of complacency is past. Australian policing, given resources (reasonable, not vast by any means), can give a firm and effective lead, but it will be at a cost. If we do not, others will fill the void with what could turn out to be radical solutions.

## Our Role

Police have a special role in society — to defend and enforce the rules and laws

that make ordered, peaceful, decent living possible. But as Lord Scarman said at Bramshill in 1987:

*'There is a strict limitation upon the range of problems capable of solution by police action. If society has fallen apart the police cannot be expected to put it together again, or even perhaps to preserve public order. That needs all the King's men.'*

## Our War

I have previously stated, and regardless of the passage of time, I still believe that there is no external threat to Australia which I can identify, or indeed anyone else can to my satisfaction when discussing such matters. That is, of course, not to say that this country should dismantle its defences. The shocking legacies of unpreparedness in the 1930s should remain as a constant lesson. But we do have a war 24 hours a day, seven days a week in the cities, and in the towns and in the countryside of Australia — a war carried out by criminals who deliberately erode our rights, who rob and steal and assault, and degrade our children with heroin and cocaine; who disrupt our economy by massive white collar crime; who have no compunction at all in living and working outside the law. This is the war we have now. This is the war we should be fighting now with full resources and the backing of our Government and the people. I am, though, aware that a number of our eminent theoretical 'criminologists', whatever they really are, disagree with this view. I am reassured by the fact that an equal number of our crime journalists tend to agree with me. I certainly view them as being much closer to reality and aware of the actual workings of the criminal world.

## On Criminologists

We are increasingly told of our shortcomings and of defects in law enforcement by persons called 'criminologists'. They appear to be self-seeking researchers of a sort without responsibility for their unsolicited advice or an awareness of simple 'accountability'. They are helped by parts of the media through such statements as:

'A violent crime expert believes...' or 'A leading criminologist calls for...' and the issue of press releases by these 'criminologists' in a manner similar to politicians, including 'for further information contact... etc.'. The day of careful checking of facts and truth seems a thing of the journalistic high standards of the past. Those at the coal face — i.e. those dedicated police officers, both State and Federal, dealing with crime — have a much better understanding of the real problems. It is their views which should carry more weight.

Statistics appear to be used extensively by these 'criminologists'. They use statistics as drunks use lamp posts — for support rather than illumination — and the source of their statistics is often without validation.

## On Police Co-operation

I believe it is really starting to work. The co-operation is efficient and helpful, particularly from my viewpoint as Commissioner. The Commissioners of Police, usually meeting several times in any one year, do so in an atmosphere of both shared and similar problems, mutual respect and comradeship. I have learned much from my fellow Commissioners and have been grateful for it. It is of interest that during my tenure of five years, three state Commissioners have changed, and at least three more will retire by early 1988.

## On the Relationship AFP-AFPA

The single most important condition for Association—Management co-operation is *trust*. It is probably fair to say that organisations get the kind of union they deserve. By this, I mean arrogant, secretive, and devious senior executives get combative, conspiratorial and rigid union activity. Effective passage of information — that is, two-way communication and shared goals — is part of the answer. I respect the role and participation of the AFPA and even enjoy the inevitable interplay of industrial relations and connected matters — perhaps strange for one bred in what is seen as a rigid, authoritarian structure, but I be-

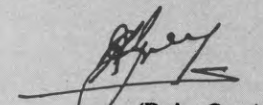
lieve our aims coincide: The efficiency of the AFP in its roles and functions, its progress and the welfare and advancement of the members. Conflict should be minimised.

#### **On Policing at Airports**

Security at airports must be increased. The travelling public deserves to move freely without fear, but there is a price and that is some lack of freedom — armed guards, searches, and a certain invasion of privacy. Perhaps occasionally a mistake will occur, in that a tip-off turns out to be either wrong or malicious; those 'wronged' by detailed search will seldom accept this — even in the interests of the greater common good. We need two types of policing at our major airports: One, essentially community policing, more or less as we see it now, at both domestic and international terminals, including Portswatch intelligence operations; and two, a more specifically trained group for the quick/immediate containment of violence if it happens. In essence, the 'terrorist acts' often 'blown up' by the public and especially the media are, when perpetrated, just violent criminal acts carried out by thugs and murderers and should be dealt with as such, with the full force of the available law. It must be remembered that adequate policing in both areas is expensive, and no amount of security can make an airport or anything else totally secure. The would-be-martyr for a cause and the madman make any country vulnerable. We can and must do better, we must by strength and presence deter these criminals from attempting their games in Australia. In this area more resources and specialised equipment are needed; the existing capability is a bare minimum for a low level threat. The cost is great but must be measured against the possible consequences of terrorist incidents. I have said this often to Government, including in my last three annual reports.

#### **What we need**

Resources. This country will, in the ultimate, get the kind of policing it is prepared to pay for! That is not to say that increases in numbers and injections of money alone will raise capabilities, but it is a healthy way to start. If we want a force capable of dealing with late 20th Century crime, and that of the 21st Century, we need to redress the balance. It simply is going to cost us. The lessening of crime in Australia requires the best efforts of us all, if this country is to be worthwhile for generations yet to come. If we don't grasp this, we fail the future.



(R.A. Grey)  
**Commissioner of Police**

## THE AFP LOOKS AHEAD

**F**OR the first time in the Australian Federal Police's eight year history, a complete review of all ranks will be made as part of the Career Structure Review. The Joint Management Review of 1984 did examine the organisational structure and classifications within the existing ranks of the AFP.

The Career Structure Review (CSR) will look at all AFP ranks to see whether they are appropriate and re-evaluate their classification if necessary.

The Review is being undertaken with full co-operation and support of the Australian Federal Police Association.

It is expected that the Review's inquiries will be complete by mid-December this year and a report completed by early next year. The Commissioner has agreed to the Review being conducted on a joint AFP/AFPPA basis. A steering committee has been appointed made up of Deputy Commissioner John Johnson as Chairman, Assistant Commissioner Ian Broomby, Assistant Commissioner Brian Bates, Chief Superintendent Alex Bunt, Assistant Secretary Mr Bob Mills and the National Secretary of the AFPPA, Mr Chris Eaton.

All members of the AFP will receive a brochure explaining the CSR, why it is being carried out and how they can help. It is proposed that a sample of 10 per cent of the police officers of the AFP will be approached to fill out a questionnaire. Of that approximately 300 officers, 30 per cent or about 100 officers will be interviewed. This will be done by the working Party headed by Superintendent Rod Leffers of Strategic Planning Division, assisted by Mr Mike Garrett of the Industrial Relations Division and Mr Graham Cutler of the Establishments Section.

In another attempt to help members understand what the Review is about, a video was filmed at the AFP Services Centre of an interview with Deputy Commissioner Johnson, Superintendent Leffers and Mr Chris Eaton on October 21. This video will be available to all members.

Deputy Commissioner Johnson said the review was not being done merely for the sake of change but because modern management demanded regular examinations and this would provide a structure which could extend into the new century. The AFP needed to look at itself from time to time and this was one of those times. He appreciated that in the past, some changes had occurred without much explanation. On this occasion, the AFP Management and the AFPPA were trying very hard to explain what was going on. Mr Eaton said there had not been significant changes to ranks in the AFP since amalgamation, and this was now appropriate and had, in fact, been requested by members.

Mr Eaton said many members had approached the AFPPA and felt that they were under-ranked for their job. The Review had developed further than that into a look into the future. The AFPPA was an integral part of the Review. Although he would not be part of the Working Party, he felt that every member involved, all of whom were AFPPA