

POLICE LIFE

ASSISTANT Commissioner Brian Bates (Personnel & Training) did not pull any punches in his speech to one of the latest passing out parade of cadets in Canberra.

'Those of you taking up duties in Sydney and Melbourne will be very much part of the AFP's efforts to combat organised crime,' he said.

'You will be part of the force's role to respond positively and directly to counter growing breaches of Commonwealth law.

'I am referring especially to the threat of major criminal activity against the Commonwealth, with particular emphasis on illicit drug imports, organised crime and major fraud.'

He told the four women and 13 men who graduated from the College at Weston on September 3 that revelations by a number of royal commissions and judicial inquiries in recent years had made Australians aware of the insidiousness of organised crime in their country.

'But it would be a mistake to assume that organised crime is a recent development. It has always been with us... but has not been exposed before.

'Syndicates of criminals specialising in armed robberies, and major burglaries, bring organised criminal violence direct to the public.

'Corporate criminals organise their depredations secretly and successfully.

'Taxation and other major frauds have emerged as one of the most successful ways of beating the system.

'Of course the drug trade has provided the most dramatic and sordid illustration of the ruthlessness of organised crime in contemporary society.'

'Organised crime is a growth industry in the community. Characteristically, it is syndicated, systematic, sophisticated, secret and successful,' Mr. Bates said.

And he made it clear the 17 new officers on the parade ground would soon be in the thick of it: 'Because of the nature of police work, some of the AFP's most junior and inexperienced people are introduced into some of our most sensitive and difficult areas of operation.

'Consequently, the quality of your performance is critical to the attainment of organisational goals.'

He also stressed the importance of the work to be done by those of the new group of officers who remained in Canberra, saying they would be fully involved in the traditional policing role and providing protection to the public 24 hours a day, seven days a week, all year round.

'Community involvement policing has emerged as a most important dimension of policing in contemporary society.

'The ACT region of the AFP has developed numerous community policing initiatives. Neighbourhood Watch, Safety Education, and Juvenile Aid are just a few of them,' he said.

The dux of the class was Constable Grant Murphy, 31, from the 'Woodside' property at Yerong Creek near Wagga Wagga, NSW.

Constable Murphy, who has an honours degree from Latrobe University, has been posted to Melbourne.

Another 19 cadets — four of them women — graduated on September 17.

The training college commander, Superintendent Kevin Harley, told them the AFP's irrepressible esprit de corps was the envy of other organisations.

'Your career in the force will be a great adventure,' he said.

Superintendent Harley told the graduates they were the product of a most effective national recruiting programme and a highly efficient training programme.

'You are now part of the police family with all the close knit bonds that entails.'

He went on to tell the AFP's new recruits that they were joining the fight against the 'ever present criminal challenge'.

'Your training so far is just the tip of the iceberg.

'You could become designated detectives while still junior constables. You are now part of the most professional police force in Australia... a force which is well respected nationally and internationally.

'The public has a right to demand excellence in your performance.'

Superintendent Harley also had a few words of warning for the cadets: 'You will be exposed to great temptation to neglect your duty; you may have to make split second decisions which will be challenged by the best legal brains in the country; you will venture into the most dangerous of police duties when you intervene in domestic disputes.'

And he had this definition of their police work: 'At times it's dangerous, it's constantly demanding, continually frustrating, occasionally boring, but forever rewarding.'

A New Zealand born accountant was the dux of the September 17 graduation.

Constable Jan Kavanagh, 27, formerly worked for a construction company in Sydney.

The dux of graduation 1023 has lived in Australia for five years.

Why the AFP as a career?

'I have several good friends in the AFP and the more I talked to them, the more I liked it,' she said.

Jan is going to work in Eastern Command in Sydney.

'General crime and plainclothes work interests me. I want to get involved in the investigative side, particularly the fight against organised crime'.

What about the 13 week course at the Training College?

'I had high expectations then I went there,' but it was better than I thought it would be.

'Our course co-ordinator, Senior Constable Steve Samuels, was extremely helpful. If he hadn't been so encouraging some people could have dropped out,' she added.

Jan pointed out that at 27 she has been the oldest woman on the course but no difficulties had been put in her way — particularly with the physical training.

'I was really pleased because there was no 'hazing', she said. 'The instructors hate to see recruits being picked on by other people. They were very fussy about that and made sure it didn't occur.

'The senior staff are really fair and the instructors really get involved,' she said.



Constable Jan Kavanagh