



Mr Ron Layh. Photo by Phil Brown of the Daily Mirror.

## MONEY LAUNDERERS WATCH OUT!

by Stephen Simpson

**A**T an age when most people are tending their rose garden or enjoying a midweek game of bowls, Ron Layh, aged 67, has his sleeves rolled up fighting crime.

Ron is a Special Member of the AFP working for the Organised Crime Unit in Sydney as a financial analyst.

He has received quite a lot of publicity lately in the Sydney press which started when on 21 April Commissioner Grey awarded Ron a Certificate of High Commendation for his work with the OCU.

Ron is a modest man. He has found the publicity a bit disconcerting. He stresses the point that he is only part of a hard working professional team at the OCU.

'I guess the interest shown in me lately was because I am an oldie,' he said. 'But really, any publicity should go to the OCU as a whole in recognition of the work it does. I'm not someone who enjoys publicity.'

It would embarrass Ron to reveal the comments made by the officer in charge of the OCU in his recommendation of the award. Let's just say that Ron is well thought of in the Unit.

Ron joined the AFP in April 1978 at the tender age of 59. He had retired as a bank manager a couple of years earlier and had become bored. So he went to the Commonwealth Employment Service looking for a temporary job for two or three days a week. He started with the AFP at the bottom rung of the ladder

sorting documents on the Greek Conspiracy Case.

Ron's career as a bank manager began to show. His experience and expertise in financial management and accounting were soon put to good use by the OCU in the analysis of the financial affairs of the Unit's criminal targets. He is now employed as a financial analyst, a clerical administrative class six under a special delegation exercised by the Commissioner, which allows for people beyond retiring age to be employed by the AFP in certain circumstances.

As a financial analyst Ron works at identifying the money trails of criminal targets, their sources of funds, how they move money and what they do with it. His tools are a calculator and a knowledge of the financial world.

Importantly, Ron has developed many contacts who help in his work. 'If I am stuck for something and can't get any further with a particular matter, then through my contacts I can usually get an answer,' he said.

### CONTRIBUTIONS

Platypus welcomes contributions of articles and pictures. Historical material is particularly welcome. Photographs should be clear black-and-white or very sharp colour slides. If you doubt your literary abilities, let the Editor be the judge. Your terms may be better than his sentences!

It is pleasant to talk to someone who is full of praise for his job and the people he works with.

'I'm the oldest here by a fair margin,' he said with a grin, 'but they don't look upon me as the ancient mariner. I'm treated the same as everyone else. The squad has a very professional approach to its work and everyone keeps their counsel. In this area it is essential.'

Ron keeps in contact with his contemporaries from his banking days at monthly luncheons, most of which he gets to attend.

'A lot of them have just retired and done nothing since, and they appear to be getting older every time we meet. Then I see others who have taken on jobs since retirement and they don't seem to change a bit. It's working,' he says, 'that's what keeps the moths away.'

Ron exemplifies his philosophy. He looks and acts like a man 15 years his junior.

His point is well made. The AFP was lucky to get Ron because when he applied for a job through the CES he could have wound up anywhere. As it happened, the skills he possesses have been of great value to the AFP. From Ron's viewpoint, he would probably agree that he was lucky at his stage of life to have landed a job with the AFP which has allowed him to use his expertise. The job has given the senior years of his life an added sense of accomplishment.

Chance gave Ron a satisfying job and it gave the AFP a resource it needed, namely financial analysis expertise. There are no doubt retired experts in various other fields who could similarly be of value to the AFP, and particularly to a section like the OCU. At the moment these people are wasting a valuable asset. Ron was not the first person to identify expertise on import-export, shipping, brokerage, accounting, and merchant banking as being of benefit to the AFP.

'I can see value in setting up a unit of experts or having access to experts in those fields,' he said. 'Retired people are a source of that expertise. To draw expertise from industry is costly. Such people demand high salaries whereas retired people are often looking for something to do, and the money is not that important to them. They're looking for some stimulation.'

He added, 'I do know retired people in some of those areas, and through contacts the others could be found.'

Ron serves as an example of senior people in the community doing a valuable and self-satisfying job.

'I'll hang up the shingle when the boys think I'm past it or redundant, or when I feel I've had enough. But at the moment I'm very happy to carry on,' he said. ●