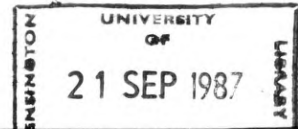


management in the AFP



OVER the past year I have undertaken a personal informal survey into the problems affecting the AFP, particularly in regard to responsibility and accountability by both police and public service staff. Many of the problem areas I noticed, may be attributed to deficiencies in the management and leadership techniques being applied by members at all levels of supervision and command. I am sure that it is difficult and often inconvenient to analyse ourselves; I am equally sure some of the deficiencies I have found in my wanderings apply to us all. I therefore expect a firm effort "where the cap fits" to improve our performance. To assist in this exercise, I offer you the following basic views.

Responsibility and Authority

Responsibility will always remain at the higher levels of management, but authority should be delegated whenever possible. It may often be difficult to do so, but the delegation of authority allows the senior officer to play his proper role to formulate policy and raise the necessary instructions and directives. Passing authority down the management line demonstrates trust in subordinates and speeds up decision making; delegate authority rather than responsibility. I am concerned that some managers within this organisation appear to do the reverse.

Making a Decision

People who have authority delegated to them are expected to make decisions. Too many members within the AFP know they have the authority to make decision, but seem unable to exercise it. Some of these people procrastinate, while others avoid the problems entirely by passing them up the line. Those incap-

able of making a decision should not be in a management role accepting that in making decisions all of us will inevitably make some mistakes. Accept the consequences and learn from mistakes; we will be better managers and more effective members of the AFP as a result. Murphy's 5th Law "If you can avoid making a decision, then avoid making a decision" is not to be followed. I suspect though, it often is and will continue so to be.

Loyalty

Loyalty is fundamental, to the effective operation of any organisation. It takes two forms:

- loyalty to the organisation, and
- loyalty to fellow members, including subordinates and superiors.

In developing loyalty to the AFP, a member should always keep its objectives and priorities in mind. This is particularly important for those placed in charge, whose decisions should not be aimed at enhancing their own position at the expense of the whole organisation. Unfortunately, I observe that this type of behaviour is not uncommon.

Some people, too many, also display disloyalty by airing grievances in public and sometimes by deliberate leaks to the press. This only serves to damage the public reputation of the AFP and to break down the morale within it.

"Be loyal to your subordinates and they will most likely reciprocate. Be as willing to take responsibility for the errors of your subordinates as you would be to bask in the glory of their achievements. Give praise when it is due and be constructive in your criticism. Above all, accept responsibility for your own errors. A sure way to destroy loyalty and cooperation is to blame subordinates for mistakes you have made."

Passage of Information

Information must flow freely both up and down the management line within any organisation. If it does not, morale and the quality of decisions will be affected. Information which must be passed down includes:

- policy decisions,
- changes to objectives and priorities,
- changes to resource allocations, and
- plans for the future, and
- feedback on subordinates work.

Information of this nature gives subordinates a sound base on which to make decisions. It is also a most effective means of involving them in the management and development of the AFP.

Information which needs to be passed up the management line includes:

- regular situation reports,
- the substance of decisions made within delegations, and
- anticipated problem areas together with suggested solutions.

This information allows management to be kept informed and gives subordinates greater participation in the management process which in turn enhances their commitment to the AFP. Pass information on, however unpalatable. This is our worst area; many members do not know the truth of a matter because it is not passed on. They deserve to be kept fully informed; they must be so.

(R.A. Grey)
Commissioner of Police