

It's a Dog's Life!

MANY of us envy the truckies and the brickies who can take their dogs to work. Perhaps we don't envy the drovers who have to take their dogs to work. But some people are so lucky they are paid to take their dogs to work!

They are police and customs officers, of course, and the allowance the AFP people get is not great. They don't complain.

The first official use of dogs in Australian law enforcement seems to have been in Victoria in 1922, when a Mr Nicholson, the head of the Victoria Police, brought in privately a cross-bred black dog. It was used for tracking, but its main job seems to have been breaking the monotony of the night shift.

When Nicholson retired in 1925, his successor, Superintendent Dunn, sold the dogs and equipment, and it was many years before Victoria saw police dogs again.

The Australian Customs Service introduced dogs for drug detection in 1968. Since then most Australian police forces have used dogs for explosives detection, drug detection and more general-purpose activities.

What kind of dog?

The German Shepherd (Alsatian) is regarded as the most suitable dog for law enforcement work and is used by Australian police forces.

The Australian Customs Service (ACS) also uses German Shepherds although 30 per cent of its dogs are other breeds or cross-breeds; the ability of the dog to detect drugs is the criterion.



AFP dog handlers First Constable Peter White with P.D. Hawke, Senior Constable Bruce Robey with P.D. Keo and Senior Constable Ernie Roughley with P.D. Mack

The potentiality of other breeds including Dobermann and Rottweiler is being examined by State forces because of the difficulty in finding sufficient German Shepherds.

Where they come from

There is in Australia a dearth of dogs suitable for law enforcement work. Experience has established that only one dog in 50 will pass initial selection testing.

Australian police forces and the ACS do not breed dogs. Suitable dogs are purchased from professional and private

breeders. Many dogs are donated by members of the public in response to appeals made by forces. Another source is the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA) and Government-run dog pounds.

How they are selected

Although there is no hard and fast rule for selecting any particular breed (individuals of any breed vary considerably in their mental approach to training and in their ability to assimilate with training), there is a higher success rate with German Shepherds.

It is difficult to identify absolute selection criteria; it is the instincts and experience of the selector that count. There are, however, certain basic characteristics that must exist, namely: intelligence of a high order, boldness, keenness of senses, steadiness, a fanaticism for retrieval and the physical ability to perform hard work.

Experience has shown that the best results are obtained if selection and training are undertaken when the dogs are between 12 and 18 months old.

Although bitches, if selected, are often very good indeed, they are now rarely chosen for training. According to Senior Constable Garry Baker of the ACT Dog Squad, they cannot work efficiently when in season, and bitches with the required qualities are rarely available.

Here are the numbers of dogs and their jobs with law enforcement agencies in Australia:

	Explosive Detection	Drug Detection	General Purpose	Total
Australian Federal Police.....	13	—	2	15
Australian Customs Service.....	—	39	—	39
New South Wales Police	—	—	20	20
Victoria Police	2	5	16	23
Queensland Police	—	—	20	20
South Australia Police	—	—	12	12
	15	44	70	129

It could be, of course, that owners of good breeding bitches do not donate them to police forces or leave them in dog pounds.

Entire animals are preferred, but Senior Constable Baker's bitch has been spayed for medical reasons.

Who looks after them?

The selection of suitable handlers is vital to the successful employment of dogs. At all stages of training and operational use the handler and the dog work as a team. The relationship demands mutual devotion, understanding, respect and confidence.

Handlers must be sound, mature people whose mental alertness, equable temperament and willingness to persevere are of a high order. A forceful character with a determination to succeed and a cheerful disposition which will be reflected in the behaviour of the dog are also necessary. A high standard of physical fitness is important.

The home environment is also an important consideration should the dog be kennelled at the handler's residence.

In general, about a 20 to 30 per cent attrition rate of handlers occurs during a training program. The main reason is unsuited temperament.

Training

The training of both dogs and handlers requires staff who possess above average qualities of leadership, sound knowledge of all aspects of dog training and extensive experience in the operational use of dogs in police-type work.

Except for the AFP, each police force with dogs and the ACS conducts its own courses of training.

Until recently, the AFP relied on the Australian Army for the training of Explosive Detector Dogs at the School of Military Engineering near Sydney. The force's General Purpose Dogs and handlers are trained by the New South Wales Police.

The AFP plans to establish a Dog Training School at the Majura Complex.

The ACS has provided dogs and trained handlers for Indonesia, Malaysia, Papua New Guinea and Fiji over recent years.

The Australian Development Assistance Bureau of the Department of Foreign Affairs has funded some of this training for Papua New Guinea and Fiji. Indonesia will be placing handlers at its own expense on a course to be commenced later this month at the ACS Detector Dog Training Centre.

The ACS Detector Dog Training Centre is reputedly the best in Australia and

ranks with the best in the world. The principal, Mr. M. Campaign, studied dog training methods in America and Europe last year and believes courses conducted by his Centre are equal to those conducted elsewhere.

A training program of theoretical instruction and practical work of 12 weeks' duration is normally required. Subjects covered include:

- dog training principles;
- care of dog, including health, feeding and hygiene;
- care and use of equipment;
- anatomy of dogs;
- theory of scent, tracking and searching;
- operational use of dogs; and
- kennel management.

About 90 per cent of course time is devoted to practical work. Only about six dogs in ten complete training.

A handler and dog must continue training after the initial course. At least one full day each week is necessary for the maintenance of skills and confidence of both handler and dog particularly in drug and explosive detection work.

Explosive Detector Dogs

The Australian Army training course for Explosive Detector Dogs lasts from 12 to 24 weeks depending on the progress of dog and handler.

A trained dog is capable of detecting the complete spectrum of commercial and military explosives, including firearms and ammunition.

Technology has not been able to match this capability. The Australian Army judges dogs to be 83 per cent successful in detecting explosives.

Drug Detector Dogs

The ACS trains Drug Detector Dogs. The dogs are trained to detect a range of narcotic odours including cannabis leaf, resin and oil as well as heroin and cocaine and their derivatives.

Drug Detector Dogs are used at wharves and with shipping, airports and on aircraft, bond stores, mail exchanges and container terminals as well as in motor vehicles and buildings.

State Corrective Services are introducing dogs into prisons for drug detection.

The success rate for Drug Detector Dogs is not known but exercises under controlled conditions point to a very high success rate equal to that of the Explosive Detector Dogs.

General Purpose Dogs

State police forces of Australia mainly use General Purpose Dogs for the following operations:

- preventive and operational patrols;
- crowd control;
- tracking;
- searching; and
- crime scenes — recovery of articles.

General Purpose Dogs are also trained in drug detection work and while their success rate is good, they are generally judged not to be as effective as the especially trained Drug Detector Dog. The success rate depends on the extent of refresher training in drug detection the dog and handler receive.

How much?

The Australian Customs Service estimates the cost of training a dog at \$45,000. Annual operating costs and other expenses include:

• Handler's salary	\$30,000
• Veterinary Fees.....	\$ 600
• Feeding	\$ 1,200
• Kennel Maintenance	\$ 600
• Transport.....	\$ 7,000
	(over 3 years)
• Kennelling	\$ 1,200

Administrative and operational costs of ACS Detector Dog Training Centre are estimated to be \$250,000 a year.

Legal Issues

The admissibility of evidence from a tracker-dog handler may be accepted provided there are adequate safeguards in the particular case. *R v Joe Saccu* (Unreported, Court of Criminal Appeal, Victoria, 13 February 1980).

The reaction of a Detector Dog as justifying 'reasonable grounds upon which to base a search' has apparently not been tested in Australia. The issue is one of discretion of the trial Judge. *Cleland v The Queen* (1982) 57 ALU R. 15.

In the United States, *Briscoe v State* 388 A.2d 153 (1978) lends support to the proposition that activities of a Tracker Dog may give rise to 'reasonable grounds for suspicion' that a particular state of affairs exists. However, in *Weeks v United States* 232 US 383 (1914) 'probable cause for suspicion' must exist prior to the activity of a Detector Dog 'sniffing' luggage as the result of the search will be inadmissible because of the 'exclusionary rule'.

The 'use of reasonable force' by a dog under control of a handler in the execution of the handler's duty seems not to have been tested in law within Australia. It is believed the usual legal test of 'reasonableness' would apply.

A recent amendment to the *Australian Federal Police Act 1979* now provides for a dog under control of a handler to enter and be upon any place that the handler as a member of the police may lawfully enter or be upon.