

# COMPUTER TRAINING BOOST



Members of the first computer investigation course hard at work.

**C**OMPUTER training for AFP officers is being stepped up following the growing incidence of computer crime.

The first computer investigation course was held recently at the AFP Training College, Barton, and Directing Staff say they are extremely pleased with the outcome.

"WE seem to have created a bunch of computer enthusiasts," Detective Senior Sergeant Gordon Williamson said.

"The overall performance level was very impressive, particularly because several of the officers were not part of the computer generation — or at least they weren't when they started the course!"

Eleven experienced detectives up to the rank of senior sergeant were drawn together for the first course which ran from September 19 to October 14. They came from the Northern, Eastern, Southern and Western regions and the ACT CIB.

Detective Senior Sergeant Williamson, formerly with the ACT Fraud Squad, ran the course with Detective Sergeant David Moore.

The Directing Staff said the objective of the course was to overcome any apprehension felt by investigators when they came across computers in the course of their inquiries.

"Apart from making officers much more familiar with how computers work we also wanted to make them aware of the expert services available to assist them; that they don't always

need to know computer systems in detail," Gordon said.

"Chris Linck from Micro Computer Support at Weston, Mark Boddy from the Computer Centre and Ross Paul from Internal Audit all took part. We also had Detective Sergeant Peter Baxter from the Special Crime Squad in Eastern Region, Detective Sergeant Dean Newlan from the Victoria Police, and two officers from the Commonwealth Bank in Sydney to talk about funds transfers."

Gordon said the course was formed into two syndicates and the gruelling final section took the form of a computer raid.

"The scenario was that a government body, the Department of Administrative Affairs — fictitious of course — was the subject of computer fraud by staff to the tune of \$200,000 in various amounts over six months. The task for the students was to get and execute a search warrant and find the offender. The exercise contained all the normal elements of an investigation but the evidence the students needed was on computer rather than on the books. The students had to gather sufficient admissible evidence

for a prosecution and they needed to demonstrate a high level of understanding from the training course to carry it through.

"The last part of the exercise was to present a briefing to Chief Superintendent (Commander International Division) Phil Baer representing the Assistant Commissioner (Investigations) on the result of the raid and what their future moves would be.

"Overall, the course — sponsored by the Investigations Department — has proven to be most successful and cost effective and the College will be running two of the courses a year with the next one in June next year," he said.

Detective Sergeant David Moore said it was vital that investigators knew about computers and their uses because the criminal world was certainly keeping up to date.

"I was recently involved in a major drug operation in Queensland and the criminals were using computers to send encrypted radio messages from a mother vessel to London and back to Australia," he said.

"One of the New South Wales targets in that operation was controlling his funding entirely on computer. Computers are certainly being used to facilitate crime but on the other side of the coin personal computers can be used by police to save thousands of man hours in investigation time."