

BRAVE LADY

"I HAVE only contempt for people who won't help the police. People scream for help when they need the police but won't help when the police need them."

The speaker was a small Canberra woman in her seventies who had offered to help two AFP officers struggling with a man outside her home.

Her courage has been praised by the officers concerned, Senior Constable John Reynolds and Constable Donna Reardon. "I wish other members of the public were as willing to help. Too many people just turn the other way," Senior Constable Reynolds said.

The Good Samaritan, who declined to be identified, told it this way: "I was in the back garden at five o'clock on Good Friday afternoon when I heard some shouting which got louder and louder and I realised I could hear women's voices screaming.

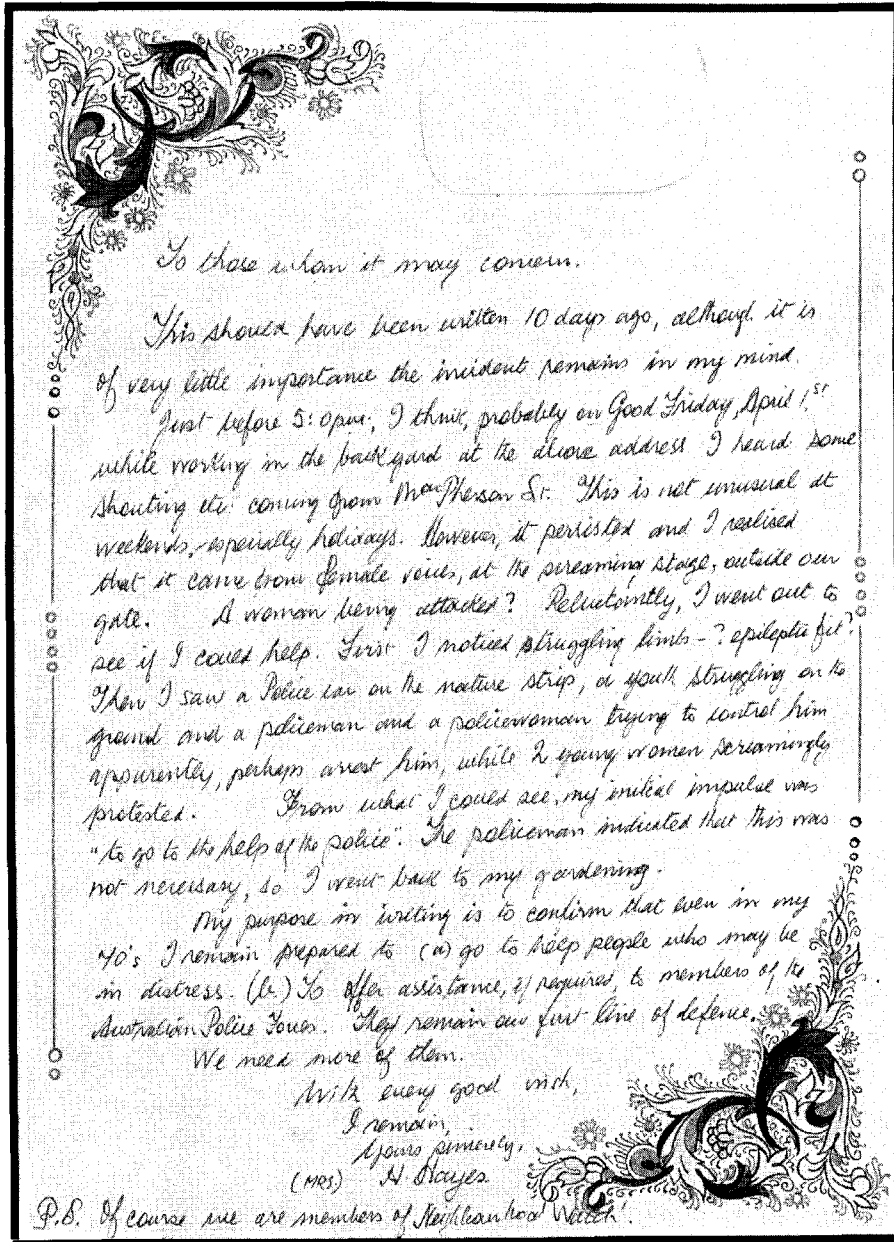
"I thought it may have been a woman being assaulted and I would have felt very badly if I had not investigated. I went to the gate and saw a policeman and a policewoman struggling with a youth with two young women standing by screaming in protest.

"It seemed to me the police needed help because the youth had a handcuff on one wrist and the other end was loose and flailing around. He was struggling very violently and obviously the officers were going to have a lot of trouble in controlling him.

"I was a nurse and in my opinion the two young women with the youth were verging on hysteria and could also have become difficult. I asked the policeman holding the youth if he could help and told him I had a telephone in the house. "The officer declined and suggested I go back inside, which I did. It was only when he spoke to me afterwards to thank me that I realised I'd had my big hedge clippers in my hands at the time!

"I hate to think what could have happened if the clippers had fallen into the wrong hands during the struggle."

But the Good Samaritan said she would not hesitate to act in a similar way again. "People don't realise that if we don't help the police and support them in their work we will lose the best police officers because men and women can only stand so much. So many people forget the awful jobs police often have to do such as speaking to families after a



beloved child has been killed in a road accident.

"I just did my civic duty. Too many people don't want to get involved but they should remember that this is our police force and that it looks after us. I have lived in other countries where I would not have gone to the help of the police at all!"

A summary of Senior Constable's report is as follows:

At about 5.30 pm on April 1 while on a routine mobile patrol we saw a man and a woman apparently arguing on the footpath.

When we approached the couple the man became abusive and when told he was under arrest a struggle ensued and we both fell to the ground. An unsuccessful attempt was made to handcuff him.

"About this time an elderly female person, clutching a pair of garden shears, came towards me. As there were other persons gathering in the area, offering no assistance, I asked her to go back in the

house as I was concerned that she or myself may be injured if one of the persons present were to get hold of the garden shears. She complied with my request.

A short time later assistance arrived . . . and charges laid.

I admire the woman's courage as other able bodied persons stood by and offered no assistance whatsoever.

CLARIFICATION

In the April edition of Platypus the story on the new slant radar said that it calculates the speed and provides a print out. Superintendent Bob Prigg rightly points out that the slant radar does not provide a print out of speed but it does provide a visual display. Our writer had confused the functions of the slant radar and Traficomp which does in fact provide a print out.