

Central Traffic Branch

CTB has co-ordinating role

By Constable Michelle Lomas and Terry Browne. Photos by Col Ellis.

SERGEANT Steve Kirby of ACT Region's Central Traffic Branch says that with each ACT district having its own Traffic Branch, the role of the CTB is one of co-ordination.

"A good example would be the visit in 1992 of US President, George Bush," Sergeant Kirby said.

Central Traffic Branch co-ordinated all the police aspects of that visit as it does for all major VIP and Royal visits to Canberra.

Likewise the CTB has a major role to play in many of the festivals and special events held in Canberra.

On a day-to-day basis the CTB co-ordinates specific traffic campaigns targeted at reducing speeding, red light, seat belt and drink driving infringements. These campaigns receive saturation publicity prior to being implemented.

"The aim of the publicity is to make the police activity highly visible and to tell the public what aspect of driver behaviour is being targeted," Sergeant Kirby said.

Despite a saturation publicity



Random Breath Testing is a valuable tool for maintaining safety on Canberra's roads

campaign informing ACT residents that all exit points from the ACT would have random breath testing units in place for Christmas Eve 1992, there were four readings taken that were over the prescribed limit.

Many friends were made on that night as each child in any car stopped for RBT was given a Constable Kenny Koala road safety showbag, which contained items designed by CTB members to help children through the boredom of long trips.

Sergeant Kirby said: "Central Traffic Branch is very progressive. We don't tread water. We are always looking for better ways of doing

things." The newly introduced LTI 2020 laser speed gun was the latest example of that attitude.

"All speed detection equipment has its limitations," Sergeant Kirby said. "But when used under the correct circumstances it is all very reliable."

He said that the main advantage of the laser speed gun was that it could be used accurately on multi-laned roadways with fewer officers required.

The search for similar efficiencies led the CTB to introduce Drager breath testing units earlier this year. These units are computerised and allow general patrols to accurately test drivers rather than having to take them to the nearest Breath Analysis Operator.

The Central Traffic Branch, headed by Superintendent Peter McDonald is situated in the Weston Complex, and has 45 members.

The Branch performs a variety of roles including: Motorcycle Patrol, Accident Squad and Accident Records, Breath Analysis Unit, and the Planning Unit, with all members being available to back-up any General Duty patrol when required.

The Branch is home for the eight remaining motorcycles within the AFP. The motorcycles are involved in general traffic patrols along with escorting dignitaries and security for major VIP tours which involve precision riding.



The new laser speed gun is particularly effective on multi-laned roadways

All members of the Branch are trained Radar Operators and regularly participate in slant and stationary radar duties.

The Accident Squad attends most accidents within the ACT which involve fatalities and serious injuries. Members are trained investigators whose skills are fully utilised when investigating motor vehicle accidents involving serious charges. Within the Squad, there are a number of trained mechanics who are required to carry out mechanical checks on vehicles involved in collisions.

The squad also has a qualified draughtsman, trained to recreate accident scenes for court purposes.

The Branch's Accident Records Staff are required to enter all information on the AFP computer system, collate statistics and answer all FOI requests from Insurance Companies.

The Breath Analysis Unit is responsible for all training in the use of the new Drager Units which are located at each station. The calibration of the units as well as the upkeep of all alcometers within the ACT is carried out by the BAU.

The Planning Unit is involved in planning events within the ACT varying from Traffic campaigns to major VIP visits. The past year was particularly busy with major visits by the Queen, US President George Bush and the Turkish President.

Sergeants within the Central Traffic Branch constantly liaise with all major ACT and National Road Safety Organisations with regard to changes in Legislation and Road Safety Initiatives. CTB also represent the AFP at the ACT Traffic Co-ordination Committee, who are responsible for road management within the ACT.

Staff members within the Branch assist the Planning Unit with Operational Orders, paperwork and the compilation of statistics in relation to Random Breath Testing and Speeding Campaigns.

The Branch works as a team to ensure the safety of road users working with Road Traffic Authorities in many major traffic campaigns.

Camp Quality Balloon-a-thon



Pictured from left: Constable Kenton Turner, Constable Mick Gordon, Robert de Castella, Constable Michelle Lomas (front). Photo by Constable Justine Adamek

By Constable Sally McDonald

On Saturday 13 March 1993, as part of the Canberra Festival, ACT Region entered a team in the Camp Quality Balloon-a-thon.

The idea of the race was to give a child with cancer the opportunity to feel part of a sporting team.

Eighteen teams competed in the race. The balloons were launched at 6am, each one containing a pilot, a parent and a child from Camp Quality.

Johnathon Watz from the Blue Mountains in NSW was the AFP team's 'athlete'. After the balloon flew for 30 minutes it landed and

Johnathon passed the baton to Constable Michelle Lomas who was waiting with a ground crew. She ran 4km back to the launchfield where Constable Kenton Turner then cycled a 10km circuit and Constable Mick Gordon swam 1km in Lake Burley Griffin. He then handed the baton back to Johnathon and they all ran to the centre of the launchfield where Robert de Castella was waiting in a balloon.

The AFP team came second, but the greatest prize was seeing the happy faces of all the kids who competed.