



Western Region Headquarters, 619 Murray St, West Perth

The challenge of the west

Feature article and photographs by Terry Browne

THE challenge to federal policing that Western Australia offers can be summed up in the expression “the tyranny of distance”.

When talking to AFP Western Region officers, that expression inevitably finds its way into the conversation, because much of the cost of an investigation can be consumed by simply transporting an investigation team to the site of the crime.

While many of the AFP’s investigations do take place in the Perth metropolitan area, increasingly, Western Region officers are called on to travel to sparsely populated areas of the state as significant crime against the Commonwealth becomes apparent.

The immense and mostly unpopulated coastline has proved a viable point of entry for drug importations in recent years leading to several major drug seizures.

Remote areas are also of interest to the AFP because fishing, mining and agricultural industries in these regions indirectly generate Commonwealth revenue and remote area communities also receive various forms of Commonwealth funding.

This means that there is potential for tax evasion and misuse of those funds.

Western Region’s senior officer is Commander Rod Leffers. Detective Superintendents Nick Drew, Karen Beck, and Tom Hanlon are in charge of the Intelligence, Drug Operations and Fraud and General Crime Branches respectively.

These Branches are supported by a Physical Evidence Unit, a Police Technical Unit, an Information and Technology Unit, and units of Training, Administration and Support, and Administrative Law and Projects. □

