

Anniversary Dinner

at Parliament House



Commissioner Keelty shares a joke with television personality Andrew Denton.

If you've ever seen the Great Hall in Parliament House, you know just how large and imposing a site it is. Now imagine it filled with 600 AFP members, local and international guests and invited stakeholders, silver balloons, tiny cut-out platypuses decorating the tables and a hot band playing the night away.

And so it was on the night of 16 October as we celebrated the AFP 25th anniversary with an elegant and incredibly good fun dinner, hosted by Andrew Denton and attended not only by Canberra staff but interstate visitors, friends and law enforcement partners.

Planning for the event had been ongoing for more than six months and as the night drew near, excitement mounted. Last minute touches, including a gift for every guest on their seat, kept the Marketing and Communications team busy throughout those final weeks, but it was all worth it as people entered the hall to the sound of didgeridoos played by Grant Edwards, Steve Terrance and David Bell.

Once cocktails were sipped and seats organised, the Commissioner opened



Among the former and current members and partners at the dinner were: Ben McDevitt, Mary McConaughy, Val McConaughy, Karen McDevitt, Pat Grey, Kay Palmer, and former commissioners Mick Palmer and Ron Grey

proceedings with a welcome to country by indigenous elder Ruth Bell and a special 25th anniversary prayer from Chaplain David Cockram.

As dinner proceeded, Andrew Denton began his roving set of interviews around the room. The best part was that although Andrew knew their stories, the "victims" had no idea they were in the picture till Andrew and a live feed television camera stopped at their table.

Former strong man Grant Edwards was first off the rank when he



Senior AFP officers hosted international guests at the dinner. From left to are: Federal Agent Mark Walters, Manager International Network; Assistant Commissioner Henry Koo, Hong Kong Police; Andrea Quinn, Commissioner of Police Datuk Kamaruddin Bin and Datin Hashan Binit Othman; Senior Assistant Commissioner Rajah Kumar, Singapore Police; Commissaire Mario Banner-Martin, New Caledonia Police; Police Deputy Director General Reynaldo Velasco and Mrs Ma Fatima Velasco, Philippine National Police; and Paul Jevtovic, Manager Brisbane Office



Grant Edwards



Audrey Fagan



Karen Shirley

spoke not only of his feats of strength in days gone by but also the moral strength and courage shown by members of the Transnational Sexual Exploitation Team for which he now works.

Karen Shirley told us how she kept her gun in her handbag and other learning stories; Danielle Woodward recounted Olympic glory as well as overseas duty and Brian McGahey brought us all the way back to 1979.

Other storytellers included Bruce Nelson, Audrey Fagan, Roger O'Donnell and Anne McEvoy, each of who took their moment in the spotlight with good grace and humour.

Between the interviews, guest drifted from table to table and stories were recounted among friends old and new.

Commissioner Keelty was the last interviewee and although perhaps aware he was next to be "picked", he too lived through the full Denton experience.

After a sumptuous meal Big Boss Groove made music to fill the dance floor, with help from an extra special guest on the drums.

Then, all too soon it was time to say goodnight and head home for a well-earned rest.

Photography by Brian Hartigan and Beck Browne



Bruce Nelson



Roger O'Donnell



Brian McGahey



Danielle Woodward

Andrew Denton