

# AFP Museum tours Bali bombing exhibition



Information panels and artefacts from the Bali bombings packed and ready to travel.



In October 2003 the AFP Museum launched its exhibition *When the Roof Became Stars: the Australian Federal Police investigation of the Bali bombings* at Old Parliament House, Canberra. Following the outstanding success of this project, a touring version of the exhibition is now drawing audiences in regional Australia.

The exhibition was originally developed as an in-house display in acknowledgment of the impact of the bombings to Australia, and the significance to the AFP. The move to a prestigious venue such as Old Parliament House ultimately gave the exhibition an unprecedented profile. This presented the museum with a unique opportunity to judge general audience reaction to an AFP-themed exhibition.

The collection of visitor response forms showed a diverse and often heart-felt reaction. Responses were surprisingly emotional, even allowing for the disturbing nature of the subject. Some visitors used the forms as an outlet for their anger towards the terrorists and outrage at the bombings; others expressed fascination with the processes of the investigation and congratulated the AFP on its participation. Several suggested that the exhibition should travel to other venues around Australia to give more people the opportunity to see it – as both an educational tool and as

a restorative measure for an event with which the public is still coming to terms.

This acted as incentive for the AFP museum to develop the exhibition into a travelling display. A smaller, compact version was planned which could fit into a variety of exhibition spaces and which was not reliant on extensive wall space or large staff numbers to install.

Several dozen venues around Australia were contacted; however many institutions book their exhibition programs several years ahead and were unable to take up the offer.

*When the Roof Became Stars* offers an informative but also poignant view of *Operation Alliance*, often using the words of AFP personnel to make a point. It avoids graphic images but provides enough detail about the investigation for the general public to make sense of the degree of involvement of the AFP and other Australian agencies.

Although state police were acknowledged in the original exhibition, it was felt that for an Australia-wide tour the state police involvement could be given greater emphasis. A small catalogue was produced including a time line of events, images from the exhibition,



and input from each of the state police services, outlining their contribution to *Operation Alliance*.

The first leg of the exhibition tour is now underway with further venues in negotiation. The exhibition has completed its run at the Grafton Regional Gallery, and is currently in Bathurst; future venues include the Powerhouse Museum in Sydney.

The itinerary is as follows:

- Grafton Regional Gallery 2 March 2005 – 10 April 2005
- Australian Fossil and Mineral Museum, Bathurst 19 April 2005 – 16 May 2005
- The Capital – Bendigo's Performing Arts Centre 25 May 2005 – 10 June 2005
- Queensland Police Museum, Brisbane 29 July 2005 – 2 September 2005
- Powerhouse Museum, Sydney 10 October 2005 – 4 December 2005 (TBC)

## The AFP Museum continues to receive significant and interesting donations which reflect the history and the work of the AFP.



*Hotel signage from tsunami-struck region in Thailand. Courtesy, Mick Travers*



*Wooden stake used in attack on QANTAS staff, Operation Mascon. Courtesy, Steve Reeves-Williams*

Please contact Ms Chris Cranston or Ms Margaret Tyrrie on (02) 6223 3618 if you would like to donate to the Museum's collection.