

# Managing change by keeping our feet on the ground

## Changing the policing model at Australia's major airports is helping to streamline and improve security practices, but it is also having a major impact on the members involved.

A major change is underway at Australia's 11 major airports, with the AFP taking full responsibility for aviation policing and security. The transition from the Unified Policing Model to the 'All-In' model of aviation policing and security is in response to the Government's endorsement of the recommendations made in the Federal Audit of Police Capabilities. The move to the 'All-In' model is being implemented to improve national security and increase efficiency.

One of the challenges for the AFP has been to ensure the new structure is implemented without causing undue disruption to policing capabilities at the airports or disadvantaging members of other policing jurisdictions who've been seconded to the AFP while working in the airport environment.

Over the next three to five years the roles performed by State and Territory police officers and AFP Protective Service Officers at the 11 major airports will transition to a workforce of AFP police officers.

As part of the transition, the existing Counter-Terrorist First Response function will be integrated into a new Uniformed Operations Policing stream across each of the airports. Current co-operative arrangements between the Commonwealth and States for the Joint Airport

Investigations Teams and Joint Airport Intelligence Groups will remain. The transition won't have any impact on the current operation or status of the Air Security Officer Program.

Since the changes were announced the AFP has been working with stakeholders and members to ensure the new model is implemented effectively. One of the key elements of this process has been to establish

Project Macer, which is responsible for developing plans for the transition and the policies needed to support it.

A major focus of the team has been to ensure officers working at the airport are aware of what is happening so they can make decisions on their future based on accurate, timely and sufficient information. In addition to developing a specific internal

### 01: Patrolling the airside.



web site containing relevant information, the Project Macer team has developed the PSO Gateway Assistance Package in consultation with the AFP's Learning and Development, Human Resources, Legal and Wellbeing Services teams.

National Manager Aviation Shane Connelly said the package has been developed to provide guidance and support to Protective Service Officers (PSOs) who wish to become AFP police officers as part of the transition.

"It contains information about the recruitment gateways involved, advice, website links and practical activities, but does not guarantee PSOs will successfully complete all the gateways needed to become sworn members," he said.

"And some PSOs may decide they don't want to be a sworn member. The changes being made to the airport policing model will have a significant impact on many of our staff, and the Project Macer team is committed to ensuring they have all the tools they need to make the best decisions for their future."

A series of musters has been held around Australia and the Solomon Islands to enable members of the AFP Executive and Project Macer team to meet with individuals affected by the change. The musters were conducted to enable the Executive, project team and subject matter experts to inform staff about the transition process and to also receive questions about the transition. Representatives from

Aviation, Protection, Learning and Development, Human Resources and Wellbeing Services attended. Each muster was held with delegates and/or officials from the Community and Public Sector Union and Australian Federal Police Association in attendance.

The musters were held at each of the major airports and at the majority of Protection locations around Australia.

"So far we've had a very positive response to the way we're handling the transition to the 'All-In' model of aviation policing and security," Assistant Commissioner Connelly said.

"This is good news for the Project Macer team, because it's helping





**01:** Patrolling the airport boundaries. **02 - 03:** The AFP have jurisdiction across the whole airport. **04:** Patrolling the terminal.

them to evaluate how the change is being managed and identify where there are significant issues. But it's also positive for the organisation as a whole, because getting this right will promote good change management practices across all areas of our business."

Managing a large project like the transition to the 'All-In' model at airports is a challenging task and the Project Macer team have been careful not to overlook the personal impacts on members. Many PSOs involved in the process are making significant career decisions that will have a long-term impact on their lives.

Feedback from the musters has shown that by-and-large most

members see the benefits of the 'All-In' model and the career opportunities available to sworn AFP members. But some PSOs have raised concerns about their ability to meet the gateways required, and what happens if they fail to make it through.

In response to these concerns, AFP Wellbeing Services is providing additional support to the Aviation and Protection portfolios. Two of the AFP's psychologists have been working closely with affected members, providing guidance on coping with change, uncertainty and anxiety in relation to themselves or their families.

Other tools the AFP is using to keep members abreast of developments include the use of monthly newsletters and dedicated intranet site to provide information and answers to questions. A series of fact-sheets is also available.

There are several options to members affected by the change. In addition to becoming an AFP police officer, they can examine the potential to remain in the PSO stream and redeploy to a Protection role, redeploy to an unsworn role within the AFP or, if it best suits their circumstances, seek employment elsewhere. A redeployment committee has been formed as part of Project Macer with representatives from Aviation, Protection and Human Resources.

The transition to an 'All-In' policing model at Australia's 11 major airports will result in significant improvements in the way aviation policing and security services are delivered. It is an exciting period for the AFP, but it is not without its challenges.

Managing change effectively is an important element of getting the transition right and ensuring affected employees get the most they can from the process. Project Macer is setting the standard for ensuring challenging situations are managed as effectively and efficiently as possible, while ensuring positive outcomes are achieved across the range of project activities.

