

Did you copy that Tango Eight-Two?

More than 167,000 calls received by ACT Policing Operations each year are triaged by a well-trained group of AFP members, many of whom are unsworn.

"One-AFP, Tango Eight-Two. Traffic stop, details when ready."

"Go ahead, Tango Eight-Two."

"Tango Eight-Two, off on the Parkway about 500 metres north of Cotter Road overpass with a red Toyota Corolla. ACT registration, Yankee Alpha Echo... Two heads on board."

"Roger, Tango Eight-Two."

At the time of this traffic stop, the driver was caught doing 15 kilometres per hour over the speed limit by an ACT Policing Traffic Operations sworn team member. Traffic stop situations such as this for speeding are common fare for police officers out on the road.

They are procedural, succinct and are a routine event, except perhaps, for the driver receiving the speeding ticket.

Back in the Police Operations room at the Winchester Police Centre in northern Canberra, it is also a frequent occurrence for an unsworn AFP member to support the sworn member through such a situation over the AFP radio network.

Sworn and unsworn ACT Policing members work closely together on a broad range of situations. The sworn AFP member in this situation has successfully completed police training and has become a constable with police powers under the *Australian Federal Police Act*. The unsworn member doesn't hold police powers, but has completed training to coordinate command, communication and control of all ACT Policing resources

and responses to incidents, ranging from traffic stops to homicides, under the charge of an operations sergeant.

The training and competence of the unsworn member at the other end of the radio call is crucial in providing the operational support service for ACT Policing.

In this instance, the sworn officer is working alone, stopping an unknown vehicle on a poorly lit road in the middle of a cold Canberra night.

To assist the officer, the unsworn radio operator can quickly tap into the online ACT Vehicle Database to research the vehicle registration and any offences, or criminal links attached to it.

During operational policing situations, having as much information as possible about what



01: An ACT Policing Operations member monitors close circuit television. 02: An ACT police officer on patrol responds to radio messages from ACT Policing Operations.

the officers may be dealing with is vital to preparedness and safety.

In any given situation, the officer may be faced with something more than stopping a speeding driver. Knowing that before approaching the vehicle is vital.

Having that further information is about to become crucial in this traffic stop situation.

"One-AFP, Tango Eight-Two."

"Tango Eight-Two."

"Tango Eight-Two, vehicle is registered to a male resident of Red Hill. However, vehicle registration indices show the plates are for a Holden Commodore, not a Toyota Corolla. Vehicle owner has nil active alerts, but inactive alerts for carrying weapons and driving while disqualified. We'll arrange back-up?"

The information provided by the unsworn member in the Operations room immediately informs the police officer that this may not be just an ordinary traffic stop. She is now dealing with someone who has, deliberately or otherwise, provided false information to the ACT Motor Registry.

Aside from his previous high-range speeding offence, the driver has now committed a second traffic

offence of having false registration details. This speeding driver also has a previous history of ignoring court orders.

The radio operator is already organising back-up and support.

"One-AFP, Woden Ten."

"Go ahead Woden Ten."

"Woden Ten, I'm mobile from an enquiry in Yarralumla, I'll start heading in that direction."

"Thanks Woden Ten. Did you copy that Tango Eight-Two?"

"Tango Eight-Two copy, thank you."

"One-AFP, Alpha Eight."

"Go ahead Alpha Eight."

"Alpha Eight I'm mobile on Parkes Way, southbound. I will be at Tango Eight-Two's location in about two minutes."

"Roger, Alpha Eight. Did you copy that Tango Eight-Two?"

"Tango Eight-Two copy, thank you."

Both the radio operator and the officer have now acknowledged the second and third radio responses to the situation. The first is the senior shift sergeant at Woden Station

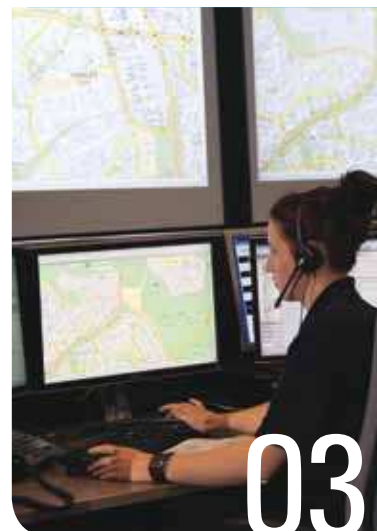
and the second, the Alpha Eight, is a senior sergeant who has a roaming operational role supporting all officers in the field.

For the police officer who approached the car originally, there is now copybook operational support around her to cope with any arising situation.

The Operations room is a busy operating environment and requires a level head to co-ordinate support in all situations.

ACT Operations receives and triages Triple Zero, 131 444, Crime Stoppers and routine calls for police assistance. In the past financial year, ACT Policing handled 167,000 calls for police assistance, dispatched 99,000 incidents for police attendance, and resolved 11,800 incidents.

Unsworn officers come into ACT Policing from all walks of



life — students, teachers, athletes or technicians.

The unsworn recruits are given six weeks of training about the broad range of ACT Policing activities, including 'ride-alongs' with officers, formal training at the AFP College, and paired training working alongside an experienced member before they can begin further training in the field.

ACT Policing Operations Manager Superintendent Brett Kidner said his dedicated training team is made up of an experienced sergeant and unsworn Operations member to ensure consistency.

"The training for our members is packaged and delivered in a way which ensures that recruits receive exposure to the full range of ACT Policing activities and have a strong understanding of the pressures under which our people operate," he said.

"Our members are often the first point of contact for those in crisis out in the community or who need immediate assistance. Accountability is at the forefront of all our actions, as all communications into ACT Policing Operations are recorded and our outcomes are transparent and measured."

Having unsworn and sworn members working side by side also acknowledges the important role that each member of ACT Policing has in ensuring smooth operations. Patrols are the first to respond to all situations, but those in the radio room are responsible for coordinating the approach through information support.

Superintendent Kidner said this overlap has had positive spin-offs, with many unsworn members aspiring to taking on a sworn role in the future.

"The need for one of our members to make a life-saving decision, quickly, can come at any time. It's no surprise that once exposed to this environment, many of our Operations members aspire to becoming sworn police officers and often succeed in that goal."

"I take pride in those who transition successfully from here to successfully complete the sworn recruit course and become a sworn member. It shows that Operations is doing its job well."

03: Busy ACT Policing Operations staff tend to more than 167,000 calls each year. **04:** Officers at the scene of a collision provide ACT Policing Operations with a situation report. **05:** An AFP member coordinates a police response to an incident.

