



# Platypus

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## Bravery award for officer in PNG

An Australian Federal Police Constable, virtually unarmed and badly cut about the head, faced a group of armed Papua New Guineans to save a young Australian diplomat and his wife from serious injury and possible kidnapping.

The officer is protective service component member Steve Dawes, who is stationed at the Australian High Commission in Port Moresby.

His brave action has earned him the Commissioner's Certificate of Commendation.

The award was presented recently, on the Commissioner's behalf, by the Australian High Commissioner in Papua New Guinea, Mr R.N. Birch.

The incident which led to the recognition of bravery occurred in the grounds of the Australian High Commission late at night.

Constable Dawes received severe head wounds in the attack and the diplomat and his wife were badly shaken.

## Diplomat, wife saved in attack

After the incident, Constable Dawes sought to play down his bravery and to pass it off as being "all in the line of duty".

However, his senior officers thought differently. Sergeant R.G. (Jock) Alcock took up the matter with Canberra and strongly urged formal recognition.

After the attack the diplomat and his wife were repatriated to Australia.

They told police that had it not been for Constable Dawes' intervention, their lives could have been in jeopardy.

The incident began late at night when the young couple returned to the High Commission to collect their car which was parked in the official carpark at the rear of the building.

The diplomat pressed the night security bell at the front of the building while his wife walked around to the rear to get into the car.

There she was confronted by a group of men.

She ran to the car, got in and locked the door.

Hearing her screams, the diplomat ran to the rear of the building while Constable Dawes dashed through the building to the rear door.

"I heard screams," Constable Dawes said, "and saw through the rear door spyhole the diplomat and a few nationals in the yard. I then opened the door and saw about 10 men armed with axes, iron bars and large knives."

Constable Dawes tends to



• Constable Steve Dawes ... sought to play down his bravery.

shrug off the remaining action in his own report of the incident, despite the fact that his only weapon was his police baton, and a workman's claw hammer he picked up to provide additional protection.

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## AFP survey on self-rule

The Australian Federal Police is to conduct a survey of many of its members on the implications that self-government could have for the future of the force.

The nature of the survey and who will be involved are matters under active consideration by management.

For those members scattered around Australia and overseas who know little of the self-government debate, it is Labor Party policy to grant self-government to the ACT. A special task force has been established to investigate the issue that is now one of Canberra's biggest talking points.

Such a survey should be able to provide the AFP with information on the attitudes of its members to the various options that may be

canvassed with the Federal Government.

The options themselves are still being developed but three possibilities are:

- retention of the status quo;
- splitting the force and reintroducing a separate ACT Police Force;
- a contract policing system, possibly along Canadian lines.

Discussion on all options is, as yet, at an early stage, although detailed consideration is under way in various policy areas of the AFP and other relevant Departments and authorities.

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## CSM FAREWELLED

The Australian Federal Police was well represented at a recent farewell evening for ACT Chief Stipendary Magistrate Mr Clarrie Hermes, who has retired after more than 20 years on the Bench.

The farewell was organised by the Canberra Court of Petty Sessions staff at the Canberra Club.

Many AFP members have come to know Mr Hermes over the years.

He was first appointed to the Bench in South Australia in 1961, moving to the ACT in 1966.

He was appointed Chief Stipendary Magistrate in 1980.

The Clerk of Petty Sessions, Mr Phil Thompson, presented Mr Hermes with a gold watch.

• ABOVE: Mr Hermes, centre, chats with AFP members, from left, Detective Sergeant Rick Ninness, Detective Senior Sergeant Brian Lockwood, Coroner's Officer Sergeant John Nolan (background), Chief Inspector Geoff Fry, Assistant Commissioner (General Policing) Val McConaghy, and former ACT Police Commissioner Mr Reg Kennedy.

Motto for AFP?

Platypus 3 will seek your views.